

Report to full Council and Town Clerk's Report May 2022

General info/updates

Buildings update - Depot: There was a break-in on the 23 March. There was damage to the rear door beyond repair, and several machinery items were stolen. The new security and fire Alarm system for Doggetts Barn and the Depot were installed in April (Council resolution January 2022). The arrangements/procedures with security management company are currently being finalised. CCTV considerations are still under review.

Business rates relief on public toilets: Business tax relief (Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Act 2021) which should give 100% relief from business rates for stand-alone public toilets - response from NALC remains outstanding. However, further research confirms that the public toilets would be considered as ancillary to the car park and therefore it is extremely unlikely the Value Office Agency (VOA) would consider there is a case for separate assessment in terms of rating principles. Business rate relief due to Covid-19 on public halls: SDC has confirmed that Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended), Section 47(8A) of the Act prevents relief to a property that is occupied by a billing authority or precepting authority.

Chairman's Reception: The provisional date for this year's Chairman's Reception is Wednesday 20 July – details will be circulated in due course.

Charities status update: Feedback from the Charities Commission has been sent to the solicitor. The Town Council is the registered proprietor of both the freeholds and the Council as body corporate. The Council manages and maintains both sites.

Churchyard Wall: This has been deferred to 2023. The Diocese Faculty has expired and will need to be reinstated.

Edenbridge Magazine: The May/June edition included a newsletter. The next edition will be in the autumn.

Council's IT File Storage System And To Move To Cloud Based Storage Solutions and dedicated Broadband Line: Council's January meeting approved the move to a dedicated broadband line and new Cloud storage solution. Following a site survey, the order for the new dedicated Broadband line has been placed, and new ethernet connection should be installed and commissioned by 30th June. The IT solutions project requires all staff to review and clear document files and a full IT reorganisation which will be done over the coming months. This is a significant project and amount of work.

Games Club - Cards, Games and puzzles social club for 55+ residents' partnership with Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Involve Kent: This is just over half-way through its 12-week pilot and seems to be going well. There are several regulars, and weekly number average 7-8.

Highways: Main Road Marlpit Hill (Hilders Lane/Hillcrest Road junction): update reported under agenda item 26.1.

Market: The Market continues to grow with new stalls. Some traders are attending monthly, some twice monthly and others weekly. There is now a fish monger, candles and melts, haberdashery, gluten free cupcakes. It is hoped a new Market Officer will be recruited soon.

Public Toilets: Since fitting mortice and key locks, and the opening now Monday to Friday, morning to 3.00 pm, there has been minimal damage/ASB to the toilet block. A hand sanitiser has also been sited outside the toilets.

Recreation Ground playground refurbishment: The planning decision for the zip wire is awaited. Project works have been delayed a week, now started Monday 9 May.

Sevenoaks District Council [Call For Sites 2021](#): SDC is undertaking the site assessment process; as yet it is not known which sites in Edenbridge are being considered.

Skate Park: The additional ramps are now in full use. Feedback has been mostly positive.

Sports Pavilion Windows: It is proving difficult to obtain updated suitable quotes to prepare the public tender document. In view of this, the public tender process may need to be on a recommendation design and install, with a minimum budget guide. It had been hoped to be able to provide an upper guide. CIL funding application would be made once the tender window has closed; Council may need to consider a contribution. (Council November 2021 confirmed to proceed with replacement aluminium windows and doors with shutters).

Waste Bags – price increase: The cost and retail prices for the garden bags have been increased by SDC as of 1 May. Per bag from 62p to 80p; per bundle of 25 bags from £15 to £20. The cost to the Council has increased commensurable. All clear bags and black sacks remain the same. Clear sacks 50p; Black sacks £1.50. This has been published on the Facebook page, and the website updated.

Agreement for the Water Meadows: The Agreement between the GSBT and Council has been confirmed and signed. The Groundstaff undertook some works in April.