

**Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held in Rickards Hall on 8 December 2025 at 7:30 pm**

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Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge (*Vice-Chairman*), Angela Baker (*Chairwoman*), Bill Cummings, Michael Gemmell Smith, Alan Layland, Margot McArthur, Michael Stockdale, Jeff Streets, Bob Todd  
In attendance: Town Clerk; County Councillor R Mayall; and three members of the public. There were no representatives from the press.

19:30 Meeting opened.

**1 To Receive Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received, noted, and accepted, from Cllrs Compton, Jacques, McGregor, and Sumner.

**2 Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**

None.

**3 Public Questions and Statements**

19:33 *The Chair closed the meeting.*

A resident raised concerns about the methodology used by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) to convert Green Belt into Grey Belt, particularly questioning the interpretation of government guidance and the implications this has for the development of towns and villages. The resident referred to the origins of the Green Belt as a planning tool (first introduced for London in 1938 and later extended across England through the 1955 government circular). He noted its primary function: to encourage development in locations where it will do the most good, and to discourage it in areas where it may cause significant harm. He also referenced the original guidance, which encouraged local councils to consider Green Belt designations where they wished to restrict urban growth, particularly in relation to unchecked sprawl and large built-up areas.

Since its original legislation in the 1950s, and reaffirmed in the 1970s and 1980s, Green Belt policy had consistently stated that towns and villages do not count as large built-up areas. Government guidance specifically confirmed that villages are not considered large built-up areas, and it had never stated that towns fall into that category either. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) classifies Edenbridge as a “small” town; for comparison, Sevenoaks is classified as “medium”.

Questions were therefore raised about whether the government has the authority to redefine 70 years of established Green Belt designation. The Green Belt policy was designed to prevent urban sprawl, and it was noted that what was currently being presented appeared to run contrary to that intention. The resident also commented that it would appear SDC was disregarding national surveys through its contentious interpretation of the policy.

The Chair thanked the resident, and said the comments would be noted and referred to the Council's consultant for feedback. She also mentioned that the Town Council was submitting its own responses to the Local Plan including ST1 Strategy for Growth, where Council considers that the proposed distribution of new development represents an excessive focus on Edenbridge and an excessive loss of Green Belt.

A second resident raised their concern for assets within Edenbridge that could potentially be lost for the community when under unitary authority, with assets potentially being sold off, and asked if the Council was doing anything to protect the town's assets.

The Chair said the Council was aware of the potential impacts on communities with the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and would continue to be engaged with the relevant authorities.

19:37 *The Chair reopened the meeting.*

**4 To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 27 October 2025 (pages 2023-110/1-9).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 October, and that they be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record, 110/1-9.

**5 To receive County and District Councillors reports**

**5.1 County Councillor**

*Report was received after item 9 (recorded here in sequence of agenda).*

Cllr Mayall reported that Kent County Council (KCC) had submitted its response to the Government on the LGR proposals supporting only one overall authority for Kent. He reminded members of his Members Grant which he was inviting applications.

**5.2 District Councillors**

Cllr McArthur mentioned the new waste collections which would be changing from April, firstly introducing food recycling in April which would be on weekly collection. Other waste would be moving to wheelie bins and two-weekly collections. Cllrs Baker and Layland mentioned the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation, noting the significant amount of work this was having for officers.

Cllr Morgan had sent his apologies.

**6 To adopt the following reports/minutes of meetings**

**6.1 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning and Transport Meetings held on 3 November 2025 (pages 2023-111/1-3) and 24 November 2025 (pages 2023-115/1-2).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes of Planning Committee meeting held on 3 November 2025 (pages 2023-111/1-3) and 24 November 2025 (pages 2023-115/1-2).

**6.2 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Personnel Meeting held on 7 November 2025 (pages 2023-112/1-7).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 7 November 2025 (pages 2023-112/1-7).

**6.3 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 10 November 2025 (pages 2023-113/1-10).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 10 November 2025 (pages 2023-113/1-10).

**6.4 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Finance and Governance Meeting held on 17 November 2025 (pages 2023-114/1-6).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on 17 November 2025 (pages 2023-114/1-6).

