

inshape

The newsletter of Sevenoaks District Council

ISSUE 87 **Autumn 2013**



Working together to keep you safe

Meet the team behind the CSU



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- Home Protection Plan

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- Post-death variations to wills
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Keeping Sevenoaks District Safe

In this issue of In Shape we take a closer look at the District's Community Safety Partnership and its work to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and to reduce the fear of crime in our District.

The Partnership consists of Sevenoaks District Council, Kent Police, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Kent County Council, housing associations, charities and many other organisations that work together to help reduce crime.

Sevenoaks District is one of the safest Districts anywhere in the UK and the Partnership remains committed to keeping it safe.

Throughout this issue we have given just a few examples of the Partnership's work from the dozens of projects and initiatives that it's involved in to improve community safety.



On call with CSU: Sevenoaks

One of the Partnership's most effective tools to help keep the District safe is the Community Safety Unit or CSU.



Based in the Council's Sevenoaks Offices, the Unit focuses on anti-social behaviour, repeat victims and community safety issues.

The CSU is made up of Council staff, Police, KCC Wardens, representatives from housing associations and the District Business Crime Reduction Partnership.

Crucially it meets on a daily basis to act on the latest reports of problems from the community. This ensures action is taken as soon as possible and that partners' resources are co-ordinated in the most effective way and residents are updated on actions taken.

Residents can play a key role by notifying the Unit of anti-social behaviour and community safety concerns such as rogue traders, fly tipping and graffiti so that these can be tackled at the earliest opportunity.

Any information supplied is shared with other agencies so it can be reviewed and the best course of action decided

upon. Personal information is treated in confidence, unless permission is given to share it.

Community Safety Manager, Kelly Webb, urges local people to contact the Unit should they experience problems: "Residents and businesses should get in touch with the Community Safety Unit to report anti-social behaviour and community safety concerns. We then work with them to reduce issues within the local community and the District overall."

Some of the initiatives run are co-ordinating Community Payback Service, delivering community anti-speeding initiatives, implementing cold calling zones and organising PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings in response to local issues and concerns.

To report any community safety issues call the Community Safety Unit on 01732 227000, e-mail community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk or visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/crimeprevention

Improved service for disabled residents

Disabled residents who apply for grants to adapt their homes will experience an enhanced service after we took the service in-house earlier this year.

The change is allowing us to focus on increasing the speed at which adaptations are completed while providing a more cost effective service. And, as our staff are directly involved in each case, we are using this as an opportunity to see if our clients are entitled to additional help to improve their living conditions.

Disabled Facility Grants provide essential adaptations to give disabled people a safer and more accessible home. Typically they fund:

- Stair lifts
- Replacing a bath with a flush floor shower, commonly called a wet room
- Improved access into and around the home and garden

Qualifying criteria applies and each application has to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist to confirm that the adaptations are necessary.



Our in-house service can respond quickly where clients' needs are urgent and help people return to their own home quickly from hospital by undertaking urgent adaptations.

Under the new arrangements clients can choose to use a private Occupational Therapist, instead of one provided by Social Services, if this is quicker.

At the same time, we recognise that people who need adaptations may benefit from additional advice and support. We can provide information

on a range of options which includes benefit advice, energy efficiency, retraining, getting back to work and starting a business.

Even if we are unable to financially assist a client we will still look to see if any other organisations or charities can be of assistance.

For further advice about home adaptations, please contact our Housing Advice and Standards Team on 01732 227000 or e-mail housing@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Greater protection for mobile home owners

A new Mobile Homes Act, passed earlier this year, gives more rights and protection to people who live in their own home on a mobile home site.

The new law affects the relationship between site owners and park home residents. The major changes are:

- Park owners must give 28 days notice in writing, using the standard 'Pitch Fee Review Form', when they intend to increase their pitch fees. If an agreement can't be reached, the site owner can apply to a tribunal for a decision.
- Previously, site owners could decide who could buy and own a mobile home on their site. Now mobile home owners do not need the site owner's approval to sell their home. However, if you bought or were gifted your home before 26 May 2013, you'll need to tell the site owner who your buyer is.
- Any site rules that interfere with the sale or gift of a home are now banned.



For further information, call the Leasehold Advisory Service on 020 7383 9800 or our Housing Advice and Standards Team on 01732 227000. Alternatively visit www.gov.uk/park-mobile-homes

Launch goes to plan

During May, we launched the Sevenoaks District Community Plan in Swanley with an exciting family fun day complete with dozens of events and activities.

Even the heavy rain didn't dampen spirits as local people enthusiastically tried their hand at everything on offer.

The District's Community Plan sets out an ambitious vision to improve the quality of life for everyone in the District. It is being delivered by many local public sector organisations together with representatives from the voluntary, community and faith sector.

Our family fun day gave practical tasters of the initiatives and actions in the Plan that aim to make our District safer, give children a better start, support people to lead independent lives, improve our environment, health and economy and enable people to live and travel more easily.

Activities were run for children and adults alike and included a giant Camelot bouncy castle, football skills workshops, bike stunt display, skate jam and portable mountain bike track, dance and build-a-rocket competitions, face painting and free fitness taster sessions.

The Community Plan's priorities came about following extensive consultation with local people when they told us what is important to them.

It runs for 15 years, during which the action plan will be reviewed every three years to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of local people.

For more information about the community plan visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/communityplan



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Photos

1. Cllrs Tony Searles and Peter Fleming, Leader of the Council, and Kulwant Jheeta at the Adult Education stand
2. A youngster tries her hand at arts and craft
3. Another young person proudly shows off her latest creation, a face mask
4. Young people help the environment by making bird feeders
5. Council Chairman, Cllr Alan Pett, tests a thermal imaging camera, which is usually used to detect heat loss in the home
6. Taking Paralympic bikes for a spin

The Wynn-ing team

The volunteering bug has well and truly bitten Halstead residents Carol and David Wynn, who have been hard at work continuing the local Olympic and Paralympic Games legacy in style.

