

**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)

**Please join with us to celebrate Silver Thursday at our**



**Coffee Morning**



**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 10.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.  
in the Plaza Suite at The Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks**

**Coffee, tea & entry are free of charge  
All are welcome**

*We are grateful to the following organisations who will be joining us to give advice and information:*

Age UK, Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

Citizens Advice

Compaid

'Pop Up Sue' on Strength & Stability

Kent Police regarding Scams

SDC Community Safety Team

U3A

You will also have a chance to meet  
Cllr. Diana Esler, District Council Chairman and  
Cllr. Marilyn Canet, Mayor of Sevenoaks Town,  
who will be welcoming you to this event

**The Coffee Morning will be followed by the Forum's AGM commencing at 1 p.m. with a sandwich lunch. The AGM presentations and business will commence at 1.45 p.m.**

Guest speakers will be: Kent County Cllr. David Brazier

Ceri Hodgkiss, West Kent Mind

**RSVP (for catering purposes) : 07707 757201  
or email [comms@sdsaf.org.uk](mailto:comms@sdsaf.org.uk)**

## Message from the Chair

Tennis fans amongst us were thrilled to see Emma Raducanu, a local teenager, sweep up the US Open trophy. What a joy it was to see such fearless talent and to celebrate the skill, speed and achievement of one so young. We were reminded that the generation coming behind us gives us much to be hopeful about. At the other end of the scale, let us remember how wise, resilient and resourceful our seniors are. Many have made substantial achievements in their earlier years and continue to contribute generously to the wellbeing of families and communities.

Each year, at the beginning of October, Silver Week gives us the chance to celebrate the Seniors in our District and to acknowledge the qualities that older people bring to our Society. Please come along to our Silver Coffee Morning on 7 October at the Stag Theatre's Plaza Suite. There will be information stalls, free refreshments and a warm welcome for you and a guest of any age. It will be a great opportunity to get out and about in a safe environment.

Our Annual General Meeting will follow at the same venue and there will be a free sandwich lunch for those members who would like to attend (please see the agenda below). Our speakers, Cllr. David Brazier, Cabinet Member from KCC will talk about transport and Ceri Hodgkiss from West Kent Mind will give us practical tips on how to support family and friends with mental health issues. **RSVP (for catering purposes) : 07707 757201, or email [comms@sdsaf.org.uk](mailto:comms@sdsaf.org.uk)**

There will be Silver walks throughout the week in partnership with Every Step Counts - the wonderful organisation that helps to improve lives through walking and talking. Do come on one of the walks to experience the fun and camaraderie. You may want to continue every week afterwards and would be most welcome.

Our Forum is always looking for volunteers either to come onto our Committee or to take part in specific projects and campaigns run by our Health, Transport, Communications and Housing Action Groups, and as our world opens up again we will need more of us to help with our social activities too. There is always something rewarding to do and there is no pressure to do any more than you feel comfortable with. Do make contact with any member of our committee to offer your services. You will be guaranteed a warm and grateful reception.

*Eileen Murray Giles*

### Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum

Annual General Meeting 2021 will be held on  
Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> October, commencing at 1 pm  
in The Plaza Suite, The Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks

#### A G E N D A

- 1.45 pm Presentations by Cllr. David Brazier, KCC Cabinet Member,  
Highways & Transport
- Ceri Hodgkiss, West Kent Mind  
Mental Health Support
- 2.30 p.m. Approval of Minutes of 2020 AGM  
Chair's Report  
Presentation of 2020 Financial Accounts  
Treasurer's Report  
Secretary's Report  
Proposals & Election of new Management Committee

## Dates for your Diary

### Age UK Pop Ins

Would you like help to improve your mobility and strength? Have you had a fall or are you worried about your balance? Why not meet others, learn useful health tips with exercises to keep yourself strong and mobile at one of the following friendly, safe venues?

**Chiddingstone Causeway Hall (TN11 8JS):** Alternate Mondays (10.45am-12.15pm):  
11th & 25th October, 8th & 22nd November, 6th & 20th December

**Cowden Village Hall (TN8 7HU):** Alternate Thursdays (10am-12pm):  
14th & 28th October, 11th & 25th November, 9th & 23rd December

**Classes are £3.50 a session (includes a cup of tea/coffee) and are run by our fully qualified, specialist instructors Sue or Judy. For more information: contact Sue on 07867648667 or email: [suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk](mailto:suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk)**

**Dunton Green Pavilion:** 2nd Wednesday of the month 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

There is also a 'virtual' class **via Zoom every Wednesday 10:30 - 11:30** which is £5 a session the sessions are paid for at the end of each month (just pay as you go). For more details of how to access this please email [suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk](mailto:suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk)

### Monthly Forget-Me-Not Cafes

Providing support and companionship to those in the Sevenoaks area who are recognising issues with their memory or cognition as well as their carers, family and friends.

#### Sevenoaks

When: 1st Friday of the month

Time: 10.30am-12.00pm

Where: The Hayloft, National Trust Knole, Sevenoaks, TN13 1HU

#### Westerham

When: 3rd Friday of the month

Time: 11am-12.30pm

Where: The Congregational Church, Fullers Hill, Westerham, TN16 1AB

People can find out more at [www.forgetmenotcafe.org.uk](http://www.forgetmenotcafe.org.uk) for venue and timings where there is a contact page for communication. You can also call 07946 534476 or 07580 601182 or email [forgetmenot.sadfc@gmail.com](mailto:forgetmenot.sadfc@gmail.com)

**Sevenoaks Philharmonic Choir** was 123 years old – then along came Covid and put paid to normal activities for 18 months. The choir struggled through as a group and lost some members along the way. But they had a cautious return to live rehearsals on Tuesday 7 September and are preparing for their first concert in two years on Saturday 27 November.

As part of rebuilding the choir they are keen to recruit new members to sing with them. Maybe you haven't sung since the school choir or maybe your own choir has folded because of Covid.

The Choir has a Facebook page:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=198612355609394&id=100063818919642](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=198612355609394&id=100063818919642)

and if you want any more information you can call John Lerner, Chair, Sevenoaks Philharmonic Choir on 07802 335585.

## Silver Week Walks (and every week)



DAY	TIME	MEETING POINT	
Monday	11am	Eynsford	From the Riverside Tea Room (Eynsford) DA4 OAE
Tuesday	10am	Riverhead	From Tesco main entrance door TN13 2QS
Tuesday	11am	Chiddingstone	From the Castle Inn in Chiddingstone TN8 7AH
Wednesday	10am	Oxford	From the Oxford Recreation Ground TN14 5PH
Wednesday	10:30am	West Kingsdown	From the West Kingsdown Pavilion TN15 6ES
Thursday	10am	Chevening/Chipstead	From The Bricklayers Arms in Chevening TN13 2RZ
Thursday	10am	Swanley	From the Café in Swanley Park BR8 7PW
Thursday	2pm	Sevenoaks Greatness	From the recreation ground in Greatness TN14 5BX
Friday	10.30am	Kemsing	From the Kemsing Village Hall car park TN15 6NB

Please feel free to join as many of these free walks as you wish. You will be made to feel very welcome. Walks take place every week. If you require further details please email [everystepcounts17@talktalk.net](mailto:everystepcounts17@talktalk.net)

## SDC Housing Needs Survey for Older People

Sevenoaks District Council wants to hear from residents aged 60 and over about the suitability of their current homes and the sort of homes they may need in later life. The Council is working with market research experts arc4 to run a short survey to help them understand how they can help older people to live independently in their current homes, as well as the type and location of new homes needed in the coming years. Once they have this information, they can work to provide the right help and the right homes in the right places. The survey should take no more than five minutes.

As a small thank you for your time, you can enter a free prize draw to win one of five £50 Marks and Spencer vouchers once you've finished the survey. If you have difficulty filling in this survey, please call **0800 612 9133** and arc4 would be happy to complete the survey with you over the phone.

[Take part in the survey](#)

**The survey is open until 10 pm on 28 September 2021.**

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

**For members who are not On Line:** Please telephone the number given above to answer the survey questions so that your opinions are not excluded.

## Driving Licence Renewal Process

If you have a driving licence, in common with other members who are reaching their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, the DVLA will be sending you a letter requesting you to renew your driving licence. People are given two options: submitting an application on paper or doing it on line. We can report back that one of our members recently chose to do it on line and was amazed to receive their new driving licence in the post within a few days of submitting their application.

A couple of tips which we would like to pass on are as follows. Your driving licence number includes a two digit suffix which should be ignored when entering the number, but there is no warning on the system that these should be ignored. Also it is not clear that if you already have a licence with your photo on it you generally do not need to get a new photo or link your application to your passport.

## Be Aware - Unleaded Petrol Changes – E5 & E10

The days of being urged to ‘Put a Tiger in your Tank’ or to ‘Keep Going well – Keep Going Shell’ are far behind us, and owners of older cars are faced with another change. It is vital that if you own a vehicle which was registered before 2011 you check that Unleaded E10 petrol will not harm it. This fuel contains a higher percentage of ethanol and could damage older engines.



The difference is that E5 unleaded petrol previously on sale had 5% ethanol content whereas E10 has 10% ethanol content. The Government has a website on which you can check if your vehicle is able to be powered by E10 on the following website: [gov.uk/E10checker](http://gov.uk/E10checker).



**If your car is incompatible, you will have to use super grade E5 unleaded instead.**

## PRAISE

- All the acts of kindness in our community that go unacknowledged
- The truck drivers who deliver our goods and who have had many demands made on their patience
- All the walk leaders who are helping to get our Seniors out and moving again
- Arts without Boundaries - a creative charity developing positive perceptions about disability within our community
- All those who have helped us to laugh and to see the humorous side of difficult times

## HEALTH

### Sevenoaks Urgent Treatment Centre

West Kent Primary Care was awarded the contract to provide the GP element of the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) at Sevenoaks Hospital. There are three UTCs across West Kent, with the remaining two located within Maidstone Hospital and Tunbridge Wells Hospital. West Kent Primary Care works with a group of 15 local GPs to cover the UTC rota. The UTC is open 8am-8pm 7 days a week 365 days a year. The UTC offers urgent same day appointments with a GP. Patients can ‘walk in’ to request an appointment or book via NHS 111. Patients booked via NHS 111 will be prioritised over walk ins.

## FINANCE

### Contactless Debit Card Limit Rising

It is proposed that the limit for paying with a ‘contactless card’ is to be raised to £100. To some folk this may seem a trivial sum but to those on a low pension the thought of losing £100 in the event that the card is stolen or lost must be very worrying. Therefore there will be an even greater need to keep your card in a safe and secure place to prevent anyone else going on a spending spree with it.

## **BUS SERVICES UPDATE**

In response to members' questions about the decline in bus services in the Sevenoaks area, in July's Newsletter we stated some of the reasons why, and what was planned to improve them. Since that time KCC have published some initial findings from their questionnaire on the future of buses and the majority of responses showed that people want "more frequent services that run for longer each day and at weekends"- the main thing that the Government pledged to do in their various statements since February 2020. £5 billion has been planned for this purpose.

We have examined this, and even though it sounds like a lot of money, we do not believe this objective will be met. We have written to the Department of Transport and our M.P. Laura Trott seeking further explanation, asking for details of how this funding will be allocated to KCC/SDC. Laura Trott has informed us that this has not yet been decided upon, even though the new plans are due to be implemented by April 2022.

