**Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held in Rickards Hall on 2 November 2026 at 7:30 pm**

Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge *(Vice-Chairman)*, Angela Baker *(Chairwoman)*, Sarah Compton, Alan Layland, Margot McArthur, Jeff Streets
In attendance: Town Clerk. There were three members of the public, and no press.
19:30 The meeting opened

**1 To Receive Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received, noted, and accepted, from Gemmell Smith, McGregor, Read and Stockdale.

**2 Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**

None.

**3 Public Questions and Statements**

*19:31 The Chair closed the meeting.*

None

*19:31 The Chair reopened the meeting.*

**4 To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 7 September 2026 (pages 2023-149/1-9).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 07 September, and that they be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record, 149/1-9.

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

**5.1 County Councillor**

n the absence of KCC Cllr Robert Mayall, who had submitted his apologies, the Chair referred to his written report.

Cllr Mayall provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation, noting continued uncertainty regarding the Government's proposals, including the potential introduction of a Strategic Mayoral Authority and revised timescales for reorganisation.

He also reported on concerns regarding a fire and accumulated waste on land adjoining Hever Road, which he was pursuing with a District Councillor, and the disruption caused by utility works on the B2026, which he had raised with KCC Highways and understood were nearing completion.

**5.2 District Councillors**

Cllr Morgan's apologies were noted.

Cllr McArthur provided an update on the changes to waste collections, following the move to three separate collections for food waste, recycling and general waste. Overall, the transition had gone well, with recycling levels having increased. However, it was noted that some operational issues remained, which it was hoped would be resolved soon.

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

**6.1 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning and Transport Meetings held on 14 September 2026 (pages 2023-151/1-5) and 5 October 2026 (pages 2023-153/1-1).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 14 September 2026 (pages 2023-151/1-5) and 5 October 2026 (pages 2023-153/1-1).

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**6.2 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 21 September 2026 (pages 2023-152/1-7).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 21 September 2026 (pages 2023-152/1-7).

**6.3 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Buildings & Leases Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2026 (pages 2023-150/1-4).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the the minutes of the Buildings & Leases Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2026 (pages 2023-150/1-4).

**6.4 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Finance and Governance Meeting held on 19 October 2026 (pages 2023-154/1-5).**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes of the Finance and Governance Meeting held on 19 October 2026 (pages 2023-154/1-5).

**7 To receive recommendations from Committees**

**7.1 Finance & Governance Committee - meeting 19 October**

**7.1.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 – External Audit Update**

Members received an update on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 external audit, noting the national delays affecting the completion of audits by Mazars.

It was reported that the AGAR had been submitted within the required timescales. During the audit review, a minor discrepancy of £1,405.08 had been identified in the fixed asset register, arising from a software data error following the transfer of records to the EDGE IT system in 2024/25. This had since been corrected, with a full explanation provided to the External Auditor.

On 23 September 2026, the External Auditor advised that, although relatively small in value, the discrepancy was considered material for the purposes of Box 9 of the AGAR. Following consideration of the available options, the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk/RFO had agreed to proceed without amending the submitted AGAR, recognising that this would result in a qualification in the external audit report.

As the external audit had not been completed by the statutory publication deadline of 30 September 2026, an interim notice explaining the delay had been published on the Council's website and noticeboard, in accordance with the External Auditor's guidance.

Members noted that the matter had also been considered by the Finance & Governance Committee at its October meeting. The Council was awaiting receipt of the signed AGAR and completed external audit report, following which the Notice of Conclusion of Audit would be published as required.

**7.1.2 Introduction of a New Buildings Cost Centre – 2027/28 Budget**

Members considered the proposal to establish a separate Buildings Cost Centre within the Council's financial accounts, to provide greater transparency and clarity in the monitoring and reporting of income and expenditure relating to Council-owned buildings. This was supported recognising that a dedicated cost centre would assist with financial management, budget monitoring and future maintenance planning.