**6.5 Charities & Grants and CIL Board minutes from meetings 1 December will be presented at the January Council**

Noted.

**7 To receive recommendations from Committees**

**7.1 Personnel Committee 7 November**

Members unanimously agreed the following:

**7.1.1 Budget 2025-26 update: To allocate some of end-of-year forecasted surplus to staffing earmarked reserves, and rest back to general reserves**

**Ratified:** to allocate some of end-of-year forecasted surplus to staffing earmarked reserves, and release the rest back to general reserves.

**7.1.2 Recommendation for overtime payment for any additional hours worked between November to January for the groundstaff**

**Ratified:** the recommendation for overtime payment for any additional hours worked between November to January for the groundstaff.

**7.1.3 Grounds Apprenticeship - expenditure of £400 for exam resits; and extend fixed term contract before moving to a permanent contract on completion of exams**

**Ratified:** the expenditure of £400 for the grounds apprentice exam resits; and extend fixed term contract before moving to a permanent contract on completion of exams.

**7.1.4 Market Officer to offer a permanent contract at the end the fixed-term contract (31 May 2026) in line with employment regulations**

**Ratified:** the recommendation for the Market Officer to be offered a permanent contract at the end of the fixed-term contract (31 May 2026) in line with employment regulations.

**7.1.5 Open Spaces Officer - two-point pay scale increment in recognition of the additional duties in respect of new Buildings and Lease Committee**

**Ratified:** the Open Spaces Officer to receive a two-point pay scale increment in recognition of the additional duties in respect of new Buildings and Lease Committee, effective from 1 November.

**7.1.6 Budget 2026-27: recommendations for staffing budgets**

**Ratified:** to support the recommendation for the staffing budget for 2026-27 of £572,559.47.

**7.1.7 Employers Assist Programme (EAP) - to maintain current arrangements**

**Ratified:** to confirm and maintain current arrangements for the Employers Assist Programme (EAP) with Health Assured, and not to pilot a free 3-month trial with SAGE.

**7.2 To receive recommendations from Finance and Governance Committee**

Members unanimously agreed the following:

**7.2.1 To increase the fees and charges 2026: Based on the RPI rate 4.5% (as published September); and service services and staff costs as per the proposed Precept percentage (item 10.3)**

**Ratified:** to increase the fees and charges 2026 based on the RPI rate 4.5% (as published September); and services and staff costs as per the proposed Precept percentage; this included:

- **Cemeteries, market rents, allotments and rents increase by RPI 4.5%.**
- **To freeze Rickards Hall fees, and to carry out a hiring fees review and possible restructuring in 2026.**
- **Services including where staff costs are charged, to increase by the Precept increase percentage rate.**

**7.2.2 To confirm the Service Level Agreements for HOUSE £9,000 (and note potential increase to £13,500); and Museum £6,500**

**Ratified:** to confirm the Service Level Agreements for HOUSE £9,000 (and note potential increase to £13,500 subject to agenda item 10.2); and Eden Valley Museum £6,500.

## **8 To receive reports and any recommendations from working groups; delegated reports; clerk's and officers' reports**

### **8.1 Clerk's report**

Members received the Town Clerk's report. Of note,

**Internal Auditor:** The Council's IA Keith Robertson had advised that he was retiring and would not be available for end-of-year audit. Quotes for new potential auditors would be presented to January Council meeting.

**Pavilion update on works:** This would now be reported to and overseen by the new Buildings and Lease Committee.

**Remembrance Sunday feedback:** The event and parade on 09 November event went well. There was approximately 150-200 people in the parade. The RBL led the service with the Church. Wreaths were laid by many local organisation and representatives from the services. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with road closures ensuring the safety and success of the event. There was also the annual afternoon church service. Wreaths had been moved to the Medical Centre's Memorial Garden so residents could see them.

## **9 Draft Local Plan - update**

The Chair referred to the statement in the meeting papers - the Town Council had been preparing its representations on the draft Local Plan in relation to the 17 proposed site allocations; and considering the 64 wider planning policies, focusing on those most relevant to Edenbridge.

