



**EDENBRIDGE**  
TOWN COUNCIL



2022-23  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

[www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk)

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



## COUNCILLOR BOB TODD

As I look at what Edenbridge Town Council has achieved over the past year, I feel a great sense of pride – from playground refurbishments to new road safety measures, community events and more - it always amazes me just how much we can accomplish in such a short time.

It has been an honour to work with my fellow councillors, who volunteer their time and expertise, as well as officers, partners and wider community groups who all help to make Edenbridge a great place to live, work and enjoy. I feel especially fortunate to represent an area with such a wonderful sense of community, as was highlighted when we invited residents to join in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and lighting of a new Beacon at Stangrove Park in June 2022. Sadly, we also said farewell to her late Majesty the Queen later in the year. We opened a book of remembrance for residents to be able to pay their respects and leave tributes, and held a public Proclamation ceremony in Doggetts Courtyard for King Charles III.

I hope you too will feel proud of Edenbridge when you read about all the work and projects that have been taking place to improve our community. Just imagine what we can achieve in another year!



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# ASSETS OWNED/MANAGED BY THE COUNCIL



- 5 playgrounds
- 9 buildings and outbuildings inc. Rickards Hall, which is available for community hire
- 8 Open Spaces inc. parks and greens
- Millennium Wood
- 2 ponds
- Over 550 trees
- Hanging basket displays



- 4 Cemeteries and the Churchyard
- 251 Streetlights owned, plus maintains 2 for Sevenoaks District Council (SDC)
- 2 allotment sites
- Sports pitches inc. Recreation Ground, Blossoms Park and Mowshurst
- Street furniture, bins and benches



- Public toilets
- 2 car parks – owns Market Yard; manages Leathermarket
- Council office facility open 9 am – 5 pm weekdays
- In addition, work with SDC and the Great Stone Bridge Trust in partnership to manage the Town Field and Water Meadows



# COUNCIL ACTIVITY 2022-23

- Held 46 Council and Committee meetings in 2022. Councillor attendance was 72%
- Planning Committee made 146 planning recommendations to Sevenoaks District Council (SDC)
- Councillors attended in excess of 37 outside organisation meetings
- Responded to SDC's draft Local Plan regulation 18 consultation
- Maintained open spaces, such as parks and playgrounds, town facilities and cemeteries to a high standard
- The biggest project we completed was the new refurbished Recreation Ground playground with a range of equipment for 0 to teenage years
- Improvements were made to the skate ramps at Blossoms Park for beginners and a new grind box
- Started a Games Club for over 55s on Monday mornings to meet and chat with new people, helping to overcome loneliness and isolation. In January included as part of Warm Spaces initiative
- Launched Edenbridge's own gardening competition 'Ready Steady Grow'
- Invested in the Thursday Market (new website, Facebook, Market Officer, promotions and events) thus helping promote the High Street and town centre
- New post - recruited a new Communications Officer
- Coordinated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations – a new Beacon was installed at Stangrove Park, bunting decorated the High Street and a community event was held to light the Beacon
- Published a new edition of the Edenbridge Official Guide and delivered to local homes
- Rickards Hall improvements continued with new chairs (funded by KCC Members grant)
- Continued to support the Food Bank providing a space at Rickards Hall and storage area at the rear of Doggetts Barn
- Launched *Building Bridges for a Dementia Friendly Edenbridge* initiative
- Reviewed our IT systems to implement upgrades and started the transition to Microsoft cloud-based services
- Continued quarterly Bulky Waste Collections for residents
- Erected two new streetlight columns at Westways
- Continued streetlight column upgrades as part of an ongoing maintenance programme – six this past year and several LED upgrades
- The Open Spaces Committee continued to oversee and maintain all our open spaces facilities and the Grounds team continued doing an excellent job looking after all these areas
- Worked with Sevenoaks Community Safety on anti-social behaviour issues; cleaned graffiti off council assets; organised litter pick sessions; carried out speedwatch and monitored Speed Indicator Device information; attended PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings
- Funded the new 40-mph buffer zone on the approach to Edenbridge, Main Road, Marlpit Hill area
- Awarded £7k in small grants to local groups
- Made CIL awards to the new Memorial Health Centre; WI Hall for new stage lighting; Hever Primary School; St Paulins Centre; Doctors Practice award for furnishings at new medical centre
- Organised and funded free Family Fun Days at Stangrove Park during the summer holidays

# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS



## Recreation Ground Playground

The new playground opened in June 2022. The project was funded by developer contributions (Community Infrastructure Levy).