**Resolved:** to approve the establishment of a new Buildings Cost Centre within the Council's financial accounts.

**8 To receive reports and recommendations from the Town Clerk and Officers; Working Groups; and Delegated Reports**

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**8.1 Clerk's report**

The Town Clerk's report was received. Of note:

**Byelaws:** Since preparing the meeting papers, on 30 October, the MHCLG had confirmed that the Secretary of State grants leave for Edenbridge Town Council to make the proposed byelaws.

**Budgets:** The Town Clerk and RFO/Deputy Clerk has started the preparation for the new budgets, this will be presented to the Open Spaces and Open Spaces Committee, with the Finance Committee receiving the full draft budget at its meeting on 23 November.

**Councillor Vacancies:** Members received an update following Council's decision in September to leave the two councillor vacancies unfilled until the May 2027 elections.

The Town Clerk reported that the Planning Committee had subsequently experienced difficulties maintaining a quorum, with one meeting unable to proceed due to insufficient attendance. Members were reminded of the provisions of Standing Order 7 regarding the reconsideration of Council decisions within six months.

The importance of councillors making every effort to attend committee meetings was emphasised to ensure the continued effective operation of Council business. Members were also encouraged to promote opportunities for residents to become involved in the Town Council ahead of the May 2027 elections.

**Cyber Security, Data Management:** This was part of the Council's longer-term protect of enhancements. The Clerk had met with PS Tech, and was awaiting on PS Technology's report, and quote, which would be presented to the next Council meeting.

**Emergency Planning Committee:** The next meeting was scheduled for 7 December, 2.00pm.

**Marsh Green Playground:** The new playground was officially opened on 7 October 2026 and had been well received by local residents and the pre-school.

**NALC Annual Conference 23 June 2027:** It was noted the Town Clerk, RFO/Deputy Clerk, and Cllr Compton had booked to attend the annual conference in London.

**Former War Memorial Hospital Site:** The Town Clerk and Cllrs Baker and Aldridge met with the new landowners and their architect in October to discuss the future of the site and War Memorial. The owners had agreed to allow the annual Remembrance Sunday service to take place at the Memorial and for the Council's Grounds Team to access the site beforehand to tidy the area.

**Station Approach – Parking Charges:** Following the Council's representations to GTR regarding the reintroduction of parking charges, GTR had indicated a willingness to discuss the matter. Further correspondence was being prepared following engagement with Rickards Hall users.

**Spatial Settlement Plan (SSP+):** Following Council's approval to proceed with the SSP+, an initial meeting with the appointed planning consultants had been arranged for early November to discuss the next stages of the project.

**8.2 Communications Officer's report**

Members received the Communications Officer's report covering March to October 2026, highlighting the wide range of communications, publicity and community engagement activities undertaken on behalf of the Council.

The report included the ongoing management of the Council's website and social media, production of the Edenbridge Magazine content and Annual Report, promotion of Council events and consultations, and support for Edenbridge Market and Visit Edenbridge initiatives.

Members particularly noted the national recognition received, including Edenbridge Market winning the NABMA Small Market Team of the Year Award and the Council being recognised by NALC for best practice in social media communications, resulting in an invitation to share its approach with other councils nationally.

Looking ahead, work would include preparations for Edenbridge Market's 800th anniversary in 2027 and supporting the Council's Quality Council Award application.

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Members expressed their appreciation for the considerable breadth and quality of work undertaken by the Communications Officer, recognising her contribution to promoting the Council and engaging with the local community.

**8.3 Remembrance Sunday 8 November**

Members received a brief update on the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday, 8 November 2026, including the morning parade and wreath-laying ceremony, followed by the afternoon Church Service. Members were also reminded of the Armistice Day service on 11 November 2026.

**9 Sevenoaks District Emerging Local Plan - Regulation 19 update**

Members received an update on the Sevenoaks District Emerging Local Plan, following the closure of the Regulation 19 consultation in September 2026.