The Wynns volunteered as stewards at both the Olympic Torch Relay and the Paralympic Games Road Cycling in the District, and were quick off the mark taking advantage of the event specific training we offered.

David, a retired officer with the RAF, and Carol, who heads up the fundraising department of a local charity, have since been busy volunteering as spectator safety stewards, marshalling races at Brands Hatch and even the British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

Last summer, the eyes of the World were firmly fixed on the District when 25,000 spectators watched the Olympic Torch Relay go through Seal, Sevenoaks and Riverhead, and when the Paralympic Games Road Cycling races took place in Brands Hatch and the surrounding roads in West Kingsdown.

We were given responsibility for stewarding spectators on the public roads for both events. But with thousands of spectators in attendance, we needed the help of the community to ensure they'd run smoothly.

This was an opportunity not only to run safe events, but to lay the foundations for an Olympic legacy by training dozens of local volunteers, giving them the skills and knowledge to steward future events.

The Wynns, who have a long history of volunteering and hold NVQ Level Three in Spectator Safety, were amongst those who received Council Spectator Safety training. Since then they've have made an Olympic effort to continue with their volunteering, as have other stewards at many other local events over the last year.

We have now enabled 11 of the volunteer stewards to complete an NVQ



Level Two in Spectator Safety. A further 20 are waiting for the next training programme to start.

Carol told In Shape about their volunteering efforts: "My husband and I have definitely got the volunteering bug, and we'd like to thank Sevenoaks District Council for giving us the opportunity to volunteer at both events.

"We have been involved with sport for most of our lives. Much of the sport in this country could not take place without help at all levels from thousands of dedicated volunteers. We decided to give

something back and have volunteered in athletics and rugby since the late 1970s. We still volunteer regularly at Twickenham as Honorary Stewards.

"We welcomed the opportunity to be part of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sevenoaks District and it has now opened the door to volunteering at Brands Hatch and Silverstone for Motor Sport – a whole new experience! It is also great that others are being encouraged to continue their volunteering and gain a qualification as part of the 2012 legacy".

‘You Can Leave Your Cap On’ and recycle more!

You can now recycle your aluminium screw cap tops from glass bottles, such as wine, spirits and olive oil, by simply screwing them back on to the bottles before you recycle them.

The market for aluminium bottle tops is growing rapidly, particularly for wine bottles, and thanks to modern recycling techniques they can be removed from the bottle ready to be re-melted and re-used.

Once you’ve finished with your glass bottle, simply screw the top back on to your empty and bring it to one of our bottle banks located at 50 recycling sites throughout the Sevenoaks District.

The initiative is the first of its kind in the UK and is being launched in partnership with Alupro (the Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation) and British Glass. It highlights the importance of recycling the aluminium, so every screw top and bottle deposited in a bottle bank can



be transformed into something new, including more bottles, drink cans, mobile phones and even cars!

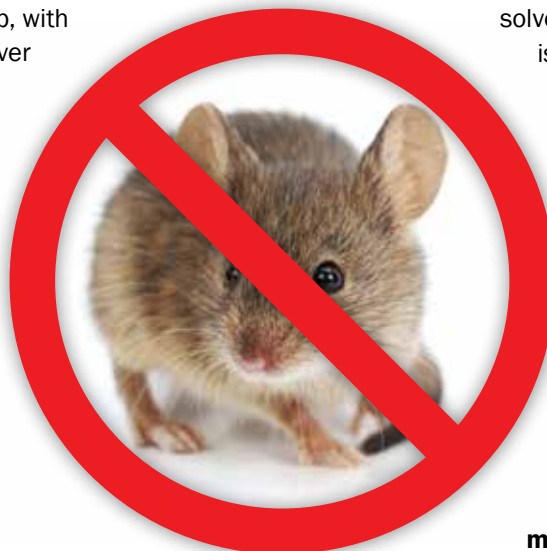
For details of your local recycling bank visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/recycling.

Mice and easy – autumnal pest control advice

Autumn means the harvest season, and the harvest season often means more rodents. So what can be done if unwelcome long-tailed guests begin running amok around your home or business?

As ever, John Felgate from our Pest Control Team is here to help, with good advice coming from over 30 years of experience.

“The first thing to do is to identify that the unwelcome guest is definitely what you think it is! Seems obvious, but it’s important that you know what the pest is. If you then choose to take the DIY method to deal with it, be very wary. There are strict guidelines regarding the use of both traps and poisons, and at no point should non-target species ever be at risk.”



Our Pest Control Team is always on hand to solve this seasonal issue. Their experience is vast, and their skills beyond doubt.

And unlike many other pest control providers, our prices are fully inclusive of enough visits to rid you of your pest problems.

For a no-obligation quote, call us on 01732 227000 or e-mail direct.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk

If you claim certain means-tested benefits you may qualify for a discount.

Life saving equipment installed in the District

Residents can feel safer with the installation of defibrillators outside our Argyle Road offices in Sevenoaks and our Dunbrik Depot in Sundridge.

The two Public Access Defibrillators - more commonly known as PADs - are available for anyone to use in the event of a cardiac arrest emergency.

We've invested in the equipment to support a campaign run by South East Coast Ambulance to promote and install defibrillators in as many locations as possible across the South East.

As well as providing the defibrillators, we have also arranged for 70 people to be trained in their use, alongside learning basic skills in first aid and CPR. However, training is not necessary to use the life saving devices. Anyone who needs to use the defibrillators can as they are fully automated with voice control instructions.




Cllr Roddy Hogarth with Steve Plater from the Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum and Michael Whitcombe who provided first aid training

Cllr Roddy Hogarth, our Cabinet Member for health comments: "Evidence clearly shows that early defibrillation alongside CPR can significantly increase the survival rates of patients suffering a cardiac arrest. This is why I am thrilled to see defibrillators installed at our offices in Sevenoaks and Sundridge. We are now working with the Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum to install defibrillators at hot spots across the District."

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Cllr Jenny Dibsall

It is with great sadness that the Council has announced the passing of Cllr Jenny Dibsall.

Jenny lost her fight against cancer on Friday 28 June. Her death was a great shock to everyone at the Council.

Jenny was elected to the Council in March 2012 representing the Crockenhill & Well Hill ward.

A by-election for the Crockenhill & Well Hill seat will take place on Thursday 26 September.

David steers health in right direction with Why Weight

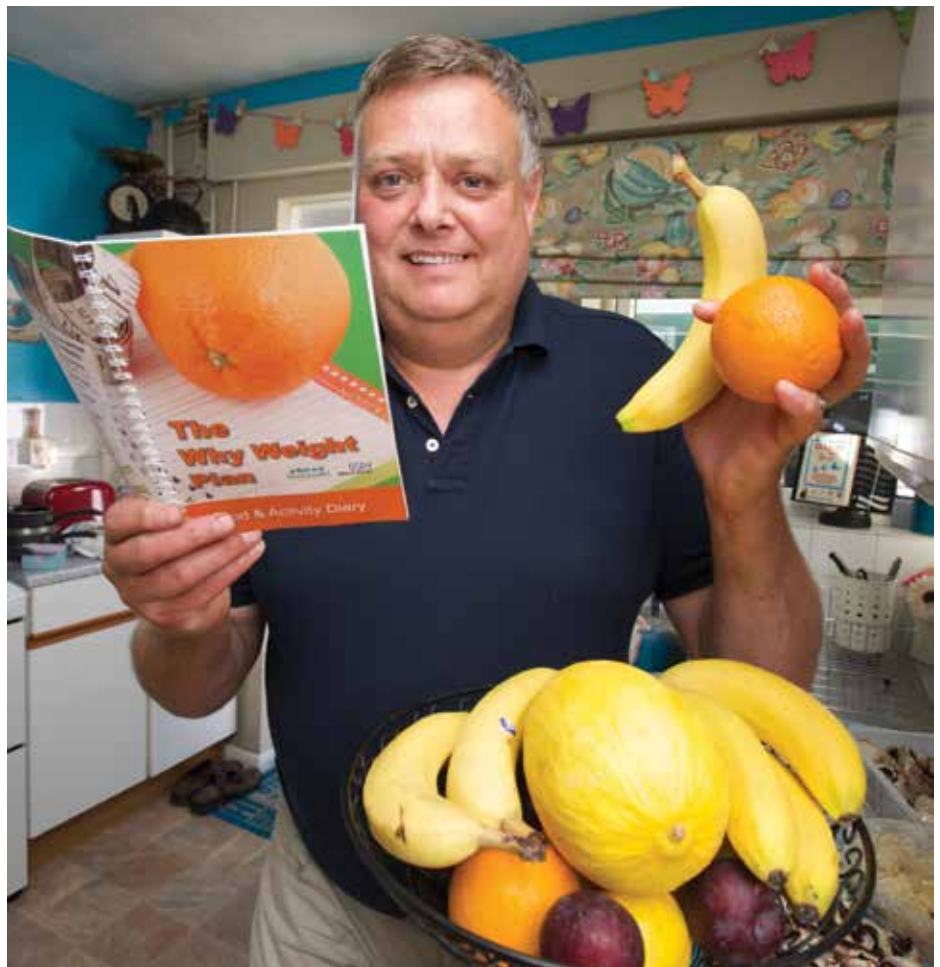
Lorry driver David Hill has reversed his fortunes after completing our free Why Weight programme.

The Swanley resident first heard about the scheme last year after seeing an advert in a local newspaper and immediately signed up. David describes the Why Weight classes:

“At the weekly meetings we had a 30 minute activity class and an instructor who taught us a range of exercises. Afterwards there was a session with a nutritionist who gave us advice about healthy eating”.

The programme has had a lasting impact on David, who has lost nearly a stone. He attributes this to putting the breaks on his calorie intake and controlling his food portions: “The key is to use smaller plates at home which cut down the size of your food portions. I now have smaller meals throughout the day rather than one or two bigger meals like I used to”.

David has picked up other good habits such as checking food labels, which indicate the fat, sugar and salt content of food, and starting to exercise more.



Since completing the programme, David feels much more energetic and has taken his exercise routine up a gear, frequently taking his dog for walks around town: “I’m a lot more confident and feel able to take longer and longer walks, something which I couldn’t really do in the past”.

Although the road to healthy living is a long one, the benefits are already visible. He no longer suffers from the painful and aching feet that he used to and his doctor has also given him the green light about his improved blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

David has held a lifelong dream to drive at the Brands Hatch racetrack in West Kingsdown. However, for safety reasons, drivers need to weigh less than 18 stone. He says he’s now on track to reach this long-held ambition as he continues to lose weight thanks to the programme.

The Why Weight programme is organised by us and funded by Kent County Council.

The next courses begin on the following dates at locations across the District:

- **Monday 23 September, 6pm to 7.30pm, Edenbridge Leisure Centre**
- **Tuesday 24 September, 6pm to 7.30pm, Sevenoaks Primary School**
- **Wednesday 25 September, 6pm to 7.30pm, White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley**
- **Friday 27 September, 9.30am to 11am, New Ash Green Sports Centre**

To book a place, please call us on 01732 227000 or e-mail healthyliving@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Manic motorists watch out, Speed Watch is about!

Residents can help reduce speeding in their community with our free Speed Watch training by making road users aware of how fast they're driving with the aid of portable speed indicator equipment.



The Community Safety Unit recruits and trains volunteers, provides speed indicator boards and works with Kent Police and volunteers to run the scheme.

Those wishing to tackle speeding in a proactive and educational way will be fully trained in road safety and Speed Watch procedures.

