

**Sevenoaks District**  
**Seniors Action Forum**

***Working together in the interests of people aged 50 plus***

Email: [comms@sdsaf.org.uk](mailto:comms@sdsaf.org.uk)

**Newsletter 35**

**February 2019**

***Chairman's Message***

2019 will be a very important year for Sevenoaks District. Our Local Plan will be ratified by the Planning Inspector and decisions about housing developments will be made that will affect all of us for decades to come. Your Committee is doing what it can to convince our decision makers to focus more on the housing needs of the elderly.

As we become older, our housing needs change and we need warm, secure and conveniently located residences adapted to our personal circumstances. We don't have enough suitable residences in Sevenoaks District to cater for our ageing population and many who would wish to downsize and release their homes for the younger generation don't have anywhere to move to. This needs to be addressed urgently.

Meanwhile, one of the best things we Seniors can do is to look after ourselves and stay fit for as long as we can - good food, good sleep, some exercise, listening to our bodies, dealing with any signs of illness promptly and keeping ourselves cheerful and interested in life. Looking after our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing makes life more fun and rewarding for us. It enables us to continue to support ourselves and to help others for as long as possible. And let's remember to look out for vulnerable people around us and give them support where we can.

Here's to a happy and healthy continuation of the year for all of us.

*Gileen*

**SDSAF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday, 31st May 2019 from 2 - 4.30 pm in the Council Offices of Sevenoaks District Council.

We have been fortunate to attract a range of speakers and refreshments will be provided.

Please save the date and we will give you more details of the programme in the next Newsletter.

## **CONSULTATIONS GALORE**

Like buses, you wait for some time and then they come along all at once. There have recently been opportunities to give views and comment on various Consultations which will have an impact on us all in the future:

- ❖ SDC Draft Local Plan 2015/2035 (ends 3 February)
- ❖ Kent County Council Library Consultation (ended 29 January)
- ❖ BBC Age-Related TV Licence Policy (ends on 12 February)  
If you do not have access to the internet but wish to comment on the proposals about the future of the TV licence you can phone 0800 232 1382 to request paper copies of this document and questionnaire with a free post envelope to take part.
- ❖ Sevenoaks District Council Community Plan 2019 -2023 (closes 1 March)  
SDC are producing a new Community Plan to help improve life in the District by including your priorities for local services. You can have your say either on-line via the following link:  
[https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20026/your\\_community/398/draft\\_community\\_plan\\_priorities\\_2019-2023](https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20026/your_community/398/draft_community_plan_priorities_2019-2023)  
or by ringing the Council to receive a paper copy on 01732 227000 or by writing to Alan Whiting, Community Planning & Projects Officer at Sevenoaks District Council.

It's tempting to think someone else will have submitted the same points that you would make, but given the growing trend of authorities to heed feedback, which has grown in some part out of the use of social media, we would urge everyone with a view on any of these proposals to complete their feedback either on-line or another format, whichever suits you best.

## **SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT LOCAL PLAN**

The Consultation on the Plan ends on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, after which the document, along with residents' comments, will be submitted to the Government's Planning Inspectorate. The decision to approve the Plan (which seems like a fait-accompli) will be taken during a public examination. SDC cannot make any amendments to it but we hope that the public's viewpoints will be noted and taken into consideration and acted upon by the Inspectorate.

The Forum's Action Group will make no comment on individual sites, but will draw attention to the lack of detail or structure on the broader, very important issues which are conspicuously absent from the Plan. We believe the method used to set the target for 14,000 new homes is flawed, and this target is too high and should not have been adopted.

There are many fine words regarding the proper provision of housing for older people and lower paid local residents, but no detail on numbers or how the Council intends to meet these needs. This is seemingly difficult as SDC claim to have no control over the property developers and what type of homes they will actually build.

The Plan also lacks detail about the infrastructure required to support the building programmes and increased population. Whilst the provision of these is controlled by other authorities SDC should have adequately planned for this, as we are now in 2019, with a

Plan which was originally drafted to cover the period 2015-35. It is surely not unreasonable that it should include details of how SDC intends to ensure adequate essential services like healthcare, roads and schools are provided to accompany these additional homes.