It was reported that the Town Council had submitted detailed, evidence-based representations addressing the proposed Edenbridge site allocations, strategic planning policies and supporting evidence. These included concerns regarding the disproportionate scale and distribution of development proposed for Edenbridge, highways capacity, transport accessibility and the adequacy and delivery of infrastructure required to support future growth.

The Council's representations had taken a pragmatic approach, recognising the need for an adopted Local Plan and further development, whilst seeking a more proportionate distribution of growth and ensuring that development could be appropriately integrated into the town and supported by the necessary infrastructure.

Members noted that the Council had been assisted by its Planning Consultant, Alan Dyer, and that the representations would form part of the material considered through the Local Plan's independent Examination process.

The Town Council would continue to monitor the progress of the Local Plan, including preparations for the Examination, and consider opportunities to make further representations where appropriate.

The Chair requested that the Council’s thanks to Alan Dyer (consultant) be formally recorded in recognition of his invaluable help and advice in preparing the Council’s Local Plan responses. Thanks were also extended to the Town Clerk, Planning & Administration Officer and Communications Officers for their work and contributions throughout the process.

**10 Forward Planning and Budget Considerations 2027/28**

Members noted that each year, the Forward Planning Steering Group (FPSG) meets to review the Town Council's aspirations, ongoing and proposed projects, and any financial implications which may need to be considered as part of the annual budget-setting and precept process. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances and competing commitments, it had not been possible for the Town Clerk to co-ordinate a meeting of the Steering Group this year.

However, as this was the final year of the current Council term, and the newly elected Council will have the opportunity to review its vision, priorities and aspirations for the following four years, the Town Clerk, in discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chairman, considered it appropriate to review the existing budget provisions and earmarked reserves rather than undertake a wider forward-planning exercise at this stage.

Members considered the Forward Planning and Budget Considerations for 2027/28. It was reported that, as this was the final year of the current Council term, a review of existing budget provisions, earmarked reserves and ongoing commitments had been undertaken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairman, rather than a wider forward-planning exercise. It was also noted that the newly elected Council would have the opportunity to review its vision, priorities and aspirations for the following four years,

Members considered the following proposed budget provisions and earmarked reserve priorities:

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1. Local Plan Professional Fees: £10,000 towards professional representation at the forthcoming Local Plan Examination.
2. Professional Reports: £5,000 towards an earmarked reserve for professional advice and reports.
3. Neighbourhood Plan EMR: Maintain a minimum reserve of £15,000, with consideration of increasing this to £20,000.
4. Buildings EMR: Maintain a minimum reserve of £120,000 for future major repairs and maintenance.
5. Equipment, Tools and Vehicles EMR: Continue annual provision of at least £4,000 towards future vehicle replacements.
6. Local Government Reorganisation and Community Assets EMR: Allocate a further £5,000.
7. Strategic Plan Projects EMR: Allocate a further £10,000 towards future Council projects and priorities.

Members supported the proposed provisions. However, in view of the Council's intention to seek participation in the Local Plan Examination hearings on several site allocations and policies, Members considered that the professional fees provision should be increased from £10,000 to £12,000.

Members also supported increasing the Neighbourhood Plan EMR to £20,000, using available surplus funds from the 2026/27 financial year.

Financial Considerations

Members also noted financial considerations mindful of the continuing cost-of-living pressures affecting residents and businesses, as well as the increasing costs faced by the Town Council itself.

Both the current and previous Councils have worked hard to restore the Council's finances and reserves to a healthy and sustainable position. Maintaining this financial stability should remain a priority, particularly given the uncertainty surrounding future CIL funding available to parish and town councils, and the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation and the establishment of new unitary authorities.

Members noted that its decisions would be presented to the Finance & Governance Committee as part of its draft budget 2027/28 considerations at its meeting on 23 November, and make recommendations to Full Council in December, including the proposed precept requirement.

The proposals outlined above were therefore intended to inform that process, with the final budget and precept decisions remaining subject to Council approval.