Throughout this work, the Council had taken a pragmatic approach. Where sites or policies were supported or objected to, the Council also included caveats to ensure that any development was accompanied by the appropriate infrastructure. During the consultation period, the Government announced proposed planning changes which may affect future decision-making, including:

- A potential 'default yes' for development within 800 metres (15 minutes' walk) of well-connected railway stations.
- Referral of refusals for developments of over 150 homes to central government for review.
- Strengthened powers to prevent call-ins and reduce delays.

The Town Council objects to the overall scale of development proposed for Edenbridge and to the loss of Green Belt, which it considered excessive. It recognises that some growth is necessary and does not oppose development east of Four Elms Road, provided it forms part of an integrated scheme with the permitted site and that all required infrastructure is secured, including extensive publicly accessible green space.

The Council opposes the following site allocations:

- EDEN10 - Land at Crouch House Road
- EDEN11 - Land at Lingfield Road
- EDEN13 - Land west of Lingfield Road Recreation Ground
- EDEN14 - Breezehurst Farm
- EDEN15 - Land east of Mead Road
- EDEN16 - Land at Swan Lane
- EDEN17 - Seven Acre Farm (unauthorised additional pitches)

The Council was supportive of several of the smaller-scale developments within the town, including redevelopment of the Leathermarket. These need to be appropriately designed and located. For all such sites, the Council had set out specific assurances it required, including matters such as parking provision, enhancements to Green Belt or Conservation Area boundaries where relevant, safe access arrangements, pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and the provision or improvement of community facilities.

The Chair thanked the councillors for their help and support with the five Council run pop-in sessions across November and December, allowing residents the opportunity to view and discuss the draft Local Plan and proposals for Edenbridge. These had been advertised via a door leaflet drop to all homes across Edenbridge, noticeboards and social media. The Vice-Chairman added

that it had been good to see so many local groups, including NEDRA, involved in promoting the Regulation 19 consultation.

Members noted that draft responses had been made accessible for members to review and comment, and were asked to confirm and support the above. Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to support the recommendations including:

- **Support the small site allocations and brownfield sites.**
- **Expansion for the Four Elms site (already with planning approval for 340 dwellings) to include EDEN9 Skinners Lane north; and EDEN12 Skinners Lane west.**
- **Oppose the following site allocations: EDEN10 – Land at Crouch House Road; EDEN11 – Land at Lingfield Road; EDEN13 – Land west of Lingfield Road Recreation Ground; EDEN14 – Breezehurst Farm; EDEN15 – Land east of Mead Road; EDEN16 – Land at Swan Lane; EDEN17 – Seven Acre Farm (unauthorised additional pitches).**
- **Oppose the two Traveller and Gypsy site allocations EDEN15 Mead Road; EDEN17 Seven Acre Farm.**
- **Update the Infrastructure Development Plan, and policies IN1 infrastructure delivery.**
- **Make representation on other policies relevant to Edenbridge issues and concerns: ST1 Growth Strategy; EDN1 Town Strategy; H7 Housing Density; T1,2 & 3 Transport and Movement; W1, 2 & 3 Flooding and water management; other policies to include community facilities, health and wellbeing, employment.**

The Council would publish its finalised responses once submitted to SDC on its website.

*19:49 County Councillor Mayall joined the meeting and provided his report (minuted numerically to agenda).*

## **10 Budget 2026-27**

The Finance Committee had considered the draft budget proposals for 2026-27 at its meeting 17 November. This had included recommendations from:

- Forward Planning Steering Group (FPSG) - reported to Council and recommendations resolved at its October meeting.
- Personnel Committee.
- Open Spaces Committee.

Committee considered the current reserves position and the forecasted year-end position. It was not an easy budget to consider noting increasing costs to the Council and,

- Upcoming Local Plan Regulation 19 and Hearing planning consultant costs
- Planned project costs
- Planning for potential impact from local government reorganisation

Members were also very aware of the budget impact on the Precept and Band D to residents, which would affect them also. Committee had discussed several potential areas where savings could be considered, but this would then impact on service delivery which members felt residents deserved, and maintaining the high standards of facilities provided.

The conclusion and recommendation from Committee was to continue to precept sufficiently to support a balancing budget, not to draw down on the reserves which had taken several years to strengthen and bring back to a stable level, and to precept for the full deficit on expenditure with the anticipated income. In addition, it supported the recommendations from committees and the FPSG to set up a new earmarked reserves and to precept to allow funding towards enabling some of the projects in the Council's strategic plan and objectives. Members received confidential reports with draft budget scenarios. At the time of preparing the reports the new tax base was not known, so calculations had assumed the current tax base of 3998.66 (and potential percentage increases).

Following this meeting, and Council's recommendation, the draft budget for 2026-27 would be published on the Council's website; and presented again to the January Council to confirm the Precept and Band D payment.

## 10.1 **To receive an update on the Council's income and expenditure 2025-26, Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves**

Members received a summary from the Town Clerk. The draft budget spreadsheet had a three-year view - last year, current year, (actuals and forecast), and budget 2026-27.

- 2025-26 forecasted year-end had assumed a net surplus of £26k (£50k less the budgeted surplus of £23k).
- The Council's Earmarked Reserves (EMR) and General Reserves (GR) had had some movements with project expenditure and some further expenditure was planned. However, this did not include year-end movements into EMR for uncomplete works/projects. The recommended guide for GR depends on the size of council, it's assets, and its risks, but should be in the region of approximately 50% of annual precept/expenditure, and a council should be able to explain its rationale for its reserves (EMR and GR). The Town Clerk and RFO had looked into the reserve figures and could justify the amounts set aside, for what purposes, and were currently satisfied with the current forecasted year-end positions.

Summary of the reserves:

- Opening: EMR £532,438; GR £329,102 (total council reserves £861,540)
- Opening: CIL allocated and unallocated reserves £171,205
- Opening overall assets £1,032,745

Looking at actual movements, forecasted movements and forecasted surplus, the end-of-year position:

- EOY: EMR £511,820; GR £352,877 (total council reserves £864,698)
- CIL EMR: CIL allocated and unallocated reserves £411,943
- EOY overall assets £1,276,641

This means a potential GR increase with budget savings of £23,775; and confirmed Council was on target with its budgets for 2025-26 and likely to make some additional budget savings - for example staffing costs.

There were no questions.

The Chair expressed her thanks and appreciation for the work of the Town Clerk and RFO in preparing the reports, and to the Finance Committee for scrutinising the income and expenditure, and budgets.

## 10.2 **To receive a request from HOUSE to increase its SLA grant from £9,000 to £13,500**

Members received the report and SLA grant increase request from HOUSE (West Kent Housing Association - youth project) to continue with the partnership and an annual grant of £13,500 towards the running costs. This would enable the continuation of its youth services including weekly detached youth sessions. Edenbridge HOUSE is a safe place for young people to socialise, have fun and get information, advice and support on a wide range of health issues. The project offers a free, fully inclusive and accessible service to all those aged 11-19 (or those aged up to 25 with learning disabilities). It delivers:

- Open access youth sessions on three evenings a week for 48 weeks (a total of 144 sessions). Each session three hours.
- Weekly detached evening youth sessions, in partnership with Eden Christian Trust. This work will involve engaging with young people in public spaces such as parks, streets or housing estates. It aims to reach young people who don't access traditional youth services and establish positive relationships with them.

The total budget is £73,620.

It was increasingly difficult to secure external funding for youth services. KCC decommissioned all voluntary sector youth services in 2024, including funding for its detached youth service. Youth organisations throughout Kent have increased fundraising requests to charitable trusts and lottery funders to keep services going. This increased competition for funds has resulted in significantly reduced success rates for external bids. Last year funding bids for youth projects were turned down by both National Lottery Communities Fund and BBC Children in Need.

Members recognised the value of the youth service in Edenbridge, and that the draft budget had assumed an increase to the SLA (subject to Council decision). Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to support the SLA 2026-27 increase from £9,000 to £13,500 for HOUSE in recognition of the value HOUSE provided to the young people in the town, and that this funding would help to ensure delivery of a weekly detached youth service and also maintain an adequate staffing level in its three weekly clubs.