Of the £5 billion some £2 billion has been earmarked for improvements to cycling and walking. This leaves £3 billion over a 5 year period for buses. If this is allocated proportional to population, then Sevenoaks would get about £ 700,000 a year. Austin Blackburn, Managing Director of GO has told us that they need an income of £350 a day to run a bus, about £120,000 a year. That won't pay the way for the number of buses needed for these "ideal" planned improvements, unless there is a massive and immediate improvement in passenger numbers. We await a reply from our letters to Government.

Meanwhile there has been some minor improvements to bus services on the Westerham and Kemsing routes and a visible increase in the use of the new bookable taxi style buses. It could well be that an extension of hours and days of use for bookable bus services may be the main solution to meeting the KCC objective of providing "Affordable, acceptable and connected transport for all, to jobs, education, health and other services". There is currently no obligation on KCC to provide concessionary fares on these services, even though they do, albeit in a small way. This may be one of the proposals for the bus improvement plans to be submitted by the end of October. What do you as members think?

At our AGM on 7<sup>th</sup> October Kent County Councillor, David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport will be one of our speakers, when we expect he will outline the proposals that KCC will be making for an Enhanced partnership between Local Authorities and the bus operators. This has to be submitted by the end of October 2021 for implementation by April 2022. There will be an opportunity to ask questions there

## **TELEPHONE LANDLINES: What's changing and when?**

The technology we currently use to make calls on landlines, called 'analogue', is being replaced with an internet-based version, called an 'IP network'. Landlines will still exist, and you can still have a phone line in your home - but the system that underpins it will be different. **The changeover needs to happen by December 2025**, as this is when the old technology will stop working. Phone providers have already started work on switching over the network, but you don't need to do anything until they get in touch with you.

### **Why are these changes happening?**

- The equipment that makes the current landline network run isn't fit for the future and needs to be upgraded. The new system will use the internet to make phone calls.
- Phone and broadband companies are leading this change. The Government and Ofcom (the communications regulator) are supporting it.
- **Will my landline phone be affected?**
- Everyone who has a landline will move over to the new system. You don't need to do anything yet - your phone company will get in touch with you.
- For lots of people, the change will be as simple as plugging their phone into their broadband router.
- **Will I need a new phone or phone number?**
- If your phone handset is very old, you might need to change it. Your phone provider will be able to advise you. In most cases you'll be able to keep your current phone number.

- **Will anything else be affected, like my telecare?**
- Things that currently use the landline network - like telecare, personal alarms, burglar alarms and fax machines - will be affected by the change.
- If your device is relatively modern, it should still work fine - but older devices may need to be reconfigured or replaced.

### **What if I don't have, or don't want, the internet at home?**

- Because the new system runs off the internet, you won't be able to make calls without an internet connection at home.
- If you already have broadband, you can use that. If not and you don't want a high-speed internet connection, you should be given the option to use a simple internet connection just for making calls.

### **Will I have to pay more?**

- BT, which provides the majority of landlines, have committed to not raising prices above inflation for 'voice only' customers – those who don't have home broadband. This commitment is for at least the next 5 years and will mean that whatever technology your landline uses, the old system or the new, your bill should not rise significantly.
- This means that you shouldn't face extra costs if you need a new simple internet connection to make calls.

### **Is it true that I won't be able to make phone calls if there's a power cut?**

- Because the new system will work off your home electricity, if there's a power cut it'll mean you can't make phone calls. In these instances, phone companies are advising that you should use a mobile phone as a backup.
- If you don't have a mobile, live somewhere where there's no signal or a poor signal, or depend on your landline, for example because you're disabled, your home phone provider should offer you a solution like a battery-operated handset. This will mean that you can make emergency calls during a power cut.