**Resolved:** to support the seven proposed budget provisions (listed above and below) and earmarked reserve priorities, and to increase the Local Plan Professional Fees provision to £12,000 (item 1), to inform the Finance & Governance Committee's consideration of the draft 2027/28 budget.

1. Local Plan Professional Fees: £12,000 towards professional representation at the forthcoming Local Plan Examination.
2. Professional Reports: £5,000 towards an earmarked reserve for professional advice and reports.
3. Neighbourhood Plan EMR: Maintain a minimum reserve of £15,000, with consideration of increasing this to £20,000.
4. Buildings EMR: Maintain a minimum reserve of £120,000 for future major repairs and maintenance.
5. Equipment, Tools and Vehicles EMR: Continue annual provision of at least £4,000 towards future vehicle replacements.

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6. Local Government Reorganisation and Community Assets EMR: Allocate a further £5,000.

7. Strategic Plan Projects EMR: Allocate a further £10,000 towards future Council projects and priorities.

**Resolved:** to support increasing the Neighbourhood Plan Earmarked Reserve from £15,000 to £20,000, subject to the availability of surplus funds at the end of the 2026/27 financial year.

Members also noted, the updated Forward Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and the proposed visioning and forward-planning exercise for the incoming Council following the May 2027 elections.

**11 Councillor Training and Strategic Planning – Budget Provision 2027/28**

Members considered the Council's proposed approach to councillor training and strategic planning, particularly in preparation for the May 2027 elections and the commencement of the new Council term.

The proposals included the introduction of an e-learning platform, provision for councillor training and a visioning and strategic planning session for the incoming Council.

Members supported the overall approach, recognising the importance of providing appropriate training and development opportunities for councillors, alongside establishing the priorities and strategic direction of the new Council.

The three proposals and associated financial implications were considered individually under the following agenda items.

**11.1 Breakthrough Communications – Training and Support Subscription**

Members considered the proposal to subscribe to Breakthrough Communications' training and support service, providing access to e-learning resources, guidance and ongoing support on matters including governance, communications and statutory responsibilities.

Members supported the proposal, recognising the benefits of providing accessible and flexible training for councillors and officers, and the potential to reduce the need for separately commissioned training.

**Resolved:** to approve the Breakthrough Communications training and support subscription, with provision of £1,295 to be included in the 2027/28 budget.

**11.2 Councillor Training**

Members considered the proposed councillor training provision for 2027/28, particularly in preparation for the May 2027 elections and the induction and development of the newly elected Council.

Members supported the proposal, recognising the importance of ensuring councillors have access to appropriate training and development opportunities. It was also noted that the Breakthrough Communications subscription would provide a range of e-learning resources, reducing the need for some separately funded training.

**Resolved:** to approve the proposed councillor training budget for 2027/28 of up to £1,500, taking account of the training resources available through the Breakthrough Communications subscription.

**11.3 Strategic Planning and Visioning Session**

Members considered the proposal to arrange a visioning and strategic planning session for the newly elected Council following the May 2027 elections.

Members noted the value of a similar session in September 2023, and supported the proposal, recognising the importance of providing an opportunity for the incoming Council to review its aspirations, establish priorities and consider its strategic direction for the next four-year term.

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**Resolved:** to approve the proposed visioning and strategic planning session for the incoming Council, with the associated costs of up to £1,800 to be included in the 2027/28 budget.

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

**12.1 McMillian Coffee Morning Friday 25 September 2026 - feedback**

Members reflected on the success of the Macmillan Coffee Morning held on 25 September 2026 and expressed their delight at the excellent response from members of the public, with almost £1,000 raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Members particularly welcomed the opportunity to engage with so many residents in an informal and enjoyable setting and expressed their enthusiasm for organising a similar community event in February 2027.

Members **supported** the idea for another event and asked the Town Clerk to check the Hall availability for a Saturday event in February or early March (avoiding the purdah period) to be organised by members.

Members also acknowledged and expressed their appreciation for the considerable time and effort contributed by Debbie Bond, who had supported the organisation and success of the event in a personal capacity, rather than as the Council's Planning and Administration Officer. Thanks were also extended to Games Club volunteer Pat Rayner for her valuable assistance on the day, including preparing and serving refreshments.

