

Edenbridge Annual Town Meeting 7th March 2022

held at the WI Hall, Edenbridge.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

QUESTION (1):

When will the Council be providing electric car charging points?

Cllr Jon Aldridge: The Town Council's Community Infrastructure Board (CIL) Board has awarded funding towards this scheme. Suitable sites in Edenbridge have been considered, but the Council is limited to considering only the locations that it owns. As part of Kent County Council (KCC) strategy it offers a scheme for town and parish councils, Kent Smarter Travel Scheme (KSTS), to help with identifying suitable council owned sites for EVCS. An application has been made to KSTS for three car parks to be assessed: Market Yard Car Park, the Recreation Ground, and Mowshurst. Engineers have visited to assess the three car parks. Unfortunately, KSTS has had such a high demand that it has had to pause its programme until further funding can be found. The Council is waiting for KSTS to confirm when it has new funding, but is keen to progress this project.

The challenges of providing sufficient EVCs and in suitable locations are more than parish and town councils are equipped address alone. A recent developer's public consultation for a solar farm had offered to put charging on site or in the town centre, but there is currently no planning application or further detail on this.

QUESTION (2):

What is the District Council's biggest challenge in achieving Net Zero?

Cllr Peter Fleming: The biggest challenge for the District Council, to become net zero is the vehicles. It is easier to buy a new car if you have the money, but it isn't easy to replace 26 tonne freighters for an electric one. SDC are looking at other ways, maybe looking at hydrogen for some of the bigger vehicles and how we collect waste, but also technology will hopefully catch-up. An interesting statistic – why doesn't the district collect glass from the doorstep? There are over 40 different sites across the district where residents can take glass, plus other sites not run by the council such as at supermarkets. Why would you drive a large heavy vehicle down country lanes to pick up glass bottles which in mass weighs a lot, when people can take their empty bottles to a glass collection site at the supermarket or another location. SDC collects more glass in the district compared to Tonbridge and Malling which has door to door collections. For a district the biggest thing is energy and reliance on gas and the more it can become self-sufficient would be better going forward.

QUESTION 3):

What is the repair Café?

Cllr Peter Fleming: The Repair Café is not organised by Sevenoaks District Council. There is a new initiative being set up in Edenbridge by a small group. These cafes provide an opportunity to take broken items in for some who has the skill to repair them. They also provide the opportunity to share and pass on skills to others for example teaching how to darn a sock. It has an environmental angle as not going out to buy new, but to repair and recycle. Leaflets of the new Edenbridge Repair Café were on display in the Hall.

QUESTION (4):

What can be done about the parking on Spitals Cross?

Cllr Peter Fleming: Sevenoaks District Council has been considering a scheme and capital money has been allocated for this project. There are several elements to the scheme, the Council is aware the number one priority is the parking issues. It has been looking at the best use of the land available, the community space on Spitals Cross is no longer used. The shop requires refurbishment. There will need to be a housing element as part of this project, but it has looked at the current parking problem before looking at introducing anything new so that there is a net parking spaces increase for residents on Spitals.

QUESTION (5):

Why is the market on a Thursday, and can this be changed, perhaps to Saturday, when people are not working?

Town Clerk: The market is a Charter Market currently held on a Thursday. The Council is looking at possibly developing a market policy which would allow for markets on other days, but there are laws that prevent competing markets being held on the same day as nearby locations, it is just under 7-miles as the crow flies. Currently, the Council also does not have the resources to pursue a second market day and is working to develop the existing Thursday market.