### 10.3 To consider the full draft budget for 2026-27

Members noted the Finance Committee had viewed and scrutinised the draft budget, including receiving recommendations from committees and considering savings, costs and services. Some savings had been reflected in the draft budget and report, including £25k:

- £20,000 from 30-year streetlight replacement programme and to not fund any this year; a CIL bid had since been approved to fund 10 streetlights (Cedar Drive and Park Avenue were there had been recent development)
- £5,000 Elections. If there was a casual vacancy and a by-election was called for, this could cost the Council in the region of £5-8k. The election EMR holds £19,636 to cover an election. If the EMR was drawn down on, then this would need to be replenished in the 2027-28 budget to ensure sufficient funding for upcoming 2027 elections.

Other proposed savings had been debated, such as cutting bulky waste collections, summer playschemes, town centre hanging baskets, but concluded it would impact on services which members felt residents deserved, and to maintain the high standards of facilities provided.

Having received the report, and discussed Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to confirm the draft budget for 2026-27 as presented for each cost centre; total expenditure £965,056.37 and other income £115,569.00.

### 10.4 To consider the Precept for 2026-27

Members noted the recommendations had been based on the above approved budget, and the current tax base (SDC did not issue 2026-27 tax base until early to mid December). Therefore, Council could only make its best estimated calculations when considering the Precept and Band D calculation. The January Council would receive an updated view with the new tax base.

The Finance Committee was recommending to Council, it should achieve a balanced budget and not drawdown on its reserves which it had already committed to strengthening. The Clerk mentioned that since preparing the papers, Kent Pensions had advised a reduction to the employers contribution rate which could achieve a saving to £17,500 in the budget. Members **agreed** not to reduce the budget commensurately, as cuts had already been made and there were several unknowns, particularly with the LGR, Local Plan, and the buildings reserves also needed future proofing.

In view of the draft budget proposals, this would mean a Precept of £849,487.37 would be needed to achieve a balanced. Based on the current Precept (£804,054) this was a deficit of £45,433.37, and would require a Precept increase of 5.7% to £849,885 with a surplus of £397.63.

Viewing the Band D impact this would increase from £201.08 to £212.54 per year - £11.46 per year / monthly increase 95 pence.

Members recognised the difficult decisions, and viewed different precept increases and impacts of budget. It was noted to put into context, last year the Precept increase was 7.9% and Band D increase 6.5%. Whilst keeping any increase down, Council was also challenged with annual inflation increases, increasing assets, LGR and unitary authority potential impacts, Local Plan professional representations as well as other projects which are still important, and noting uncertainty with future LGR it was felt important to be prudent and ensure healthy council finances were maintained. Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to confirm recommendations for the Precept increase of 5.7% to achieve £849,885. With the assumed tax base of 3998.66 the Band D Council Tax would be £212.54 or £11.46 increase for the

year. (Members noted the tax base would be notified in December and confirmed at its January meeting.)

#### **10.5 To confirm the recommendation for the Earmarked Reserves for 2026-27**

Having considered the budget, Members were asked to confirm earmarked reserve levels for 2026-27, noting these may change with projects not completed in the current budget. Members noted the reserves position, unanimously,

**Resolved:** to confirm the EMR levels as presented:

- Opening: EMR £532,438; GR £329,102 (total council reserves £861,540); CIL allocated and unallocated reserves £171,205; overall assets £1,032,745
- Forecasted EOY: EMR £511,820; GR £352,877 (total council reserves £864,698); CIL allocated and unallocated reserves £411,943; overall assets £1,276,641

20:11 Cllr Mayall left the meeting.

#### **11 Matters arising from the minutes for report and not elsewhere on the agenda**

##### **11.1 To appoint two further members to the new Buildings & Lease Committee.**

In October, the existing Lease Negotiating Group members were appointed to the new Buildings and Leases Committee, plus four others. There remained two vacancies. Current members: Cllrs Baker, Gemmell Smith, McGregor, Read, Streets, Stockdale, Sumner and Todd. Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to appoint Cllrs Cummings and Layland to the Buildings and Leases Committee.

