

To Councillors: J Aldridge (*Vice-Chairman*), A Baker (*Chairwoman*), S Compton, B Cummings, M Gemmell Smith, C Jacques, A Layland, M McArthur, S McGregor, V Parker, A Read, M Stockdale, J Streets, S Sumner, B Todd.

Notice is hereby given of a Council Meeting of Edenbridge Town Council to be held in Rickards Hall on 12 January 2026 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
7 January 2026

To assist in the speedy and efficient dispatch of business members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting. Council Meetings may be recorded.

Any person intending to make recordings is advised to notify the Clerk in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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Meeting Papers & Report

1 **To Receive Apologies for Absence**

2 **Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**

The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If an interest becomes apparent to a member during the course of a meeting that has not been disclosed under this item, the member must immediately disclose it.

3 **Public Questions and Statements**

Members of the public, and members with prejudicial interests on items on the Agenda, may make representations, answer, ask questions and give evidence at this meeting in respect of items on the Agenda. (This is the only opportunity for members of the public to make a contribution during the meeting.)

Both public and members are limited to three minutes per person to speak and the total time designated for public questions shall not exceed fifteen minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.

4 **To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 8 December 2025 (pages 2023-119/1-11).**

 Full Council | 08 December 2025 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-119/1-11)


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

5.1 **County Councillor**


5.2 **District Councillors**

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

6.1 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning and Transport Meeting held on 15 December 2025 (pages 2023-120/1-4).**

 Planning and Transport | 15 December 2025 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-120/1-4)

6.2 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Charities & Grants meeting held on 1 December 2025 (pages 2023-116/1-2).**

 Charities & Grants | 01 December 2025 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-116/1-2)

6.3 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Community Infrastructure Board meeting held on 1 December 2025 (pages 2023-117/1-7).**

6.4 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Buildings and Leases Committee meeting held on 8 December 2025 (pages 2023-118/1-4).**

Buildings & Leases Committee | 08 December 2025 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-118/1-4)

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

7.1 **Clerk's report**

Buildings and Leases Committee: Held its first meeting on 8 December.

GDPR and Privacy Policy audit and compliance: This needs to be a priority project for first part of this year especially as now falls part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) under assertion 10.

Involve Kent Community Arts and Craft Group: The new group has expressed its thanks and appreciation to Council for supporting this new initiative. It is hoping to have its first session early February in Rickards Hall, Tuesday afternoons. (This is a good time for the Council as would be in between other bookings.)

Leases - Forge Theatre Group: Amendments to the draft Lease have been viewed by the solicitor and an updated clean draft has been issued. The FMG has a show on in January so we hope to meet in February once they have had the opportunity to view this.

Love Edenbridge Day 7th March 2026: Eden Valley Chamber of Commerce are very appreciative of the Council support for its second Love Edenbridge event, and preparations are underway.

Market Archway: This was due to be installed on 29 December but unfortunately, a new date has had to be scheduled.

Personnel: Appraisals are taking place this month. All training records are being reviewed and new monitoring records will be created. Some job descriptions also are to be updated.

Projects 2026:

- Bandstand at Stangrove Park
- GDPR and privacy policies review
- Marsh Green playground refurbishment
- Local Plan and appointment of additional consultant for Reg 19 and Hearing phases
- New garden area by Old Police station
- Streetlight replacement programme and new streetlight for Church Street
- Pavilion heating, new boilers and mains water connection
- Quality Council status
- Cyber Security
- Digital conference facilities meeting room and Rickards Hall
- SLAs formal agreements review
- Health and Safety online recording review
- Community Warden review and volunteer projects
- Neighbourhood Plan - review, considering viability, collating data (e.g. potential spatial strategy plan)

8 **Draft Local Plan - update**

The Town Council submitted its response to Sevenoaks District Council's (SDC) Draft Local Plan as part of the Regulation 18 (phase 3) consultation, which ran until 11 December 2025.

- Detailed comments on the 17 proposed site allocations that affect Edenbridge.
- Feedback on the wider planning policies in the draft Local Plan that have direct relevance to Edenbridge's character, infrastructure and future development.
- Additional comments on 20 policies where the Council felt further clarification or safeguards were necessary.
- Town Council positions on infrastructure needs to support planned growth, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

SDC has advised that it has received around 5,000 responses from across the district; and 1,150 people attended its 30 face-to-face 'Pop-up' sessions that took place at 10 locations in the District where Council staff were on hand to answer questions.

SDC will publish all the Local Plan comments (without address information) on its website later in the New Year. All the comments will then be analysed and considered before the District Council publishes a final draft of the Local Plan in summer 2026 for further public comments (called the Regulation 19 Publication).

This version of the Local Plan will be submitted to Government for examination by the end of 2026.

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/town-council-submits-formal-response-to-sevenoaks-district-draft-local-plan/>

9 **To approve the Budget and Precept 2026-27**

The December Council meeting received the draft budget which had been scrutinised by the Finance Committee at its November meeting. Details of Council's decision was published on the Council's website with a statement and the draft budget – link below.

At the time of the meeting, the tax base for 2026-27 had not been confirmed. It was received on 12 December: 3,996.77 (2025-26 was 3,998.66); this is down 1.89 or 0.05%.

Members are asked to reconfirm the budgeted income and expenditure and Precept for 2026-27:

- **Budget for 2026-27: Expenditure: £965,056.37 and other Income: £115,569.00**
- **Precept of £849,885. This is a 5.7% increase**
- **Band D charge: £212.64 per year. This is an £11.56 total increase / monthly increase 96 pence. Overall increase: 5.75%**

https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/document_category/budget-2026-27/

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

10.1 **Civic Medallions**

At the December Council meeting, four nominees were confirmed for Civic Medallion awards having each received all 15 councillors vote - this has been minuted in the December minutes. All have been written to and a date confirmed for the Civic Medallions presentations, Thursday 19 February. Invitations will be sent out to their guests over the coming week.

Are there any other comments?

10.2 **Food Bank: to receive an update on the Food Bank, to confirm Council's ongoing support to the Food Bank and the arrangements to run out of Rickards Hall Tuesday mornings**

The Food Bank is well subscribed, the volunteers are well organised and have signposting services for residents each week; some weeks will be attended by representatives offering support such as West Kent Housing, financial and utility advisers. Council has already noted the increase in the use of the Food Bank and its need to expand the storage facilities having supported space for a second (smaller) shed on Council land. Verbal update to be given at the meeting.

Do Members confirm the continued support to the Food Bank and the arrangements to run out of Rickards Hall Tuesday mornings free of charge; and to continue with the annual review for this?

11 **OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision**

11.1 **To appoint new Internal Auditor**

As reported under the Clerk's report at the December Council meeting, the internal auditor, Keith Robertson had advised that he is retiring and will not be available for end-of-year audit. He will still do the finance training for councillors on 16 February at 5.45pm.

I have approached three potential auditors, two have quoted (see attached).

- Internal Auditor A - Precept below £1m, £75per hour plus VAT plus travel costs. Offer one-year and three-year engagement periods. If you commit to a three-year term, we guarantee that your hourly rate will remain fixed for the full duration of the agreement. Assuming 15 hours for like to like with B £1,125.
- Internal Auditor B - Two in person visits £975 plus VAT and travel expenses. Based on the hourly rate of £65 per hour allows for 15 hours.

It is difficult to compare not knowing the time to allow and how each auditor operates. I would estimate a total of 12-15 hours for two audits and time to write-up the reports.

How do members want to proceed?

📄 Confidential Annex 1 (omitted from public documents):

📄 Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents):

11.2 **Annual Town Meeting - 30 March 2026**

Members are asked to consider the format and presentations for the ATM. So far,

6.30pm: Registration - tea and coffee will available and an opportunity to meet your councillors

7.00pm: Presentations will commence promptly

- Minutes of the last Annual Town Meeting (2025)
- Introductions by Cllr Angela Baker, Chair of Edenbridge Town Council
- Council Report to include highlights from 2025-26; financial report; overview of what's coming for 2026-27

Presentations:

- Update Kent County Councillor - Cllr Robert Mayall
- Update on District matters and the draft Local Plan - Cllr Kevin Maskell, Leader, Sevenoaks District Council
- Local Policing - Kent Police Neighbourhood Beat Team – TBC
- News from Tom Tugendhat MP office - TBC

Other presentations to be considered and confirmed

Local organisations/groups

- Everyone Active
- Bonfire Society

Public Questions

9.00 pm: Light refreshments will be served after the presentations.

Members are asked to consider other presentations for example, Reorganisation and Local Plan although these are likely to be covered under SDC presentation.

12 **Devolution and local government reorganisation**

Following the Government's published plans to reorganise how councils in 'two-tier' areas operate, such as Sevenoaks District and Kent County Council, SDC has submitted its response in November, to support the "three unitary option" consisting of Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale in the north; Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in the west and Ashford, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover and Folkestone and Hythe in the east. KCC supported one unitary authority.

The Government is expected to make a decision on what will happen next in Kent and Medway around April 2026.

The new unitary councils would deliver existing district services such as waste collection and planning and county council services such as education, social services and highways.

Town and parish councils would not be affected, although there is uncertainty with some the transferring of local assets. However, SDC started engaging with local councils early last year. This Council is currently maintaining an open view and monitoring the position, as well as planning for the future with building a new earmarked reserves in the eventuality of possible new service costs and/or assets.

Do Members have any additional comments?

13 **Consultations**

13.1 **Council Plan Consultation - Sevenoaks District Council - closing date 12 January**

SDC is in the process of developing our next Council Plan which will broadly set out our priorities for the next two years. Take the survey - link below.

<https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/newcouncilplan>

13.2 **NHS Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) Patient Survey – West Kent and Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley - closes 2 February 9.00 am**

NHS Kent and Medway would like your help to improve urgent care services for people, this includes Edenbridge and the Minor Injuries unit.

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UrgentTreatmentCentre_Patients_WK_DGS/

14 **Date of next meeting - 09 March 2026**