There are 23 items of play equipment including multi-sensory play for young children, five different swings, two multi-play frames (one with a tubular slide), and play equipment for older children including a zip wire and tornado rotator.



## Games Club

Over 55s can come along for games, friendship and a hot drink. The club meets every Monday 10.00 am to 12.00 pm at Rickard's Hall and members find it a great way to combat loneliness and isolation.

The session is facilitated by the Community Warden and volunteers, and supported with a grant from Kent County Council/ Involve Kent.



## Open Spaces Trees

The Town Council manages 550 trees plus the Millennium Wood, and we have a replanting programme, which includes replacement of significant trees.

We planted 12 feature trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy across four sites and three memorial trees gifted by three different organisations/people.

# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS



## Edenbridge Market

The Thursday Market has been managed by the Town Council since May 2021. During this time it has attracted a range of stallholders and maintained a regular number of stalls, as well as Lloyds Mobile Bank.

Visitors to the market can find products such as fresh bread, cheeses, fruit, sweet treats, plants and clothes.

Find 'Edenbridge Market' on Facebook or visit the website:  
[www.edenbridgemarket.co.uk](http://www.edenbridgemarket.co.uk)



## Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

In June 2022 the Council organised a community event at Stangrove Park to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Later in the year we sadly said farewell to her late Majesty the Queen and helped the people of Edenbridge pay their respects and tributes in a book of remembrance. Following the Queen's death the Council held a Proclamation Ceremony in the courtyard of Doggetts Barn for the new King, Charles III.



## Civility & Respect

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) have been campaigning for improved standards to help address issues of bullying, harassment and intimidation, and have put Civility and Respect at the top of their agenda. The Council has also raised this with Tom Tugendhat MP, requesting calls for government to establish appropriate and effective sanction mechanisms to deal with issues in the sector, and to improve standards on Civility in public life.

# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS



## Road Safety

The Council campaigned to Kent Highways via our Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) to make the northern approach into Edenbridge safer.

The road now changes from the National Speed Limit down to 40MPH and then down again to 30MPH. By adding in this 40MPH “buffer zone”, it is hoped that the road will be safer as drivers slow down sooner on the approach into the town.

We were pleased to use some CIL money to fund the new safety measure.



## Streetlights

In January 2023 we connected two new streetlights at Westways, bringing the number of streetlights we manage across Edenbridge up to 251.

With more people using Westways to access the housing development at St Johns Way, Council agreed the area would benefit from more lighting. Funding for the lights came from CIL money (the money we collect from developers and use to improve infrastructure in the town).



## Skate Park

We made improvements to the skate ramps at Blossoms Park, including a new grind box.

We are proud of our play/sports provision for young people in the town. As well as the skate park, there are playgrounds at the Recreation Ground, Spitals Cross, Marsh Green and Stangrove Park, where this is also a multi-use games area for Street Snooker and Cross Bar King, complemented by an outdoor gym and basketball net.



# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS



## Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre

We are pleased to have contributed £200,000 of CIL funding towards the new health centre being built in Edenbridge by the NHS. The Council's CIL Board meets twice a year to consider CIL funding requests for infrastructure projects.

We have supported Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust by sharing information about the project with residents, and promoting feedback opportunities and events such as a public roadshow.



## Family Fun Days

Families were able to come along to Stangrove Park over the summer for free crafts, games, sports, bouncy castle fun and other entertainment.

Five Family Fun Days were held - one funded by Sevenoaks District Council and the others funded by Edenbridge Town Council.

Special activities were also arranged including face-painting, a popular magician show and African drumming.



## Dementia Friendly

Edenbridge Town Council has been working with the Kent Dementia Action Alliance (KDAA) to make Edenbridge a supportive and friendly place for those who are living with dementia. Together, we connect with local businesses and community groups to raise awareness by sharing information and promoting best practice. This partnership initiative is also supported by Eden Valley Chamber of Commerce and Edenbridge Manor Care Home.