The speed boards are available for groups or residents to borrow and use in their community, measuring

and displaying motorists' speed. This community initiative is effective in educating road-users to keep within the speed limit.

District resident Daphne Davis, who keenly volunteered for our Speed Watch training, had this to say: "Being a part of Speed Watch is enriching and rewarding. I really feel like I'm making a difference. The programme is undoubtedly making our community safer, so along with fellow residents we will continue to use these speed boards."

Co-ordinated by Sevenoaks District Council and delivered by Kent Police in conjunction with the Sevenoaks Community Safety Partnership, this free training will be held at the Council offices in Sevenoaks on Thursday 26 September at 6.30pm.

To get involved contact the Community Safety Unit on 01732 227000, or e-mail community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk



Keeping an eye on the District

Our CCTV system is playing an important role in keeping the public safe and assisting the police with their investigations according to figures published earlier this year.



Sharon Wright, the Council's CCTV Manager, told In Shape how the system not only works towards keeping the public safe, it even helps drivers avoid local congestion!

"We operate 96 CCTV cameras in Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge, Westerham and New Ash Green and all of the images are fed back to our CCTV Control Room 24 hours a day, 365 days a year where they are recorded to a cutting edge digital system, producing high quality resolution images," says Sharon.

"The latest figures for 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 show that the system assisted the police with 59 arrests for offences including assault, possession of offensive weapons, drug dealing, criminal damage, drink-driving, and theft. It assisted with a further 36 arrests from April to July of this year.

"Our Control Room is in direct contact with Kent

Police Headquarters and thanks to recent improvements in technology, the images can be directly transmitted to police patrol vehicles that have been dispatched to an incident.

"In one example, CCTV staff instigated an arrest after an operator saw a man throw a punch at an innocent bystander causing him to hit his head on the road and lose consciousness. The offender fled, however, the police were able to arrest him after viewing the images sent to them by us.

"In another example, a vehicle was seen being driven erratically in a Sevenoaks car park. Staff monitored the vehicle's direction and updated the police until it was stopped. The police found that the driver was over the legal alcohol limit and that the

vehicle had been taken without the owner's consent."

However CCTV is not just about detecting crime as

Sharon explains. "The Control Room can observe serious traffic delays in the town centres and thanks to its links with TV, radio and internet organisations who broadcast traffic problems, drivers can be informed quickly if there's congestion.

"Our CCTV operators have additional responsibilities as they're the first point of contact for both our out-of-hours emergency calls and those of a neighbouring council, helping to bring in extra income. We handled nearly 3,000 calls last year dealing with many important issues including, floods, stray and dead animals, homelessness, dangerous buildings and much more. We assisted with 80 separate incidents of missing and vulnerable persons, all with positive results.

"The CCTV control room is also at the heart of the Sevenoaks Shopsafe and Pubwatch schemes. The Control Room is alerted to incidents which need monitoring and partners in the scheme can be informed in an instant if trouble is heading their way."



In the market for

Enthusiasm for buying and enjoying local produce has never been greater. The number of producers and destinations promoting their wares in the Sevenoaks District – from award-winning cheeses and ice creams to luxurious soaps – is growing to meet the demand.

And Why Farming Matters has even released an iPhone and iPad Kent Food App to help you to track down your nearby local producers, farmers' markets, eateries and more.

Traceable, ethical and sustainably produced food created into mouth-watering menus has been the key to the success of the Twig & Spoon restaurant, at Woodlands Garden Centre, Ash, opened almost five years ago by Kim and Wayne Barr.

Kim rates the importance of knowing the origins of the food she serves so seriously that she provides detailed profiles of her trusted suppliers – from ice cream to packaging – on her restaurant's website.

These include breads from The Granary Bakers, New Ash Green and local eggs, bacon, ham and sausages.

Kim says: "The Twig & Spoon has been a huge success story and we now have a 16-strong team, including three chefs, making everything we serve from our main dishes to our jams and pickles.

"Visitors to the garden centre had been asking us to provide refreshments or a coffee shop for some time. We agreed but we wanted to make it special, reflecting the countryside, farms and producers based nearby.

"Our visitors love it and we have some local community



Twig & Spoon, Ash

groups which are regular guests at the restaurant. We have also built strong relationships with local suppliers who work really hard to provide high quality produce from the Garden of England.

"We sell local free range eggs and use them across all the foods we prepare for the restaurant. We are very proud to have been awarded Gold in the British Hen Welfare Trust Eggsellence Awards."

Kent produce is also a top choice with visitors at the new Porcupine Pantry

at Penshurst Place which opened this year. Ben Thomas, the General Manager, is delighted that this means they "will now be able to service our local community and customers more effectively and manage the high demand for our good quality catering, that we have encountered at peak times over the past few seasons at Penshurst Place."

More local producers are also expanding to meet the growing demand for fine foods such as the ice creams and cheeses now available from the pedigree Holstein cows thriving at Hall Place Dairy, Leigh.

The popularity of the award-winning still and sparkling wines from the



local produce

Mount Vineyard, at Shoreham, thriving in an area where the Romans grew grapes, continues to grow with a new wine being added this year.

Whatever the season, however, you can always enjoy the scent and spirit of the Garden of England in the natural and organic bath, body and home fragrances available from Wild Planet, based in Shoreham.

Meanwhile, Squerryes Estate hope to make their own sparkling wine on site thanks to a partnership with Westerham Brewery which includes plans to build a new state of the art sparkling winery and craft brewery.

Westerham Brewery has established itself over the last nine years as one of the top producers of craft beers in

the South East supplying over 300 local pubs. The brewer Robert Wicks says they are “looking forward to working with the Squerryes Estate to establish Westerham as a great place to visit. The National Trust attractions of Chartwell and Quebec House combined with a craft brewery and winery will make Westerham one of the best places for a day out.”

On Saturday 14 September, the first Sevenoaks Food Fair will mark a major celebration of Kent’s local producers and craftspeople. Town Council Clerk Linda Larter is confident



Wild Planet, Shoreham

that the event, being held at Vine Gardens, will be a huge success.

