



Edenbridge Town Council

NEWSLETTER Winter 2021/22



PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

Cases of Covid-19 continue to be high and with new variants emerging, so the return to normality remains somewhere in the future. The impact of the past two years has long term effects on the economy, mental and physical health, and has changed the lives of millions of people. We have had to learn to cope and adapt, and it is important that we all continue to following the Government safety [guidelines](#).

We have been awarded a grant, through Sevenoaks District Council (SDC), for ongoing Covid-19 compliance and enforcement activities. This will help continue to deliver measures to encourage public and business awareness, and understanding of regulations and guidance. Part of this funding has allowed for new signage in the town centre and across the Open Spaces sites.

If you or anyone you know is in need of support, [SDC](#) has advice on financial and housing matters. The Edenbridge [Food Bank](#) runs its weekly session from Rickards Hall (next to the Town Council office); [Reachout](#) provides mental health support; and other support networks are highlighted on the



NEW – GAMES CLUB - Starting Monday 10 January, 10 am – 12 noon in Rickards Hall a new Edenbridge cards, games and puzzles weekly social club for residents 55+.



Come along and meet new people, learn new games and have fun in a friendly atmosphere. SDC has been successful in a funding bid with Involve Kent to deliver this activity, which will be piloted for three months; if successful the Club will continue. The aim is to help reduce loneliness and isolation, improve mental wellbeing and give people something to look forward to. All sessions in January will be free, with a £2 entry thereafter. Games in January will include Tiddlywinks, Scrabble, Chess and more. Come along and give it a try, we look forward to welcoming you to this new Monday Games Club.

Portable Speed Indicator Device (SID) has arrived in Edenbridge. Following consultation on suitable sites within the Kent Highways guidelines, three sites have been approved. SIDs are designed to help educate and change driver behaviour, as well as provide useful data on traffic volumes and speed in the town. This can be feedback to Highways where there are consistent speeding issues. The device was funded from Community Infrastructure Levy.



New Town Councillor - welcome to Michael Gemmell Smith as your new member for the North and East Ward. He moved to Edenbridge in 2000 at the age of 11 and now runs his own business from Hever Business Centre. Michael says, *I am very enthusiastic offering my support and ideas to help Edenbridge be the best it can be. I'd aim to encourage positivity around the great potential of the town.* Visit the [website](#) for more details.

Thursday Charter Market –Market Yard Car Park

The Town Council has been working to encourage existing and new traders to Edenbridge Market, it has also recently joined the National Association of British Markets as well as

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a couple of trader sites. Regular stalls include fresh fruit and veg, bread and cakes, plant stall, cheeses and sausages as well as the fortnightly mobile Lloyds Bank and other monthly traders. Contact: 01732 865368 or email information@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk.

RICKARDS HALL FOR HIRE: A spacious community hall just off the High Street is available to book and is ideal for meetings, children's birthday parties, dance or fitness classes, events and more. There is a kitchen for catering, visual display facilities and Wi-Fi available. Click [here](#) or call 01732 865368 for details.



PACT meetings are back - Wednesday 12th January 10.30am at Rickards Hall. The Town Council recently wrote to Sevenoaks Police, and the Police and Crime Commissioner, raising concerns following an increase in anti-social behaviour. As a result it was agreed to restart the Partners and Community Together (PACT) meetings, and the Police highlighted the new [e-Watch](#), which is similar to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. In addition there is a messaging service providing twice weekly information to people who sign up to receive it – [My Community Voice](#).

Edenbridge Civic Medallion Awards 2021

Town Councillors have awarded their highest honour, the Civic Medallion, to two members of the community who have made an outstanding contribution to Edenbridge.



Julie Barry BEM was voted by the Council to be the 23rd recipient of this prestigious award which was first issued in 1992, in recognition of over 10-years as the Parish Nurse. Julie created a unique role. She also set up and

supported mental health self-help groups. With her energy, drive, rapport, and intuition in identifying needs, people felt able to trust her. Her empathy with the most vulnerable has been especially important, and many people have valued this and have reason to be grateful. She is always smiling, helping people feel at ease, and nothing was ever too much trouble. Julie developed trusting relationships and provided invaluable support and advice. Amongst other things, she bridged the gap between organisations and groups within this community and is hugely respected and loved by everyone.

Julie also set up and ran the food bank (known as God's Hands). It started from very humble beginnings, using some space in the old Baptist Church. This then developed into a project within her parish nursing role, and operated out of St Lawrence's Church car park. With a team of volunteers that Julie trained and cared for so well, the food bank was able to gather food donated by people in the churches, from donations at supermarkets, individuals and other local charitable groups, providing a lifeline for people in crisis. Her commitment to the food bank saw this become an essential facility for those with a need for this vital support. Julie provided that individual, sensitive, caring approach to each and every person in the community whom she has helped over the last eleven years.

It was with huge sadness that in August, we lost our dear councillor, John Scholey following a short illness. Just before he died, the Council awarded him with a Civic Medallion, in recognition of his long and valuable service to the Town

Council and the community. When he was told about this award, the news perked him up and he dictated a letter in which he was typically modest and said he was honoured beyond belief, and 'I have tried to serve this community to the best of my ability during my 20 years as a councillor, but I never expected this honour'. John was thrilled with this award and requested it be presented to his wife Gill on his behalf, recognising all the work she had done in the background to support him and the wider community.

John first became a Town Councillor in 1999, serving for over 22 years; he was Chairman of the Council from 2005 to 2007 and also Chairman of the Finance and Open Spaces Committees for several years. With his love of the countryside, he had a significant impact on the footpaths and Millennium Wood and maintaining the Green Belt. His knowledge on planning policies and Sustainable Drainable Strategies was invaluable and key to the flood risk management and defence improvements for Edenbridge.

In 2007 he was elected as a Sevenoaks District Councillor, remaining in office until 2019 and served on the Finance Committee for a number of years, including a period of time as Cabinet Portfolio Holder. He was also a campaigner and advocate for the Mont St Aignan Way relief road finally being built. John was hugely respected at District Council.

John was also involved with a number of local organisations including Scouting, the Eden Valley Museum, Friends of Edenbridge Parish Church, Tonbridge and Malling Conservative Association, and Edenbridge Men's Probus.

Chairman, Cllr Bob Todd awarded both Civic Medallions. Pictured above, Julie receiving her award; right, Gill Scholey having received the award following John's Memorial Service in October.



DATE FOR DIARY – Annual Town Meeting Monday 7 March 2022. More details to follow on [website](#).



The Council spent three months reviewing and scrutinising its new draft budget 2022/23. Savings have been made on expenditure over the past two years, but for several years there has been a deficit against income. With external costs increasing the recommendation was to increase the Precept to achieve a balanced budget. This means a Band D precept for 2022/23 is expected to be £171.20, which is an increase of £1.25 per month or £15 annually. Full details of the budget and explanation are available on the website [here](#).



Towards the end of 2021 the Council soft-launched its new visitor and residents website, which is concentrating more on Edenbridge and its immediate vicinity than the previous one. www.visitededenbridge.com showcases local attractions, outdoor activities, where to go and what to do in and around the town. The website is regularly updated in order to stay current.