



TENTERDEN
TOWN COUNCIL



Stuart Kirk Photography

Picture by Stuart Kirk

Town Budget



Tenterden Town Council has announced its annual precept for 2018 - the town's budget - of £415,914, equating to £2.23 a week for the average household.

The precept pays for the council's day-to-day running costs, which are increasing significantly, partly as a result of Tenterden's development, with more housing and major regeneration proposals - see lead story.

The increase covers:

- The potential purchase of land for new football pitches,
- Taking over the tourist information centre and Friday market,
- New storage for grounds maintenance equipment,
- Repairing damage caused by vandals, and
- An increase in staffing to accommodate the dozen or more projects "on the go".

Town Clerk Phil Burgess commented: "Tenterden is experiencing a unique period of growth and development, and this requires greater resources and engagement with our residents - for instance, we have experienced a 70% increase in the number of public enquiries over the past two years. Last year, we were able to cut the annual precept as a result of investing the money we received from land sale receipts. However, that money is being used for major capital projects, such as improvements to the Recreation Ground and making the Town Hall more accessible and user-friendly for residents - we are not allowed to spend our capital receipts on day-to-day running costs. "Nevertheless, we believe that a new precept equating to £2.23 per household represents excellent value for money"

Cinema Plans Update

Tenterden Town Council is commissioning a feasibility study on the potential for a new cinema in the town.

The £3,000 study, which will be carried out by cinema business analysts Craigmount Consulting, will evaluate the commercial aspects of a Tenterden cinema, and look at possible sites.

The commissioning of the study is the latest stage in the council's strategy for regenerating Tenterden for the future.

Also part of the strategy are....

- Major changes to the Recreation Ground - a third meeting with specialists Ground Control is being held to refine plans for the re-ordering of the area, with zones

dedicated to a skate park, multi-use sports arena, children's play facilities, the bowls club and tennis/netball courts.

- Working towards online access via the Town Council website for availability of community halls and details of other hireable spaces, and
- Refurbishing and maximising the use of the Town Hall.

Says the Mayor, Cllr Justin Nelson:

"We are making solid progress in utilising some of the £3.5m we have available from the sale of council-owned land, as well as other sources of grant income, to create a more vibrant and accessible town."

Keeping Our Buses

Tenterden Town Council has pledged to fight proposals to cut local bus services.

Kent County Council has announced cuts to bus company subsidies, meaning that several services from outlying villages into Tenterden, and from the town to Headcorn station could be axed.

Mayor Cllr Justin Nelson said: "We will be pressing KCC to maintain Tenterden bus services, citing the social and economic damage the proposed cuts would cause."

In the meantime, the council is evaluating potential community transport options, and has opened discussions with the Day Centre, which has four minibuses currently only used for limited times during the week. The council is also in touch with Ashford Volunteer Centre to see if they have similar transport options. KCC have announced that their proposals are subject to public consultation before a final decision is made in May, with services withdrawn in September.

Public Engagement

A new initiative has been launched to help Tenterden Town Council inform residents of its ideas, activities and decisions and to gather residents' views.

A Public Engagement forum was set up in December, and ideas to improve communications were discussed to complement the council's existing range of activities, which include the website, press releases,

newsletters and social media. Suggestions at the initial meeting included a public survey, press advertising and making council meetings less formal. The next meeting of the Public Engagement sub committee is being held at the Town Hall at 7pm, Monday, 15 January, and all are welcome to attend and contribute.

Vandals Action

Action is being taken to combat vandalism in the town.

While there is no evidence the problem is becoming worse, upgraded software is being installed in the town's CCTV system, to more clearly identify culprits who have been responsible for vandalising the Bowls Club and damaging public toilets in Station Road and at both Tenterden and St Michael's recreation grounds.



Christmas Market

Tenterden Town Council has congratulated the organisers and volunteers who helped make the Christmas Market such a success.

The Tenterden Christmas Market saw thousands of visitors thronging the streets over two days, a brilliant display of lights, more than 80 stalls, a Christmas light parade involving 300 children, and even a snow machine. The Mayor of Tenterden, Cllr Justin Nelson, declared the event "the best ever", and congratulated organisers Natasha Mahoney and Seren Welch and their helpers who worked exceptionally hard to make it such a success.

The organisers will be presenting a report on the Christmas Market to the council at 6.20pm on Monday, 29 January, prior to the council meeting. The public are invited to attend.

Friday Market

Tenterden Town Council is assuming responsibility for the running of the town's Friday market.

Currently managed by Ashford Borough Council, the new arrangements will mean that stallholders will no longer have to pay an annual fee to attend the market.

In addition, the town council will encourage stallholders who want to

participate occasionally, or for the first time without committing to a long-term arrangement.

The initiative is part of the council's drive to regenerate the High Street, and to improve and expand the popular market.

The new arrangements begin in April, and stallholders seeking further information should email townhall@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk

Green Areas



While Tenterden is celebrated for being surrounded by beautiful countryside, the council continues to look for ways to

provide new 'green' areas for the town.

Cllr Callum Knowles has been foremost in identifying land which could be used for the conservation of wildlife and encouraging wildflower growth, as well as providing areas for walking and

school field trips for nature study.

Says Cllr Knowles: "I think it's important that we have 'green' areas which people can enjoy, particularly as more homes are built in and around the town. In particular, it helps children develop an appreciation and understanding of the value of nature."

Two areas have been identified - Kiln Field, a four-and-a-half acre piece of land near Shrubcote, and the disused cemetery between Coombe Lane and Station Road - and the council is working with Kent Wildlife Trust to evaluate their potential.

Have Your Say On Planning



Planning and new housing developments can often be controversial, but Cllr Richard Lusty, chair of

Tenterden Town Council's planning committee, is urging local people to have their say.

The planning committee meets every three weeks at the Town Hall, and members of the public who wish to speak on a particular application can do so by registering in advance with Deputy Town Clerk Claire Gilbert,

tel: 01580 762271, email townhall@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk

One speaker for and against an application is permitted, with a time limit of three minutes.

Says Cllr Lusty: "While we are fully consulted on planning applications, Ashford Borough Council makes the final decision. So it is important that people have their say, so we can add their views to our consultations with ABC".

Councillor Vacancy

A by-election is being held on Thursday, 15 February for a councillor to represent South Ward, which is bounded by the High Street, Oaks Road, Woodchurch Road, and Appledore Road.

Candidates wishing to be considered for election should live or work within three miles of the town, but not necessarily in South Ward, and apply for a nomination pack from the Town Hall, telephone 01580 762271, or email townhall@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk for submission to Ashford Borough Council no later than Friday, 19 January.

Mayor's Fundraising



The Mayor of Tenterden, Cllr Justin Nelson, is organising an Indian Feast evening at The Badsha Restaurant on Wednesday, 7 February.

Funds raised at the event will go to the Mayor's nominated charities, Community First Responders and Tenterden Cricket Club. For tickets and information, please contact the Town Hall, Tel: 01580 762271 or email adminassist@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk

Community Chest



Tenterden's £165,000 Community Chest, which is dedicated to funding local projects, is being launched at 7pm on Wednesday, 17 January.

The money will be shared out among projects of benefit to the whole community, and will be adjudicated by a panel of local residents, supported by Cllrs Sue Ferguson and Dr Lisa Lovelidge (pictured). Representatives of projects seeking funding can collect an application form from the Town Hall, tel: 01580 or send an email to townclerk@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk

Contact

If you would like more information about Tenterden Town Council, visit the website www.tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk; tel: 01580 762271; or please email townhall@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk Or visit the Town Hall, 9am-3pm, Monday to Friday.