### **Is there anything I should watch out for?**

As the switchover is affecting millions of homes, this can create an opportunity for criminals to develop new scams. These could be over the phone, via email, or at your doorstep. Remember the key advice when someone is contacting you about the switchover:

- **STOP** – Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **CHALLENGE** – Could it be fake? It is ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush you.
- **PROTECT** – Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to [Action Fraud](https://www.actionfraud.org.uk) 0300 123 2040

Other unscrupulous people may also try to sell you equipment or get you to sign up to expensive contracts that you don't need. Don't rush into any decisions, seek a second opinion, and speak to your phone company who will be able to advise you about what you need.

*We are grateful to Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge for supplying us with this information.*

## **Household Waste Recycling Centres Consultation**

Kent County Council (KCC) is currently consulting on the future use of a booking system for customers to access their Household Waste Recycling Centres (sometimes known as the 'tip'). Feedback since they started using the booking system suggests that many customers have found it convenient and useful but that some would still prefer to just "turn up and go". KCC are considering keeping the booking system on a permanent basis, but before this is considered by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee they want to hear the views of Kent residents and other stakeholders. This consultation closes on Thursday 30 September 2021. You can visit their webpage on the following link: [visit our webpage](#) to find out more and participate in this consultation. **You can also request a paper copy of the Consultation by phoning KCC on 03000 41 73 73.**

## Savoury Cheese Pie - a wartime treat for supper

8 slices white bread  
4 oz grated cheddar cheese, a little more if ration book allows  
2 eggs, beaten  
2 fluid oz milk  
Salt and pepper to season

Grease a medium size baking dish and preheat oven to 180C/ 350F / Gas 4  
Cut each slice of bread into 4 triangles and arrange in baking dish sprinkling grated cheese between each layer. Beat eggs and milk together and season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour the egg mixture over the bread and bake in the oven for around 30 minutes until the custard has set. Serve hot with baked beans



## Digital Bank Branches

We were recently informed that the Sevenoaks Branch of HSBC will be transformed into a Digital Branch in October 2021. This means that there will no longer be cashiers behind counters to receive and dispense cash. Members of your Committee met (virtually) with the Director of HSBC who is in charge of the Sevenoaks Branch and he kindly explained what changes were proposed and answered our probing questions. During this exchange we highlighted the need for help to be given to any customers who require assistance to use the new facilities and were given an assurance that this would be provided. We will be interested to hear from any of our members who have HSBC accounts what they think of the new digital branch when it has opened.

We have in the past highlighted the trend of bank closures, under the cover of Covid. Given that Sevenoaks Town is a busy and thriving centre we are filled with a certain amount of dread with regard to the plans for smaller towns and villages. We are all being urged to think local and consider the environment but that is hard to adopt when many services and amenities are being centralised.

## Every day a New Scam

Following reports in the local press Kent residents are being warned to be careful when receiving emails, letters or texts saying they have won the **People's Postcode Lottery**. What happens is that you receive a communication from People's Postcode Lottery. They say you have won a large sum of cash. You need to contact a non-existent company and send personal details or payment to claim the prize. This is a SCAM - do not give personal or financial details. Criminals will use letterheaded paper to try and trick you. If you are unsure about anything you receive from People's Postcode Lottery, contact them on 0808 109 8765 or [info@postcodelottery.co.uk](mailto:info@postcodelottery.co.uk). Report scam letters to Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133 or [visit the website](#). **People's Postcode Lottery** advises legitimate lotteries will never ask you to pay anything to receive your winnings or to keep your winnings a secret. If you haven't bought a ticket, you can't be a winner. If you have entered a competition, you can only win the prize which has been advertised.

## FORUM CONTACT DETAILS

To contact the Forum Committee email Eileen Murray Giles at : [chair@sdsaf.org.uk](mailto:chair@sdsaf.org.uk)  
or write to us "Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum" 22 Lambarde Road, TN13 3HT  
SDSAF Website: [www.sdsaf.org.uk](http://www.sdsaf.org.uk)

**If you would like to receive the Newsletter in large print please let us know**