**12.2 Remote and hybrid meetings facilities - update**

Members noted that the Town Clerk had met with Ashdown Audio Visual regarding improvements to the meeting facilities at Doggetts Barn and Rickards Hall, including provision for remote and hybrid meetings.

It was noted that the proposals for Rickards Hall required further investigation, particularly regarding acoustic improvements and the installation of suitable sound, microphone and hearing loop systems. A further report would be presented to Council once appropriate solutions had been identified.

One Member expressed concern regarding the delays and emphasised the importance of prioritising suitable sound and meeting facilities at Rickards Hall.

**12.2.1 Meeting Facilities for Doggetts Barn - to approve the expenditure of £2,625.52**

Members considered the proposed improvements to the meeting facilities at Doggetts Barn, including equipment to support remote and hybrid meetings, and which would also connect with the Hearing loop amplifier.

The proposed improvements would provide greater flexibility in how the Council conducts its meetings and presentations. During the past year, there had been several occasions when the Town Clerk or individual Councillors had been unable to attend meetings in person, where the ability to participate remotely would have been beneficial. The display screen would also provide improved facilities for presentations, including those from external organisations and consultants, and enable documents and reports to be shared electronically during meetings, reducing the need for printed copies. Overall, the improvements would provide more practical and accessible meeting facilities for the Council and other users of the meeting room.

The Council had already made financial provision of £1,500 into EMR (from the 2023-24 budget) for meeting room improvements to its sound and meeting room facilities through an existing Earmarked Reserve.

**Resolved:** To approve expenditure of £2,625.52 for the proposed meeting facilities improvements at Doggetts Barn.

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**12.3 Pavilion – Mains water supply project: update and next steps**

Members received an update on the Pavilion mains water supply project, forming the second phase of the Pavilion heating and water improvement works.

It was reported that, following completion of the heating and hot water installation, Intrinsic Facilities Engineering had progressed the design for replacing the existing cold-water supply arrangements. The project had experienced delays while confirmation was sought from SES Water regarding the available water pressure and flow rates.

The revised design provided for a new 32mm mains water connection, a ground-floor cold-water storage tank and modifications to the existing booster pump arrangements. The existing roof-space tanks, previously identified as being in poor condition, would be drained, disinfected, disconnected and left in situ to avoid unnecessary removal costs.

Members noted that Intrinsic had completed the technical specification and that the project was ready to proceed to procurement. An indicative cost assessment would be obtained before competitive quotations were sought, with a formal tender process undertaken if required under the Council's Financial Regulations.

The previously approved SES Water quotation of £10,305 plus VAT remained valid until 31 March 2027, subject to confirmation of the final arrangements. The project would be funded through the existing Pavilion CIL allocation.

**Resolved:** to note the update on the Pavilion mains water supply project and,

1. To approve proceeding with procurement of the remaining works, with Intrinsic Facilities Engineering overseeing the process and obtaining competitive quotations in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, including a formal public tender exercise where required. The outcome and recommendation would be reported back to Council for approval before appointing a contractor.

2. To reconfirm the Council's previous approval (April 2026, Minute 136/8.4.1) to proceed with the SES Water connection works at a cost of £10,305 plus VAT, funded from the Pavilion CIL allocation, subject to confirmation of the final quotation and coordination with the main project works.

**12.4 Planning Committee – Review of Membership**

Members reviewed the membership of the Planning Committee, noting that the Committee had an agreed membership of 12 Councillors, with one vacancy and two existing Members currently unable to attend meetings.

It was reported that a recent meeting had been unable to proceed due to insufficient Members being present to meet the quorum requirements. Given the volume of planning matters being considered, Members recognised the importance of maintaining sufficient active membership to ensure the Committee could operate effectively.

**Resolved:** to appoint Cllr Compton to the Planning Committee, filling the existing vacancy and bringing its membership to 12 Councillors, though it was noted two members currently unable to attend.