“It is a superb, central location for all the family and we will be featuring produce from right across the Garden of England from locally baked breads, cakes and chocolates to Kent meats and fish.

“There will be no admission charge and lots of activities for our younger visitors. The Vine Gardens offer plenty of room for people to relax, sample and enjoy the vast array of Kent foods and drinks on offer alongside a wealth of local crafts available.

“And visitors can arrive in style taking advantage of the Sevenoaks Vintage Bus which is also providing a popular attraction in the town,” she says.

To find out more about where to buy and enjoy local produce download the free iPhone/iPad Kent Food App from the App Store or go to:

**www.producedinkent.co.uk
www.kentfarmersmarkets.co.uk
www.wfminkent.co.uk
www.visitkent.co.uk**



Mount Vineyard, Shoreham

Working in partnership to protect your property

From SmartWater to shed alarms and holiday loan kits, the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership is providing innovative ways to help residents protect their property.

Sevenoaks is one of the safest Districts in the county and the Partnership continues to work hard to keep it that way.

Police Community Liason Officer, Sophie Mills, spoke with In Shape about how residents can help protect their property.

“We’re all very proud of the low crime rate in the Sevenoaks District. With the combined efforts of the Partnership and local people we can continue to keep the District safe. One of our initiatives is to distribute free shed alarms. Once set, these devices will sound an ear-piercing alarm if your shed or garage is being broken into alerting you and your neighbours that there’s a crime in progress.”

Kent County Council Warden Siobhan Mackay and her team work closely with people who have been or who are at risk of being burgled. She told In Shape of the benefits of another initiative, SmartWater protection.

“SmartWater is used to mark property with a liquid code that becomes visible only under ultraviolet light, making the return of stolen items a much greater likelihood. These marks are irremovable and practically permanent. We’re out in the community marking the property of those most at risk.”

Recently the Partnership introduced holiday loan kits, a new, innovative way to help you secure your home when you are away.



Maxine Quinton, Sevenoaks District Council’s Community Safety Assistant, explains:

“These kits include timer switches, which can turn on the lights in your home between certain pre-set times. UV pens to mark your property and shed alarms are also included, as well as advice on other measures to protect your property and valuables when away.”

Holiday loan kits can be reserved by calling the Community Safety Unit on 01732 227000, before being collected from Sevenoaks Police Station in Argyle Road, Swanley Police Station in London Road and Edenbridge Town Council Offices. These can then simply be returned when you get back.

However, one of the best ways to protect your property is to remain vigilant. Maxine adds: “With the recent warm weather it can be tempting to keep windows and doors open, even for a short time when going out. This however can be an open invitation to criminals including bogus callers. It is vital to put valuables away and lock all windows and doors when leaving your property. Always remember to ask for ID when letting someone into your home.”

For more information on how you can help prevent burglary, call the Community Safety Unit on 01732 227000 or e-mail community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Cash boost for local businesses

Local businesses and residents keen to start their own enterprises can now take advantage of free or heavily subsidised help and advice.

The West Kent Partnership - a public and private sector group operating across the Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells council

areas - has secured £60,000 to support local businesses.

This funding has been earmarked for one-to-one support and workshops delivered by business experts covering a number of business-crucial subjects. These include, finance, bookkeeping, sales, marketing, exports and social media.

Support is being made available to all businesses and, in addition, specialist support is being developed for three key groups:

1 Home-based businesses



Sevenoaks District has a high concentration of home-based businesses. However, homeworkers often work in isolation without networks or support. This scheme will offer mentoring and networking opportunities to help them keep ahead of the game.

2 Support for rural businesses



Changes in the wider economy over the past 30 years have led to a reduction in the number and profitability of many traditional rural businesses. Specialist help will be made available to this sector to help these businesses to be competitive.

3 Help for unemployed people



Unemployed people are being offered help to become their own boss. Highly specialised support is available to help harness their entrepreneurial ideas so that they can take their first steps towards self-employment.

To find out more, please visit www.westkentpartnership.org.uk or call 01732 227000.

Multi-million pound boost to help businesses move to the next level

Businesses in West Kent will soon benefit from the 'Escalate' scheme providing £5.5million of interest-free loans to encourage economic growth while generating employment.

The West Kent Partnership, Kent County Council and others have secured the cash from the Government's Regional Growth Fund for its ambitious scheme.

Escalate is aimed primarily at small and medium sized companies that have the potential to grow rapidly.

Cllr Peter Fleming, Chairman of the West Kent Partnership and Leader of Sevenoaks District Council, says: "This is exceptionally good news for our local businesses. We've worked hard to secure this funding that is expected to generate or safeguard over 1,000 local jobs. What's more it will have the

knock-on effect of stimulating further economic growth in the supply chain.

Work is already underway on Escalate and businesses should be able to apply for loans from November.

For more information, visit www.westkentpartnership.org.uk or call 01732 227000 nearer the time or look out for details in the local press.

Making a splash... Safely

When Mark Horne was made redundant 12 years ago he was already studying for his swimming teacher qualification. He was offered a coaching position at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre and hasn't looked back.



With accidental drowning responsible for more than 400 deaths in the UK every year and an estimated one million primary school children unsafe in and around water, he is passionate about the need to equip young people with the skills to enjoy swimming at home and while on holiday.

"I look upon the ability to be able to swim as a life skill first and a tool through which to enjoy the pool or beach second," says Mark, who only learned to swim himself in his early 20s after putting his name down for the Sevenoaks Triathlon.

Recent research from the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) showed just one in 10 parents said their child only swims on holiday while 52 per cent do not think, or are not sure, if their child could swim to safety if in danger.

"I never had swimming lessons as a kid but having come to it in my 20s and having gained a teaching qualification I am passionate about helping those who lack skills and confidence in the water," adds Mark.

