



Edenbridge Town Council

Town Clerk: Caroline Leet



Annual Town Meeting – 01 March 2021

Summary of public questions and answers

Q1: What is the council doing to enable Edenbridge to be net-zero by 2050? In particular, what is it doing to enable/facilitate low/zero carbon transportation, eg through the installation of public EV charging points?

A: A presentation about the Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Environmental policies was provided (see slides). The Town Council is very conscious of the issues around climate change and has been proactive in looking at ways the Council delivers services. Details of what the Town Council has been doing are available on the website [here](#).

Regarding car electric car charging points, the Town Council has investigated this, but it is not as straightforward as would be hoped. There needs to be landowner permission, suitable electric supply and sited where they would not cause parking issues i.e taking up a resident parking space. New homes now include charging points.

Q2: What more is being done to monitor and discourage speeding and nuisance driving around Edenbridge, particularly on Hever Road?

A: The Council has been looking to implement a portable speed indicator device (SID) scheme; this would allow the SID to be rotated between a number of sites in the town. The aim is to educate drivers to slow down and to be able to collate speed data. Several sites have been suggested to Kent Highways; three locations have been approved for the scheme. If the scheme has positive results, the Council may consider purchasing a second device and extending the scheme.

If there are concerns about dangerous driving, this should be reported to 101.

Kent Highways request town and parish councils to complete a Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) to identify areas which it would prioritise for safety intervention measures. Given the finite KCC highways budget, not all priorities are likely to be funded. However, the Kent Highways team can discuss the problems and provide technical advice for the best way to deliver improvements and provide estimates for the costs. Using this information, parish and town councils can determine whether they can provide funding for these priorities and, working with Kent Highways, deliver them.

Safety improvement examples include: new warning signs, request for lower speed limits, traffic calming measures. The Council submitted its HIP in September 2020.

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Q3: Any plans to start charging for parking in car parks

A: The Town Council has not discussed this recently, but it is something that perhaps the Council could consider to possibly generate some additional income. The Council does have to pay business rates on the Market Yard car park even though residents can park free of charge. However, if the Council were to consider charging car parking fees there are initial costs involved to set-up and would require enforcement. It is also a viable service.

Q4: Why Edenbridge town council hasn't declared climate emergency yet??

A: Whilst the Town Council recognises that a number of parish and town councils have made such statements, this needs to be led by the Government, county and district councils. The Town Council already promotes environmental waste management policy to deliver services, weed control processes and is proactive in implementing green energy with solar panels on its buildings which are not listed buildings. It is keen to reduce its carbon footprint and it already manages over 550 trees in Edenbridge, the Millennium Wood and is introducing wildflower areas. Details of a review meeting in March 2020 can be found on the website, or click [here](#).

Q5: Can anything be done about the empty, boarded up units on the high street? Could we have pop up shops? And can the market be on a weekend and include vintage items?

A: Edenbridge market was established by a Charter granted by Henry III in 1227. The site of a regular cattle market from the mid-1840s until 1928, the rings for tethering the cattle can still be found on the east wall. The market has always been on a Thursday. This being a Charter, there would be a legal process to alter the day.

The traders across Kent have previously been committed to other markets on other days. The Market contract is currently out to public tender. It is hoped that a new market contract can be awarded within the next couple of months to ensure the Thursday Market continues in Edenbridge.

The Town Council had planned to hold a Saturday Pop-up style market at the end of November, but unfortunately this was cancelled due to the Covid-19 and Tier 4 restrictions. The Town Council is not in a position to consider any other markets at this current time.

The Town Council has engaged with the property owner and the lease holder for the area in the town square where the majority of the boarded shops are. Unfortunately, this is not under the Council's control, but we will continue to keep the communication channels open.

Q6: Why don't you support local project in the town that help your people back into work.

A: The Town Council does not have the resources to run 'back to work schemes.' However, it does award an annual grant to HOUSE who work with getting people in to work. West Kent HOUSE youth services click [here](#).

Sevenoaks District Council is facilitating a programme to get young people back to work partnered with West Kent Partnership. Details on its website, click [here](#). West Kent also provides support to improve skills and employment prospects, click [here](#). Live Well Kent provides help with training and work skills as well as other services it provides; click [here](#). Kent County Council has information on its website for help with employment, click [here](#).

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Q7: What is to happen with the hospital please

A: The hospital will remain open until the new medical practice opens. NHS Properties will then sell the land, which is likely to be used for houses. This site was included in the draft Local Plan for proposed housing.

Q8: When will the new Medical centre be completed

A: It is hoped that the Tender stage will be completed this year and the building works will also start this year.

Q9: What is being done to tackle a sharp increase in ASB and low level crime within Edenbridge recently? Such as an increase in graffiti, vehicles being driven through the parks etc?

A: The Town Council works closely with the local PCSOs. There is quite a bit of work going on in the background and over the summer and autumn months last year the police did have a number of covert operations in the area.

The Town Council also works with HOUSE providing a grant. As covered in the presentations, HOUSE does quite a bit of work with young people including the age group around 18-20.