# FINANCE REPORT



## COUNCILLOR NICK LLOYD CHAIR OF FINANCE 2019-2023

For the financial year to 31 March 2023 Council expenditure was, as last year, within budget with lower spend in several areas.

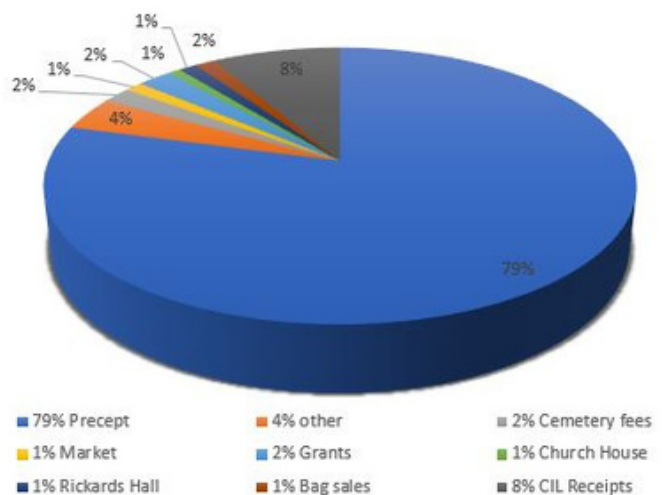
### Annual Budget comparisons

	£	2022/23 Budget	Excluding CIL	CIL	Total
Income		729,582	758,798	68,895	827,693
Expenditure		719,365	668,120	344,375	1,012,495
Transfer to/from Reserves		<u>10,217</u>	90,678	(275,480)	(184,802)
Movement to Earmarked reserves			<u>68,435</u>		
Movement to General Reserves			<u>22,243</u>		

## Income

Most of the Council's income is the Precept - its share of the Council Tax - but it does have other income from cemetery fees, rents, hall hire, the weekly market, the sale of refuse sacks and some small grants.

### Income £828k of which the Precept £656,364

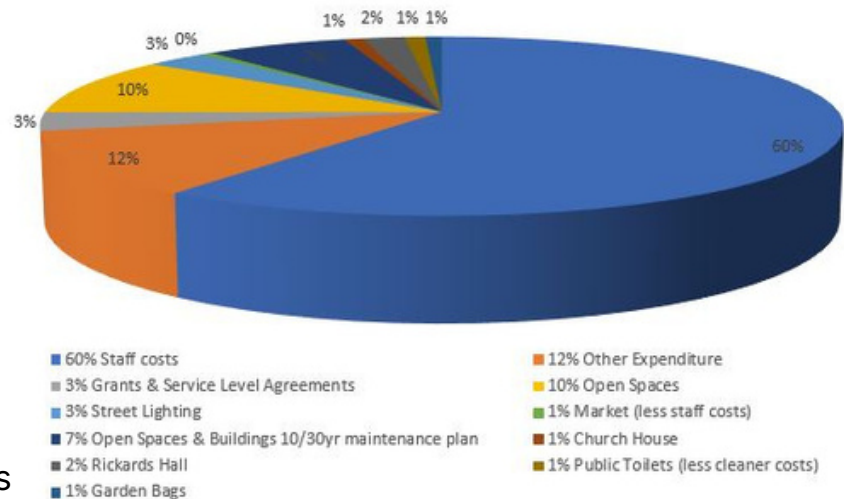


## Expenditure

Staff costs are the largest single element of spend (60%). Rates of pay are determined nationally and other than reducing staffing, and therefore services, this is hard to change. The rest of the expenditure was for equipment, vehicles, office costs and maintenance of the open space and buildings in the town.

The Council also awarded £6,950 in grants to community groups including Edenbridge Community Christmas Association, Citizens Advice Bureau, 1st Edenbridge Girl Guides, Hi Kent, Marling Morris Dancers, and West Kent Mediation.

For a number of reasons, several planned projects were not completed this year, so £68,435 of the surplus has been transferred into the reserves for completion this coming year.