The ASA report also surveyed 3,500 primary schools and found 51 per cent of children aged seven to 11 cannot swim the length of a typical swimming pool (25 metres) unaided.

"We have schools in the Sevenoaks District who are doing great work in promoting swimming," says Mark. "But this

needs to be a partnership and that's why it's important for me to work with schools, coach people on a one-to-one basis and to be a part of the respected swimming programme offered by the Sencio Community Leisure centres."

For full details of the swimming coaching programme offered by Sencio Community Leisure, visit your nearest centre or look online at www.sencio.org.uk/activities/swimming

Swimming – just some of the benefits

- Swimming is a life skill, essential for your safety and the safety of others
- It's a very sociable sport/activity
- It's a fantastic cardiovascular exercise (and kind to joints)
- It's great for team building (in the club environment)
- Ideal for those who don't like the gym
- Builds confidence, character and discipline in young people
- Research shows young people who take part in sport tend to do better academically

Water babies who now have a competitive edge

Marni Patterson was never taught to swim as a child so when Joseph came along, followed three years later by sister Isabella, she was keen to ensure they became safe and confident in the water.

Eleven-year-old Joseph and Isabella, eight, both took to the pool as toddlers and by the age of four were able to swim. Their development has continued through lessons at school, private tuition and by building confidence while on annual family holidays.

“It was Joseph’s head teacher, who spotted his potential and with her support and the help of coach Mark Horne he has gone from strength to strength,” says Marni Patterson. “His school is terrific at spotting potential in students and that has certainly been the key to unlocking Joseph and Isabella’s potential.”

Now a member of Sevenoaks Swimming Club, Joseph trains four times a week and is relishing the regime as Marni Patterson explains: “He loves it. He has grown in confidence so much, his fitness is



of an extremely high standard and he thoroughly enjoys the competitive element.”

And what about sister Isabella? “She’s every bit as enthusiastic and is

also developing her own competitive streak,” adds Marni. “I am extremely proud that both my children are pursuing swimming as a sport, but I’m equally happy they have the skills to be safe around water.”

It’s never too late

An estimated one in five adults in this country is unable to swim. That’s a lot of people at potential risk and a lot of people missing out on one of the best ways to stay fit and healthy.

Aside from being a low-impact activity that is kind to joints, ideal for cardiovascular health and can be enjoyed as a life-long pastime, swimming is also great for a number of other reasons, as Sencio Community Leisure’s Chief Executive Jane Parish explains:

“A lot of people, especially women, can be self-conscious about exercising. But it doesn’t matter what

age or shape you are as there is so much benefit to be had from taking to the pool, whether it’s a gentle regular swim or joining a water aerobics class which will keep you fit and also has a great social element. And, with the help of a good coach, it’s never too late to learn to swim.”

Call your local centre to find out more about swimming lessons and courses for all ages and abilities:

Edenbridge: 01732 865665

Sevenoaks: 01732 470700

White Oak (Swanley): 01322 662188

Funding the fight against abuse

Projects supporting residents suffering domestic abuse and substance misuse - drugs and alcohol - are just some of the initiatives supported and part-funded by Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership.

The District's Community Safety Partnership co-ordinates these important projects which have a real impact on the individuals and their families' lives.

John Shanley knows how important this work is from his job as a frontline youth worker for the charity The Kenward Trust.

"I work face-to-face with young people giving them the facts about the dangers of alcohol, illegal drugs, cigarettes and legal highs," says John.

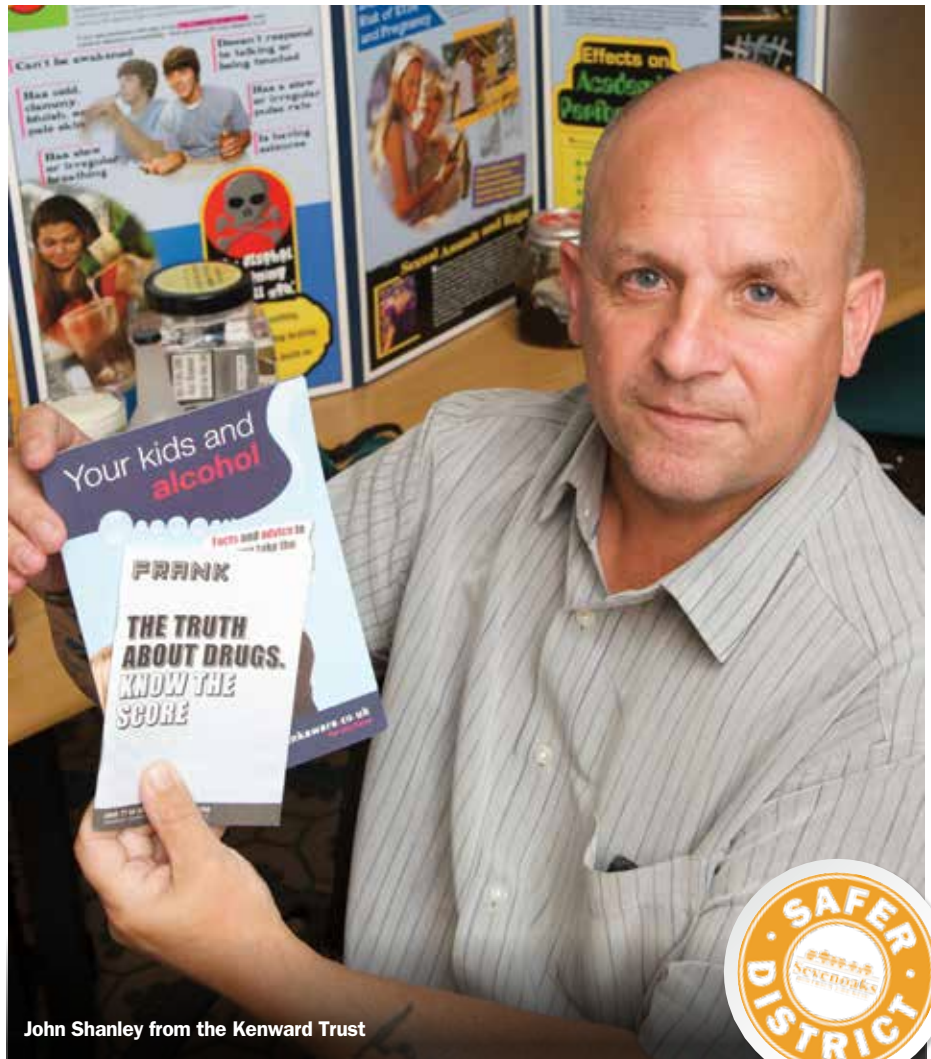
"These sessions help young people make informed choices about these substances once they are aware of the negative impact they can have on their learning, development and health. We also work in local areas where residents are concerned about the harmful effects of alcohol on their communities.