#### **12 OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision**

##### **12.1 Involve Kent - request for Rickards Hall to help with establish a new community arts and craft group aimed to encouraging**

Council had been approached by Involve Kent - a Charity involved in Community Activities, and commissioned by KCC; its role focuses on supporting individuals aged 55 and over who are experiencing social isolation due to various life circumstances. Many of its clients face loneliness, vulnerability, and declining mental wellbeing, often leading to conditions such as anxiety and depression. Involve Kent had supported establishing the Monday Games Club run out of Rickards Hall.

Involve Kent was been working with a local resident to establish a new community arts and craft group, providing a safe, welcoming space where they can connect with others, learn new skills, and rediscover a sense of purpose and belonging. These sessions would be designed not only to be creative and engaging, but also to foster friendships and emotional support among participants. Ideally, they would like to run a two-hour session, with an additional 30 minutes allocated for setup and clear-up, totalling 2.5 hours. This would allow time to create a relaxed and welcoming environment for participants without feeling rushed. While the group was primarily intended for Edenbridge residents currently supported by Involve Kent, there could be interest from individuals in the wider Sevenoaks area. Should that happen, they would be happy to refer them into its 'Actively Involved' service, which would enable them to access the group.

Involve Kent had a nominated employee coordinator for the group, who would take full responsibility for the group's management. The sessions would be supported by carefully selected volunteers, all of whom will have completed safeguarding training prior to the start date. They will also undergo DBS checks to ensure a safe and secure environment for all participants. They have a designated safeguarding lead based at our head office, who will be available to support and advise should any concerns arise. Costs to clients would be kept to an absolute minimum, primarily covering light refreshments such as tea, coffee, and biscuits. Involve Kent would provide the initial art supplies, and also make use of donated materials wherever possible. However, it did not have the funds to cover regular hall hire costs.

Members were asked to support this initiative allowing a regular weekly booking of Rickards Hall for free of charge. Current Hall hire fees are £22.78 per hour.

Members discussed, and whilst they supported the initiative, it noted that every time it gives away the Hall free of charge, the Council picks up the running costs such as heating, and also prevents a fee paying hirer. However, it agreed that the aims of the group and in helping residents with social isolation due to various life circumstances was the sort of thing the Council could partnership with Involve Kent and helping to deliver services to the community.

Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to support the new arts and craft group for the over 55s under the umbrella and management of Involve Kent allowing free use of Rickards Hall on a weekly basis initially for three months free of charge, and to review after this period.

**12.2 Love Edenbridge Day 7th March 2026 - to consider free use of Rickards a Hall and Courtyard, and use of TN8 licence to EVCC**

Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to support the Eden Valley Chamber of Commerce event Love Edenbridge on Saturday 7 March 2026, permitting free use of Rickards Hall and use of its TN8 licence (noting, this does not include sale of alcohol).

**12.3 UK-wide COVID-19 Day of Reflection on Sunday 8 March 2026**

Members noted the letter from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport suggesting a number of commemorative events for UK-wide COVID-19 Day of Reflection on Sunday 8 March 2026. However, gestures earlier this year - five years on from the outbreak of Covid-19 - Council had opened a memory book providing a opportunity for residents to honour a loved one, share a personal memory, or express gratitude to someone who provided support during the pandemic, but there ha been no interest. Members **agreed** not to do anything for 2026.

**12.4 WI Hall: To receive notice the Chairman of the Management Committee is stepping down**

Members noted the Chairman of the WI Hall Management Committee was stepping down. His commitment over several years was appreciated - this was a voluntary role but one which Jim Burbridge had dedicated a lot of his time to ensuring the stability and success of this community facility.

**12.5 To note: Resignation of the Community Warden**

Members received and noted the resignation of the Community Warden, Kevin McGovern.

**13 Devolution and local government reorganisation**

Members noted the recent update on the proposals LGR from SDC supporting a proposal for three-unitary councils and had submitted to Government. The Government would now take a few months to consider the proposals before launching a public consultation, expect to commence late in February.