**12.5 Edenbridge Food Bank – Lease Agreement**

Members considered the proposed lease agreement with Edenbridge Food Bank for the use of Council-owned land to the rear of the Council offices, where two storage sheds had previously been approved.

It was noted that Council had agreed in 2021 that the arrangements should be formalised through a legal agreement. An existing Council lease had subsequently been adapted for this purpose, avoiding the need to commission an entirely new agreement.

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The proposed lease was for a term of seven years, with provision for a further seven-year term, subject to compliance with the lease obligations and agreement between the parties. The Food Bank had reviewed the proposed lease and confirmed its acceptance of the terms.

**Resolved:** to approve the proposed seven-year lease between Edenbridge Town Council and Edenbridge Food Bank for the use of Council-owned land to the rear of the Council offices. And, to authorise the Town Clerk, Council Chair and one other Councillor to sign the lease on behalf of the Town Council, subject to the execution requirements of the agreement.

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

**13.1 NABMA Annual Conference and Market Team Award ; and to ratify the expenditure of £435**

Members received an update on the Market Officer's attendance at the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) Annual Conference in Harrogate, which had provided valuable opportunities for networking, sharing best practice and exploring ways to support and develop Edenbridge Market.

Members expressed their delight that Edenbridge Town Council had received the NABMA Market Team of the Year Award (Small Markets), recognising the dedication and achievements of the Market Officer and Council Officers in supporting and developing the town's market.

Members congratulated the team on this achievement and welcomed the national recognition received.

**Ratified:** the expenditure of £435, comprising £350 conference expenses and £85 travel costs, for the Market Officer's attendance at the NABMA Annual Conference.

**13.2 Annual Health & Safety Audit – 28 September 2026**

Members received an update on the annual Health & Safety audit undertaken by WorkNest on 28 September 2026. It was reported that, whilst the full written report was awaited, the overall findings were satisfactory, with several matters identified for further consideration and action.

The principal areas highlighted included cracks in pathways within the cemeteries and Stangrove Park, asbestos awareness training for relevant staff, and the need to strengthen procedures to ensure contractors and others undertaking works were made aware of any asbestos-containing materials.

Other matters included Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments, renewal of the electrical safety certificate for Doggetts Barn, which had since been completed, and a vandalised bench in Stangrove Park.

Members noted that officers would review the full report once received and progress the necessary actions, with any associated expenditure considered as part of the 2027/28 budget preparations where appropriate.

**13.3 Rickards Hall - Police Engagement Location**

Members considered a request from the Neighbourhood Policing Team to use Rickards Hall for regular community engagement drop-in sessions, providing residents with an opportunity to meet and speak with their local Beat Officers.

It was noted that the Police proposed to commence monthly sessions from 12 November 2026, initially on a trial basis, with each session lasting approximately one hour.

**Resolved:** to approve the free use of Rickards Hall for monthly Police Engagement drop-in sessions on an initial trial basis, subject to availability and provided that the arrangement did not affect existing bookings or other anticipated income-generating use of the Hall.

**14 Local Government Reorganisation - Update**

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Members received an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), noting the Government's decision in September 2026 to pause the process pending a review of its earlier decisions.

It was reported that the anticipated implementation of new unitary authorities could be delayed from April 2028 to April 2029, with shadow authority elections potentially taking place in May 2028. Elections to Sevenoaks District Council were therefore expected to proceed in May 2027, alongside the Town and Parish Council elections, subject to Government confirmation.

Members noted that further clarification was awaited and that the Town Council would continue to monitor developments, particularly the potential implications for service delivery, community assets and forward planning.

**15 Unpaid invoices over 6-months - outstanding Market Pitch Fees**

Members considered the outstanding debt of £308.40 owed by KTreatz Ltd in respect of unpaid market pitch fees for October to December 2025.