Since the preparation of the final Draft Local Plan, SDC have replied to a Ministry of Housing consultation saying that they disagree with the targets set which, in our opinion, should have been done from the outset. We intend to publish our comments on our website [www.sdsaf.org.uk](http://www.sdsaf.org.uk) before the 3<sup>rd</sup> February deadline.

### **A LITTLE LIGHT READING!**

Merilyn Canet, our Vice Chair, wading her way through the weighty appendices of the SDC Draft Local Plan!



### **BUSES UPDATE**

The outcome of the KCC Bus summit conversation held on 30 October has been published on the Kent Media Hub website and is still available as a web cast.

The only new initiative for the SDC area is for a 'pilot' scheme; a new taxi-style service commencing in the summer. The route will run from Fairseat, through Stansted, West Kingsdown, East Hill and terminate at Sevenoaks. Details of fares and timetables have yet to be announced.

We now have the final details of the draft KCC 2019/20 Budget; they show inflationary increases for the main subsidies that concern us and we do not anticipate much change to existing services.

We are grateful for the input received from members, mainly about cuts and amendments to some services, but these issues can only be taken up by the individual bus companies unless they concern subsidised routes. However, help can be obtained from "The campaign for better Transport" who will try and act on your behalf.

We are also having meetings and conversations to try and compile a detailed report on "Just who controls our buses" and how we can act on your behalf. We will report in detail on our website and in summary in our next Newsletter.

### **MATCH OF THE DAY!**

**WALKING FOOTBALL** is becoming increasingly popular for both men and women and is a great, inexpensive way to improve fitness and socialise at the same time.

Sevenoaks Football Club, Mill Lane, Sevenoaks TN14 5BX - Greatness Park Playing Fields, on Mondays (1 – 3 pm, except during school holidays). On the all-weather pitch so not muddy, Free and all welcome. Rules will be explained.

**UK FOOTGOLF** is available for those nearer to Swanley; to book online at Pedham Place Golf Centre, London Road, Swanley BR8 8PP, check out their website: <http://www.ukfootgolf.com/pedham-place/>

### **LOST & FOUND**

If you have been unfortunate enough to have lost something valuable it may have been handed in to the police so you need to note that they can only keep it for a very short time, perhaps a week or so Please do bear this in mind and make enquiries quickly as it won't be kept. Fortunately, there are still honest and kind people who will hand things in.

## COMMENDATIONS FOR GOOD SERVICE

We have been impressed by the messages of praise and appreciation we have received about the following services and people over the course of last year, namely:

- ❖ Age UK Computer assistance
- ❖ KCC Library Reference Service
- ❖ NHS 111
- ❖ MTW Audiology & Hi Kent hearing services
- ❖ NHS Cataract Service
- ❖ Carers First
- ❖ Age UK Pop-In Stability Education
- ❖ Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust PALS
- ❖ Tom Tugendhat, MP for Tonbridge & Malling

*Please let us know of individuals, services or organisations that have impressed you so that we can give them a well-deserved mention*

## Computers, Bogus Callers, Bank Fraudsters, the TV Licence Fee.

The list is endless. As we have said in previous Newsletters, it is so easy to be caught 'on the hop' and get drawn into a conversation with the caller whose number you don't recognise when they are trying to persuade you that your internet will be cut off, or you're having trouble with your modem. The latest, apparently very credible scam is to persuade people there is a problem with the payment of their TV licence and harvesting bank details given.



Banks do not ask for your account details, mother's maiden name or anything else for that matter over the telephone or internet. This all sounds like common sense but bear in mind that the thieves doing this work are expert at it. Please don't be bullied or coerced by them; report their activities to the authorities.

The tragedy in all this is not just the loss of money but the feeling of having been conned and made to feel foolish so please don't let them succeed.

## Age UK Pop-in Events

These take place around the District and offer the opportunity to have a chat and have a free cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. The events in Sevenoaks and surrounding villages have also given participants the opportunity to take part in gentle exercises to help stability and mobility with the encouraging guidance of Sue Larken. Sue's cheerful and welcoming presence has made these events something to look forward to and have really made a difference for many of our members.

At every session there are helpful tips on how to improve their balance, reduce the risk of a fall, strengthen muscles and stay warm and well. We hope that they will continue in the coming year and we are grateful to Age UK, Sevenoaks District Council and various parishes for enabling them to take place.