**14 To review the management arrangements and future of Edenbridge Thursday Market**

The continuation of the Market and under the management of the Town Council had been prompted by a non-resident raising questions, and two separate market traders asking to be considered to take over the management of the market. To provide some background, Council committed to the Thursday Market following a failed market tender in 2021. It was considered that the Market provides social, economic, and environmental value to the community - offering a local trading opportunity, supporting high street footfall, and providing a walkable, alternative shopping experience for residents. Reviewing the market income and expenditure over a four year period showed only 2023-24 made a profit £2,972, and last year a loss of £949. This included the expenditure of market rates, advertising, salary costs.

	<b>2025-26 forecast</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
<b>Income</b>	£9,000	£9,599	£12,665	£6,874
<b>Expenditure</b>	£10,937	£10,549	£9,693	£9,202
<b>Net +/-</b>	-£1,937	-£949	£2,972	-£2,328

What it didn't reflect was discounted trader fees, a drop in footfall which is consistent with national figures, and a decline in traders generally. It was also difficult to evaluate the value to the town - choice of shopping for residents and savings, increased visitors to the town on Thursday, and social interaction.

Overall, Members felt there was value for the community with the Market and noted that the failed tendering process back in 2021 could be similar again in an uncertain climate. Members unanimously,

**Resolved:** to continue with the management of the Thursday Market, not to go out to tender, and to keep under review.

## 15 Consultations

### 15.1 Sevenoaks Local Plan - Reg 19 (3) - closing date 11 December

Noted.

### 15.2 Proposed Taxi Licensing Fees from April 2026 -Sevenoaks District Council - closing date 10 December

Noted.

## 16 Civic Medallions - to receive outcome of voting of nominations

*In view of the confidential nature of agenda item 16 to be discussed, the Chairman moved that press and public be excluded from the chamber. Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972 s100 and 102. Members **Resolved:** to exclude members of the public from the meeting for item 16 - Civic Medallions.*

*20:26 Three members of the public left the meeting.*

Following resolutions at September and October meetings, four nominations had been considered, and under the procedures, members had to submit their vote in confidence to the Town Clerk. For a nomination to be successful all 15 Councillors needed to support the nominee. The Clerk reported all nominees had received all 15 votes:

Dr Simon Morrison - in recognition of his outstanding and long-standing contribution to the Town of Edenbridge, particularly his pivotal role in the campaign to establish the Edenbridge Medical Practice and recognising the future healthcare needs of the community, have left a lasting legacy that continues to benefit residents today. In addition, ongoing commitment, as Chairman of the Friends of Edenbridge Medical Practice.

David Pocock - in recognition of extraordinary and long-standing contribution to the cultural life of Edenbridge with long-standing leadership of the Town Band, a commitment that continues to this day. Over many years, he has given his time, energy and heart to safeguarding the future of the Band, nurturing younger musicians and ensuring it remains a cherished and enduring part of the town's tradition, history and identity, bringing people together and fostering a strong sense of belonging through music. Now in his 80s, he continued to turning up week after week with the same kindness, humour, and quiet strength, is both remarkable and deeply inspiring.

Susan Oldfield - in recognition of outstanding and sustained service to the residents of Edenbridge, particularly mindful of her founding role in The Bridges Centre, and continued commitment as a trustee for over thirty years, and hands-on involvement from weekly support and fundraising to the care and attention you give to individuals who may be feeling isolated or vulnerable, has been invaluable. In addition, dedication to the community through St Peter's and St Paul's Church through

decades of service as a Pastoral Assistant, and also wider work alongside the Parish Nurse and Furniture Bank.

Anthony Shipwright - in recognition of exceptional service and dedication to the young people of Edenbridge over more than two decades, he had have given time, energy and commitment selflessly to supporting local youth initiatives. His consistent presence, guidance and encouragement have provided countless young people with a safe, supportive environment in which to grow and thrive.

Civic Medallions are awarded by the Town Council to members of the community who have made an outstanding contribution.

Members agreed to host an awards event at Rickards Hall in February.

The Chair said she was delighted with the outcome and thanked the councillors for supporting the worthy nominees.

**17 Date of next meeting - 12 January 2026**

Noted.

20:37 Meeting closed.