It was reported that, despite repeated requests for payment and several opportunities to settle the account, the debt remained unpaid. At its September meeting, Council had deferred consideration of further recovery action until November, noting KTreatz's stated intention to make payment by 30 September 2026. However, this date had passed without payment being received.

Members also noted that KTreatz had referred a separate matter to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and had indicated that payment would be dependent upon its conclusion, initially advising that this would be by 30 September 2026. To date, no further information regarding the outcome of the ICO matter had been received.

Members noted that the Finance & Governance Committee had considered the outstanding debt at its October meeting and recommended pursuing recovery through the Small Claims Court.

Following discussion, Members acknowledged the additional officer time and administrative costs involved but considered that, given the repeated unsuccessful attempts to secure payment, formal recovery action was now appropriate.

**Resolved:** to proceed with recovery of the outstanding debt of £308.40 from KTreatz Ltd through the Small Claims Court, and to authorise the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Deputy Clerk/RFO, to take the necessary steps.

**16 Consultations**

None.

**17 To receive reports from councillors who have attended meetings of outside bodies**

Cllrs Baker and Layland had attend the Citizens Advice meeting; main concern was the current lease for the Eden Centre with KCC and the potential impact from Reorganisation. It was noted that the Edenbridge and Westerham branch is the smallest in the country.

**18 Press release**

None.

**19 Council Property Matters – To consider and approve expenditure for legal advice relating to existing property arrangements.**

*In view of the confidential nature of agenda item 19, 20 and 21 to be discussed, the agenda included a motion to exclude press and public from the chamber. Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972 s100 and 102.*

*20:30 pm There were no members of the public present.*

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Members considered a confidential report concerning existing property and lease arrangements, including the need for further legal advice to clarify the Council's position and any necessary formal action.

Members supported the recommendations, recognising the importance of ensuring that the existing lease arrangements remain valid and enforceable and that the property continues to be protected for community benefit.

**Resolved:** to note the update regarding the existing property and lease arrangements and to:

- confirm that the immediate priority is to ensure the existing lease remains valid and enforceable, with the correct legal parties identified and any necessary amendments or formal changes undertaken.
- approve an initial budget of up to £2,000 for legal advice and associated preliminary work, with expenditure authorised by the Town Clerk, subject to receipt of a satisfactory fee quotation.
- confirm that any proposals involving a potential change in property ownership, or expenditure exceeding the approved budget, would be brought back to Council for further consideration and approval.

**20 HMRC VAT Review – Confidential Report**

Members considered a confidential report concerning an ongoing HMRC review of the Council's VAT arrangements, including the potential requirement to review historic VAT treatment and partial exemption calculations.

Members noted that officers were progressing the necessary enquiries and that specialist professional advice was being sought. The outcome and any potential financial implications remained unknown at this stage.

**Resolved:** to note the ongoing HMRC review of the Council's VAT arrangements, including the potential requirement to review historic transactions and partial exemption calculations, and to:

- support the appointment of an independent VAT specialist to assist the Council with the review and its response to HMRC, and the expenditure of £2,000 for associated costs.
- authorise the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk/RFO, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council, to progress the review and necessary correspondence with HMRC, seeking specialist advice as required, with any material financial implications or proposed settlement arrangements reported back to Council for consideration.
- note that a further update would be provided once the outcome and potential financial implications were better understood.

**21 Sevenoaks Local Plan - SDC Council Meeting, 1 December 2026**

Members discussed the current position of the Sevenoaks District Emerging Local Plan, including the recent refusal of the planning application for Broke Hill Golf Club, a site included in the Regulation 19 proposals.

Discussion centred on the potential implications of this decision for the overall Local Plan strategy and the proposed development allocations for Edenbridge. Members also considered the importance of the Town Council's representations and its ability to present and defend its position on relevant sites and policies at the forthcoming Local Plan Examination hearings.

Draft Published

Members exchanged views ahead of Sevenoaks District Council's consideration of the Local Plan on 1 December 2026.

**22 Date of Next meeting - 07 December**

Noted.

20:56 The meeting closed.

Draft Published