## HEALTH SERVICES

SDSAF has an active Health Action Group who monitor the proposals and plans of the various decision making bodies in the NHS. As reported in our previous Newsletter, in July 2018 West Kent CCG announced the possibility of building new Health Hubs across the region. One of the sites now being explored is Sevenoaks, and we await further news about the location and services which will be provided there.

The plans for a new Health Centre at Edenbridge are well underway . At the public meeting SDSAF Committee members asked where the health authorities intend to replace the 14 inpatient beds which will be lost and whether proceeds from the sale of the site would be ploughed back into the local health economy. We also highlighted the pressure which GP surgeries are under and their capacity to cope with increased demands.

A consultation is expected in the near future with regard to the establishment of three Hyper Acute Stroke Units at Maidstone, Dartford and the William Harvey hospitals, which could result in the closure of stroke services at other hospitals. There has been some concern that patients will not be seen as quickly due to longer journey times.

With the ever-growing population and reported national shortage of GPs members have drawn our attention to the pressure on GP services and the long waits some are experiencing in getting an appointment which was raised at a recent West Kent CCG Board meeting. If you are experiencing difficulty accessing health service appointments please let us know so that we can bring these matters up with the health authorities.

## TRANSPORT TO HOSPITAL

Transport to hospital and other appointments can be challenging, especially for those who have no access to a car or find using public transport difficult. The following organisations can be contacted and may be able to help:

**G4S Transport** to NHS Hospital appointments for patients with a medical or physical condition which prevents them from using public transport: Tel: 0800 096 0211

**Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport:** Tel. 01732 458931

**Edenbridge Volunteer Transport:** Tel. 01732 865353

**Dial-2-Drive:** £15 annual fee. 60p per mile, min charge £5: Tel. 0300 777 1200

**Tunbridge Wells Community Car Service:** Tel. 01892 511627

**SMILES Volunteer Transport Service** (c/o North West Kent Volunteer Centre). The service covers Sevenoaks District Council's northern parishes which include Swanley. There is an Annual registration charge of £18 per person. Mileage to the volunteers is paid at 45p per mile (payable to the driver). An administration charge of £4 per trip is paid (payable to the driver). Two to three days' notice is required when booking.  
Tel: 01322 294600.

## Age UK Big Knit

**What is the Big Knit?** The Big Knit is the campaign which Age UK runs in partnership with Innocent drinks. Knitters produce little woolly hats which then go on to their smoothies. For every smoothie sold Age UK receives 25p. If you are interested in helping Age UK reach its target please contact Liz Bew at Age UK Sevenoaks Office on **01732 454108** or via her email [liz@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk](mailto:liz@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk)

## Put on your dancing shoes! . . .Strictly for All

In cooperation with the RVS and their 'First time for everything' Programme, we are planning a Tea Dance at the Plaza Suite in The Stag, Sevenoaks, on the afternoon of **Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> June.**

The event is kindly funded by Prudential as a way of encouraging Seniors to take more exercise.

All levels are welcome – even if you feel you have two left feet do come along and have a go!

There will be tea and refreshments so please save the date and we will let you have more details in due course.

## By the way . . .

The newsletter is available in large print; please let us know if you would prefer to receive a large print version.

### SDSAF Committee Contacts:

Chairman	Eileen Murray Giles	Chair@sdsaf.org.uk	
Vice Chair	Merilyn Canet	merilyncanet@talktalk.net	01732 461397
Secretary	Margaret Parker	comms@sdsaf.org.uk	
Treasurer	Brian Gasson	briangasson36@gmail.com	
Membership	Roger Bryan	roger.bryan@me.com	07470 201703
	Frank McConnell	comms@sdsaf.org.uk	
	Alan Dixon	comms@sdsaf.org.uk	
	Jean Bentley	comms@sdsaf.org.uk	
	Chris Stewart	comms@sdsaf.org.uk	
Newsletter Editor	an opportunity exists		

Write to us c/o Roger Bryan, 10 Greenside, Swanley, BR8 7ER

SDSAF website: [www.sdsaf.org.uk](http://www.sdsaf.org.uk)

Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum appreciates the continuous support provided by:

