

Edenbridge Annual Town Meeting

Q&As ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 11 MARCH 2024

1) QUESTION

What can be done about the parking problems created in the area around the Recreation Ground, when sports festivals are taking place? A resident asked if the Town Council was aware of the very large sports festivals held on the Recreation Ground, Lingfield Road, and the impact it has on residents with extra parking around the streets at least half mile around the area, parking on junctions, abandoning cars and health and safety impact. If they are aware of it what are they doing about it, and could they consider the problem that we have?

Cllr Margot McArthur: Not connected to the Rugby Club, but does live close to the Rec and was aware of the events and understands the impact locally. The Club had tried to limit problems, all of the visiting teams were given specified parking locations around the town - unfortunately it was not possible to ensure every vehicle from a visiting club parked according to the instructions. Hopefully, lessons will be taken from the recent event and the Club will address how to manage this going forward.

2) QUESTION

Following on from the last question – it would have been useful if the Rugby Club could have given out more information to the local community in advance that an event was taking place using other social media sites, appreciate it was on its own website but had it been better advertised residents would have known about the event.

Cllr Sarah Compton: As the Club Secretary of Rugby, have listened to the concerns and suggestions and will take forward; any questions or suggestions can be sent to the chair@edenbridgerugby.co.uk. The Club has received no emails or complaints direct about the event. The recent rugby festival was one of the biggest fundraisers the Club organises and it helps to keep the Club running. There were about 2,000 kids attending and it was a great event getting children outside and involved in sport.

3) QUESTION

The Chair of the recently newly formed New Edenbridge District Residents Association (NEDRA) thanked the Town Council for all their hard work and efforts on behalf of the Edenbridge residents. NEDRA was interested to hear that the Town Council supports the residents opposition of what is seen as excessive and inappropriate development in the 2040 Local Plan. Questions were: the revised Plan issued this summer, will residents be able to see an analysis of the responses to the recent consultation; and how much time will be given to consider the proposals as last time, it was way too short.

SDC Cllr Julia Thornton: SDC was currently working towards the Regulation 19 submission for the summer. There are two committees of development and conservation looking at the analysis and evidence, and reporting back its findings. First meeting, 26 March, would look at the feedback on consultation which will give an idea of the direction to go with and the content for the Reg 19. The analysis of feedback was available on the website: https://engagement.sevenoaks.gov.uk/strategic-planning/da474463/consultation/published_select_respondent

The question on timings, SDC did exactly the same communications as previous times and got more results this time. Have to do six week statutorily, but because of Christmas SDC did eight weeks This worked in residents favour as people were often off work and allowed time to respond. SDC does and will continue to engage with town and parish councils, and

the communications team would be publishing in the In Shape Magazine, social media channels, and local drop in sessions.

SDC were likely to run the Regulation 19 consultation in the Summer, subject to Member approval, and would again extend it from the statutory 6 week period to take account of school holidays.

4) QUESTION

A resident commented on how difficult to complete the online form, and knows some people did not complete the full questionnaire.

Cllr Thornton: We received over 5000 responses to the consultation and all submitted comments will be fully and carefully considered. SDC were keen to continue to develop how it engages to make it as easy as possible, so will take learning from the feedback. Residents did not have to complete the full consultation questionnaire for their comments to be included.

5) QUESTION

Since new Health Medical Centre has been built there is no streetlighting on, why are the new street lights on Four Elms Road not on?

Cllr Margot McArthur and the Town Clerk: The new street lights replaced four Town Council's footpath lighting as they had not met Highways road lighting standards. The hospital developer was responsible for the first year, after which KCC would adopt. The connection delay was an issue between the developer and UK Power Networks. All parties were working to get them connected as soon as possible and the Town Council had sent several communications already. It was hoped this would be resolved shortly, and the Council was monitoring this issue.

6) QUESTION

Why had the broken street light column on Station Road near the roundabout not been removed?

Town Clerk: The street lights on Station Road are KCC responsibility. It was likely that a different team was required from that which install the new columns in order to disconnect and remove the damaged unit.

Written questions placed in the QUESTION BOX at the end of the meeting:

Q7) How can we prevent the dumping of a disproportionate amount of housing on Edenbridge in the current Local Plan? Sevenoaks Town is much larger than Edenbridge but only bears a small proportion of housing – looks “fishy”?

Response: Edenbridge Town Council has engaged a planning consultant to assist with its responses to the draft Local Plan consultations; these are published on the Council's website (<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/news/consultation-responses/>). The Council has also submitted a letter to SDC, stating that if the Pedham Place site (Swanley) was included in the Local Plan Reg 19 consultation, the quantity of housing being proposed for Green Belt sites in Edenbridge was not needed to meet the District's required housing provision.

Q8) Would the Council please consider installing a bench (not picnic table) in the middle of Lingfield Road Recreation Ground along the tree line, so that people can sit, rest, and relax away from the busy car park?

A request to the Council's Open Spaces Committee could be considered. Any proposal would also need the support of the Rugby Club who lease the field for sporting activities.

Q9) What is to happen to the War Memorial?

The Town Council was in contact with NHS Properties regarding the future of the hospital site, which was being proposed for housing, and the location of the War Memorial. The War Memorials Trust had been consulted also, their advice was to preferably keep War Memorials at their original location, however some do get relocated. Discussions were on-going and no conclusion had yet been reached.