"Our work with the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership helps ensure fewer young people misuse substances in the future to their own detriment and that of our society."

Another service that is supported is the Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS) who provide support and guidance for anyone affected or suffering from domestic abuse.

Volunteers are specially trained to listen to victims and enable individuals to make informed choices for themselves. Volunteers also attend court cases to provide emotional and practical support to victims through what can be a very difficult time.

Kelly Webb, Sevenoaks District Council's Community Safety Manager told In Shape about the impact of domestic abuse.



John Shanley from the Kenward Trust

"At least one in four women and one in six men experience domestic abuse during their lives and sadly this also has an affect on the whole family."

"Last year, DAVSS supported 58 men and women across Sevenoaks District and their helpline received 56% more calls than the previous year. This demonstrates the demand for their services.

"In January we also helped to set up regular face-to-face drop-in sessions to allow anyone affected by domestic abuse to access local support. These

run every Wednesday at Swanley Children's Centre, Sure Start, from 9.30am to 11.30am."

The Community Safety Partnership also supports the Freedom Programme, which is a scheme to help victims, and a Perpetrators Programme to help abusers recognise and stop their abuse.

For more information regarding our projects, please call 01732 227000 and ask for the Community Safety Unit or visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/crimeprevention

New Chief Executive in the hotseat

The Council has appointed Dr Pav Ramewal as its new Chief Executive. Pav has been our Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources for the past nine years.

He succeeds Robin Hales who took the decision to retire from the world of local government after 10 successful years at the Council.

With a PHD in Managing Change through Empowerment and as a Chartered Accountant, Pav is well qualified to steer us through the challenges ahead. In addition to his financial expertise, he also has an MSC in Public Sector Management as well as an MBA.

Pav has been instrumental in pioneering our financial strategy and supported the introduction of a rolling 10 year budget. This innovative financial approach has helped us to manage the biggest reductions in our funding in living memory while minimising the impact on frontline services. It has been so successful that it has been adopted by many councils and other public sector organisations across the country.



On his appointment in 2004 Pav was determined that Sevenoaks District Council would be rated in the top 25% of all local authorities nationally. By 2007 and again in 2010 we were rated in the top 2% of the best performing district councils nationally.

Talking about the future, Pav comments: "As money becomes ever tighter, we need to continue to make savings, investigate new ways of working and deliver value for money whilst protecting the quality of services that our residents and local businesses rely on. It is important that we put the customer at the heart

of everything we do and ensure that Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live, work and visit."

Pav took up his new position on 1 September with his new senior management structure saving the Council £300,000 a year.

National Trust and Council team up to scoop top award

Our Building Control Team has helped a local tourist attraction win a prestigious building control award.

The National Trust's Emmetts Garden Visitor Centre in Ide Hill picked up the prize for the 'Best Small Commercial Building' at the Local Authority Building Council South East Building Excellence Awards in June.

Not only did the award celebrate good practice, it recognised the positive working relationship between client, contractor and our Building Control Team.

The oak framed Visitor Centre has been designed and constructed to fit in with its natural setting and uses a host of sustainable building materials, including cedar roof shingles, which go beyond today's building standards.



Along with all the other regional winners, the Emmetts Garden Visitor Centre will be put forward to the national awards to be held in London later this year.

Our Building Control Team can provide advice for all building control related projects. To contact the Team, call 01732 227000, e-mail building.control@sevenoaks.gov.uk or visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/buildingcontrol

Your councillors

Sevenoaks District Council's priorities and policies are decided by 54 Councillors who were elected by local people. The Sevenoaks District is divided into 26 smaller areas, known as wards and each ward is represented by one or more District Councillors. You are very welcome to contact the District Councillors to express your views and to ask for their help on local issues.

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Liberal Democrat (LD) 



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Vacant
election taking
place on
26 September

Crockenhill and Well Hill
For issues relating to this ward
please email democratic.
services@sevenoaks.gov.uk
or call 01732 227241



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How to contact your District Councillors

We have provided your District Councillors' phone numbers and e-mail addresses. If you would like to write to them, their postal addresses are available on the Council's

website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/councillors or by calling us on **01732 227000**. If you are unsure which ward you live in, please call us on **01732 227000**.

Free health MOTs

If you're aged 40 to 74 then you can take advantage of a free Health Check for an overall assessment of your health.

We've teamed up with Kent County Council to offer this service to residents in this age group who have not had a health check in the last five years helping to detect underlying health problems.

Most people are at risk of serious conditions such as coronary heart disease, dementia, kidney disease, stroke and diabetes. But the good news is that these conditions can usually be prevented. The first step is to understand and reduce your level of risk.

Our health checks can tell you there and then of your risk level and, if there's a potential problem, offer you tailored healthy living advice to help you reduce the risk.

Your results will be shared with your GP. They may contact you if they believe you are at risk of developing a serious condition.

Each check takes about half an hour and is taken by a qualified health checker who will ask you some simple questions and take a single drop of blood for testing cholesterol levels.