The Community Warden reports graffiti to the district and county councils where it is on their land; and to other landowners. She and the groundstaff also attend to graffiti on Town Council land and have done a considerable amount of graffiti cleaning in the past year.

Vehicles that are driving inappropriately should be reported to the police on 101, or if there is an immediate threat on 999. Vehicles that are being driven on park or field land and where there may be an immediate potential risk to the safety of members of the public, should be reported on 999.

Q10: What will happen to the war memorial when the hospital site is sold?

A: The relocation of the War Memorial is a sensitive topic with a number of people having different views. There are several questions that need to be answered before considering further, including confirmation of custodianship. Until the hospital closes, the guidance advice from the War Memorials Trust is that it cannot be moved. There have been no formal discussions to consider any of the sites on Town Council land. The Medical Centre is including a memorial garden in its designs and is keen to maintain some link to the War Memorial.

Q11: To support youth work in our community and to keep in with what is all going on at the moment.

A: The Town Council provides an annual grant to HOUSE; the presentation from HOUSE provided an update on its activities in Edenbridge (see slides). The Council has also helped during the past year providing Rickards Hall to allow for the youth boxing exercise activity to continue (when the restrictions have permitted).

As trustees of the Norman Foundation a grant was awarded to the local school to help fund some computers for the children.

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The Council welcomes grant applications from any youth organisations, (grants are awarded in the autumn).

The Council also worked to ensure that a new games activity area was installed last November that could be used during the restrictions. This area provides kids with the opportunity to improve fitness, target skills, numeracy and for younger children to learn colours. There is also a basketball shooting hoop.

Q12: Is there any possibility of the all weather pitch at the leisure centre being upgraded to make it fit for purpose

A: This is a question for Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Sencio. In 2017 the Town Council supported a CIL bid for a contribution towards replacing of the current artificial sports pitch at the Leisure Centre (this offer expires December 2021). To date, there has been no further development on this specific aspect, but SDC has been looking at the overall Leisure Centre facility and potential improvements.

The Town Council's Forward Plan does not currently include any plans to create another artificial sports pitch in the town.

Q13: Do Councillors make site visits during lockdown? If not, how can they properly assess an application?

A: Due to the current restrictions, it has not been appropriate for Members to visit sites, but as local councillors they already have a lot of local knowledge between them. The Town Council makes its recommendations to the local planning authority SDC who make the final decisions.

Site visits are for the Planning Authority to consider where appropriate.

Q14: Can the councils and other local organisations work together to help provide some conservation work that children, young people and adults can do on a volunteer basis on land in and around Edenbridge to improve biodiversity and contribute to CO2 reduction.

A: The Town Council's Millennium Wood is an area where conservation is encouraged. The Council has worked in partnership with SDC to pilot the wildflower meadow at the Town Field. It is currently considering the viability of extending this to a section at Mowshurst field.

The Great Stonebridge Trust has been involved with students regarding coppicing in the floodplain in previous years.

As mentioned already in other responses, the Council supports reducing its and the town's carbon footprint and already maintains over 550 trees and looks to replace trees that it may lose. The Tree Men of Kent has awarded the Council Excellence for the trees in the town.

Edenbridge is already fortunate to have a number of community groups each keen to support conservation and biodiversity including the Parish Church who has recently converted an area in the churchyard to conservation.

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Q15: Could Councillor Lake or an ETC Councillor update us please on the traffic surveys planned for the Marlpit Hill area?

A: The Town Council has campaigned to Kent Highways to carry out speed surveys on Main Road and to include the junction at Hillcrest Road/Hilders Lane. A further request more recently asked Highways to include Swan Lane. A response received recently says: *Following the Government update on easing restrictions, a request for the traffic surveys to be carried out towards the end of March. There will be three surveys installed on Main Road to include these sections as part of our review.*

Q16: How can we reignite the high street post covid? What can we do from a council level and community level.

A: Sevenoaks District Council started looking at this last year, and engaged Pillory Barn, a Kent-based PR and marketing company to develop a campaign and promotional assets to help get people back to the district's town centres and promote shopping local. The communications assets are in place and were made available for use by the town councils. Unfortunately, we then entered Tier 4 and another lockdown. Some of those initiatives will be able to be used when the high streets are able to reopen. The Council's Economic Development Team has commissioned Pillory Barn to develop a Spring/Summer campaign, which is in the early stages of development following the Prime Minister's speech last week outlining the roadmap out of lockdown.

The Town Council itself does not have the resources to run a significant campaign but did work with the district council prior to Christmas and would look to support appropriate campaigns. The Town Council's website has some useful links for residents and businesses including a link to the SDC Business recovery pack.

Q17: Crime statistics in the area?

This has been referred to the local PCSO and we are waiting for some feedback.

Q18: What is the council doing to facilitate fibre broadband via Openreach for all of Edenbridge?

A: Building Digital UK (BDUK), part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) is delivering broadband networks to the nation working with the County Councils. Details are available on Kent County Council's website, click [here](#).

Homes and businesses in rural areas of the UK may be eligible for funding towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband when part of a group scheme where speeds of less than 100Mbps. Click [here](#) for details. Ultrafast Broadband is available from some suppliers in the Edenbridge area.