## CIL Funds

The Town Council continues to receive, via Sevenoaks District Council, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funds from developers of housing projects. As can be seen from the reserves analysis (page 12), the CIL Fund has been accumulating for a number of years. This year there have been significant payouts to local projects:

£100,000 (first of a total £200k award) towards building the new Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre

£177,370 new playground in the Recreation Ground

£24,000 skate park improvements at Blossoms Park

£5,000 new 40 mph buffer zone Main Road north end approach to the town

£9,154 to the Cricket Club artificial pitch

£16,750 to the WI Hall for new stage lighting

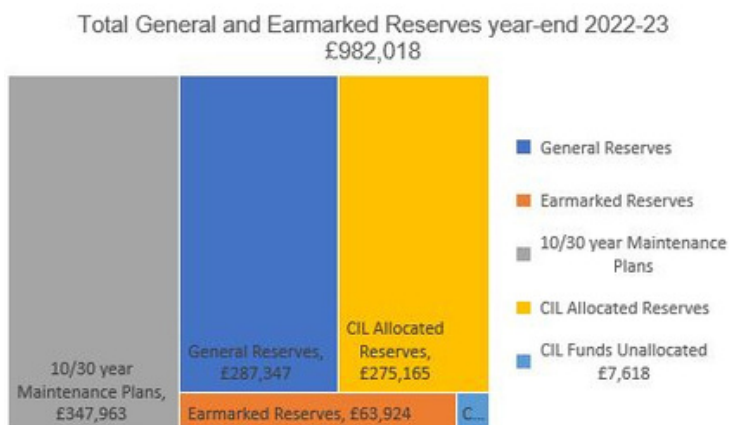
£3,472 Westways two additional street lights

£8,600 to Hever School for a Shepherd's Hut



# Reserves

As of 31 March 2023 there are £411,888 of earmarked funds (grey and orange), the largest part of which relates to reserves set aside to cover expected maintenance costs for the open spaces and buildings of the town. The CIL Funds comparison of £282,784 of which £275k are already allocated to projects (yellow and pale blue).



The CIL Funds are held by the Town Council but available to other organisations with clear rules as to how they are spent. This leaves the General Fund (in blue above) to cover emergencies and unforeseen costs, such as a major flood or even a pandemic. Generally, councils are recommended to hold reserves of 50% of annual expenditure and those with a large asset base, like Edenbridge, more like 75%. However viewed, the Town Council's General Fund is lower than is comfortable at £287,347 (31/3/23). This Council has been very conscious of this and has managed to reverse annual deficits and is now slowly building back up the General Reserve by budgeting for small surpluses. The budget for next year plans to have income slightly higher than expenditure allowing a small surplus to continue this.

## Reserves Position

	31/03/2022			31/03/2023	
£	Opening Reserve	Released	Planned Movement	Year-end Adjustments	Closing Reserve
<b>Ear-Marked Reserves</b>					
- Neighbourhood Plan	15,000.00		-		15,000.00
- Election	11,500.00		4,000.00		15,500.00
- Depreciation Equipment & Tools	1,000.00		-		1,000.00
- 10/30 Year Building Plan	80,117.00		12,680.00		92,797.00
- 10/30 Open Spaces Plan	225,064.00		30,102.00		255,166.00
- Cemetery	1,000.00		-		1,000.00
- Staff	12,000.00	(6,000.00)			6,000.00
- Grants (and deposits)	772.25	(772.25)		785.39	785.39
- Projects Carried Over	7,957.00	(7,957.00)	13,900.00	678.00	14,578.00
- Rickards Hall Deposits				500.00	500.00
- Council Grant Carried over				1,290.00	1,290.00
- Land Asset Review			3,000.00		3,000.00
- Community Warden	3,771.00				3,771.00
- Tourism				1,500.00	1,500.00
<b>Total Ear-Marked Reserves</b>	<b>358,181.25</b>	<b>(14,729.25)</b>	<b>63,682.00</b>	<b>4,753.39</b>	<b>411,887.39</b>
<b>General Reserve</b>	<b>250,811.88</b>	<b>(73,263.65)</b>	<b>29,140.88</b>	<b>80,657.87</b>	<b>287,346.98</b>
	<b>608,993.13</b>	<b>(87,992.90)</b>	<b>92,822.88</b>	<b>85,411.26</b>	<b>699,234.37</b>
<b>CIL allocated</b>	<b>472,795.00</b>	<b>(349,966.05)</b>	<b>152,336.29</b>		<b>275,165.24</b>
<b>CIL unallocated</b>	<b>83,934.46</b>	<b>(155,037.92)</b>	<b>78,721.91</b>		<b>7,618.45</b>
<b>Reserve Totals</b>	<b>1,165,722.59</b>	<b>(592,996.87)</b>	<b>323,881.08</b>	<b>85,411.26</b>	<b>982,018.06</b>



## Governance

This was the fourth and final year of the current Council. As well as contending with the unforeseeable Covid crisis there have been four years of change and improvement in the Council's Governance. This has been driven by Caroline Leet, the Town Clerk, who joined in 2019 and Lorraine Ganney, the Responsible Financial Officer, who joined the Council in 2021.

Governance is an aspect of the Council that is all but invisible and generally not appreciated until something goes wrong. Finance and Governance go hand in hand and there have been improvements in the information available to the Committee. Every two months a detailed finance pack is now presented which includes a full balance sheet, income and expenditure account, cashbook summaries and reconciliations of movements and transfers. These are published on the website for clear transparency.

There has been a steady investment in software to more effectively manage the Council finances, building on its existing finance system with modules for hall bookings, cemeteries and asset management, as well as new software for staff and health and safety management.

At the start of this Council there was a review of its committee structure which included the introduction of this Governance Committee. The Council's policies have been reviewed and updated as needed via the Governance Committee, particularly Standing Orders (which regulate how the Council operates). New policies have been put in place, including for the Community Infrastructure Levy, Payroll and Salaries procedures and Capital and Reserves. The Governance Committee has also reviewed the Council's full Governance Risk Assessments and receives the annual external Health and Safety Report, making recommendations to full Council.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/TRANSPARENCY

We aim to be open and transparent about our activities and encourage community engagement and conversation to ensure a democratic process with elected Councillors and the Council's decision-making. Our website is updated regularly with news, information and links, as well as details of upcoming meetings that the public are welcome to attend. We publish a Council newsletter in the bi-monthly Edenbridge Magazine, which is delivered free to all households, and we are active on social media. We also continue to promote Edenbridge as a beautiful place to visit via our tourism brand *Visit Edenbridge*, highlighting key attractions as well as our local High Street and weekly market. Search "Edenbridge Town Council" and "Edenbridge Market" on Facebook and discover more at:

**[www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk)**

**[www.visitedenbridge.com](http://www.visitedenbridge.com)**

**[www.edenbridgemarket.co.uk](http://www.edenbridgemarket.co.uk)**





"We aim to continue providing the high standard of facilities and services that residents deserve."

– Chairman, Councillor Bob Todd

## WHAT WE DO

All this for  
£3.50  
a week



Parks,  
Playgrounds &  
Open Spaces



Allotments



Streetlights &  
Bus Shelters



Market



Cemeteries



Tourism



Public Toilets

Based on a Council Tax Band D property, the average household will pay £180.43 a year for the services of Edenbridge Town Council compared to £171.84 in 2022-23. That's a 5% increase on last year, or £8.59 annually or 17p per week. This 'Precept' represents the smallest proportion of your overall Council Tax bill, which you receive from Sevenoaks District Council.