In the last 18 months we have completed 336 health checks. More than half were referred to their GP for further advice or follow up testing and 56 people were found to be at high risk of developing coronary heart disease.

Our next free health checks:

- Saturday 14 September,**
11am to 3pm, Swanley Library
- Wednesday 9 October,** 11am to 2pm, New Ash Green Library
- Tuesday 15 October,**
11am to 2pm, Kemsing Library
- Friday 8 November,**
10am to 1pm, Seal Library
- Saturday 16 November,**
11am to 3pm, Sevenoaks Library
- Tuesday 14 January,** 1pm to 3pm,
West Kingsdown Library
- Tuesday 11 February,**
11am to 2pm, Westerham Library
- Tuesday 4 March,**
10.30am to 1pm, Hartley Library

To find out if you're eligible for a free health check, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/healthchecks

Health Checks are extremely popular so places must be booked in advance by calling us on 01732 227000.

Secure your vote for the European election

In the coming weeks you'll receive a voter registration form asking you to ensure your vote is in place for next year's European Parliamentary Election on 22 May.

From October, we will be posting out voter registration forms to every residential property in the Sevenoaks District. If you're already on the register of electors, you can confirm your details online, by free phone or by text, all of which save you bringing or sending your form back to us.

The best way to secure your registration is to respond to the form immediately. An early response

saves unnecessary reminders and one of our electoral canvassers knocking on your door.

You can also tell us on your form if you wish to apply to vote by post.

Remember you can only vote if your name appears on the register of electors.

If you have not received your form by late October, or you have any questions, please e-mail elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk or phone 01732 227000.

Ethical café at the Eden Centre opens its doors

Eat@Eden is a brand new café within Edenbridge's new community centre, The Eden Centre.

It's one of West Kent Extra's new social enterprise projects which aims to give back any profit to the local youth project – HOUSE, also based in the centre.

The café also offers work experience and volunteer opportunities and will run events and training. With some really innovative ways of selling its services, Eat@Eden is set to provide a great place to eat, socialise and get involved in Edenbridge.

The café provides affordable, fresh, healthy and, wherever possible, locally sourced seasonal food, or food that has been ethically produced.

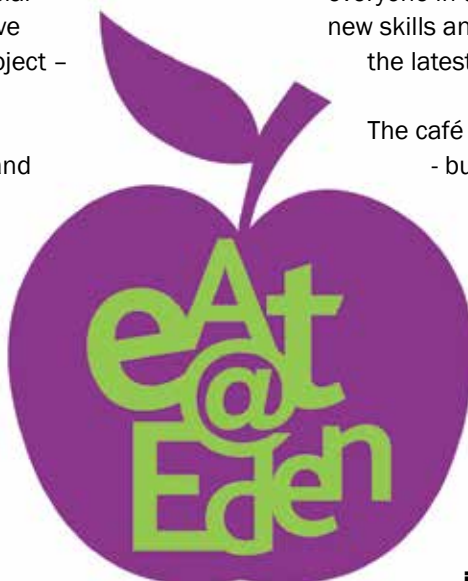
The café hopes to be more than somewhere to grab a healthy snack and will provide opportunities for

everyone in the community to come together and learn new skills and have fun. Follow the café on twitter for the latest news and updates: @EatAtEden

The café has a loyalty scheme for regular customers - buy nine hot drinks, get the tenth free. Loyalty cards can be collected from the café when purchasing a drink.

Whether you're the next Masterchef in the making or a cooking novice, someone who enjoys the company of others or is looking for a friendly place to meet new people, everyone is welcome to volunteer, whatever your age.

E-mail eateden@wkha.org.uk or pop into the café if you'd like to make a positive difference in your community and of course, have fun!



Sevenoaks District Council at your fingertips

Main Office

Argyle Road, Sevenoaks,
Kent TN13 1HG

Tel **01732 227000**

Minicom **01732 227496**

(text telephones only)

Open Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5pm and Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm.

Emergencies (outside office hours)

01732 227000

then listen to the options

Swanley Contact and Information Centre

Swanley Library & Information Centre,
London Road, Swanley BR8 7AE

Tel **01322 614660**

Council Tax payment facility

open Monday to Thursday

9.30am to 5.30pm, Friday 9.30am

to 6pm and Saturday 9am to 4pm

Edenbridge Local Office

– Thursdays only

Adjoining Edenbridge Leisure Centre,
Stangrove Park, Edenbridge,
Kent TN8 5LU

Tel **01732 227000**

Benefits surgery from 1.30pm to 4pm

Leisure centres

Ash Green Sports Centre*

01474 707164

Edenbridge Leisure Centre**

01732 865665

Lullingstone Park Golf Course**

01959 533793

The Olympic, Swanley*

01322 669201

Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Centre***

01732 451889

Sevenoaks Leisure Centre**

01732 470700

White Oak Indoor Bowls Centre,
Swanley***

01322 665571

White Oak Leisure Centre,
Swanley**

01322 662188

* Operated by the local town or parish Council

** Operated by Sencio Community Leisure, Head Office 01732 746010

*** Operated by independent limited companies

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In Shape is available in an audio format for residents with visual impairments. Call 01732 227000 for details

This publication can be explained in other languages by calling **01732 227414**.

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Learn to swim for all ages and abilities

- Small Group or 1-2-1 Lessons
- Swimming Teachers' Association (STA) accredited courses
- Classes tailored to all levels of water confidence
- Lessons are available for babies, children and adults
- Visit www.sencio.org.uk/swimming for more details



Sevenoaks Leisure Centre
Buckhurst Lane
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Tel: 01732 470 700

Edenbridge Leisure Centre
Stangrove Park
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Kent
TN8 5LU
Tel: 01732 865 665

White Oak Leisure Centre
Hilda May Avenue
Swanley
Kent
BR8 7BT
Tel: 01322 662 188



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Kumon's maths and English study programmes work to unlock your child's potential, building their confidence and independent study skills.

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Mandy Yarnold **01342 851221**

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