## OUR BUDGET...

£771,841

Expenditure

£702,217

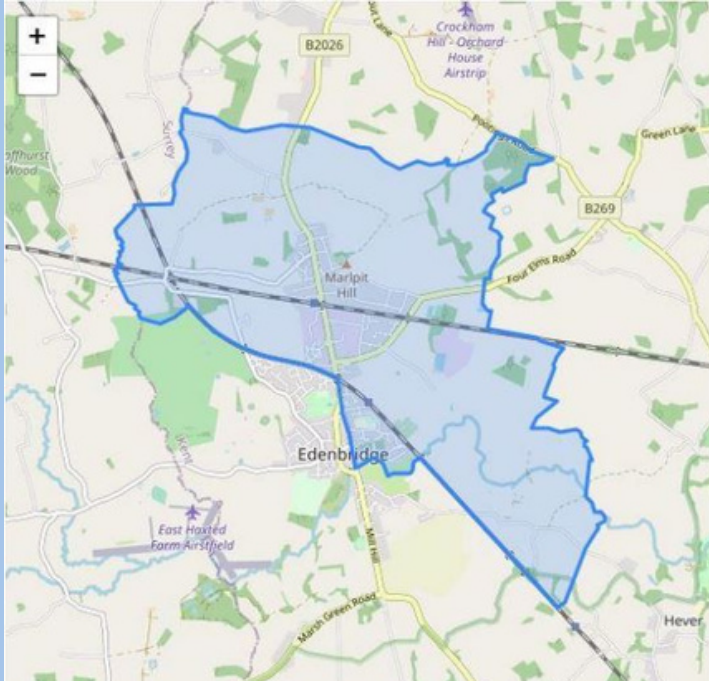
Income - Precept  
(Share of Council Tax)

£92,773

Income (estimated)  
e.g. cemetery fees,  
market, hall hire

# YOUR NEW COUNCIL

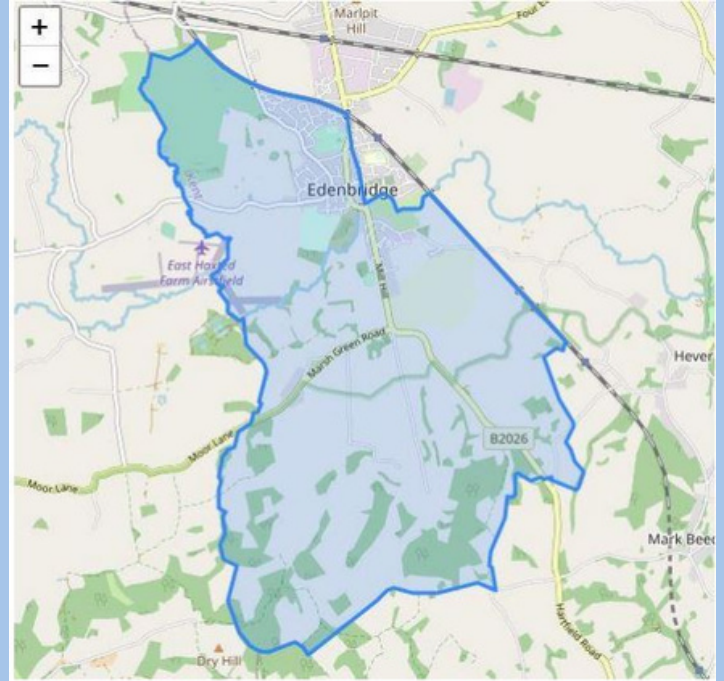
## 2023 - 2027



### 1. North & East Ward

Cllr Angela Baker  
Cllr Sarah Compton  
Cllr Alan Layland  
Cllr Stuart McGregor  
Cllr Vince Parker  
Cllr Angela Read  
Cllr Stephen Sumner  
Cllr Bob Todd

**Email your Councillor:** insert their surname where **highlighted**



### 2. South & West Ward

Cllr Jon Aldridge  
Cllr Andy Eyre  
Cllr Michael Gemmell Smith  
Cllr Nicola Martindale  
Cllr Margot McArthur  
Cllr Jeff Streets  
Vacancy (at time of print)

cllr.**surname**@edenbridgetown  
council.gov.uk

### Council Staff

**Town Clerk:** Caroline Leet

**Responsible Finance Officer/Deputy Clerk:** Lorraine Ganney

**Head Groundsman & Buildings Manager:** Craig Open

**Groundsteam:** Lance Thompsett, Tony Saunders, Sean Rose

**Admin & Planning Officer:** Deborah Bond

**Communications Officer:** Davina Miller

**Community Warden:** (vacancy)

**Deputy Clerk:** Kathy Staff

**Tourism Officer:** Lindsey Eaton

**Market Officer:** Guy Holden

# GET IN TOUCH

## EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Doggetts Barn, 72A High Street, Edenbridge  
TN8 7AR

## EMAIL ADDRESS

[information@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:information@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk)

## PHONE NUMBER

01732 865368



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**TOWN COUNCIL**