

# TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE 2020-2021

There are plenty of opportunities for you to see the Town Council and its committees in action. During the Covid-19 crisis, all meetings will be held via Zoom videotechnology. If residents wish to speak at a meeting, please contact: townhall@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk or telephone 01580 762271 before 12 noon on the day of the meeting. Meetings are also live-streamed - log onto <http://www.audiominutes.com/p/player/player.html?userid=tendntc>

Date (ALL MONDAYS unless specified)	Internal	Planning	Town Council	External
1 <sup>st</sup> June 2020		Planning		
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	External, Internal			
6 <sup>th</sup> July 2020		Planning		
13 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Town Council, Internal, External			
3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2020		Planning		
10 <sup>th</sup> August 2020	External, Internal			
7 <sup>th</sup> September 2020		Planning		
14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Town Council, Internal, External			
5 <sup>th</sup> October 2020		Planning		
12 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	External, Internal			
17 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 (Sat)	Meet Your Councillors Coffee Morning – 10am to 12 noon (To be confirmed)			
2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020		Planning		
9 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Town Council, Internal, External			
7 <sup>th</sup> December 2020		Planning		
14 <sup>th</sup> December 2020		External, Internal		
4 <sup>th</sup> January 2021		Planning		
11 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Town Council, Internal, External			
1 <sup>st</sup> February 2021		Planning		
8 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	External, Internal			
13 <sup>th</sup> February 2021 (Sat)	Meet Your Councillors Coffee Morning – 10am to 12 noon (To be confirmed)			
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2020		Planning		
8 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Town Council, Internal, External			
6 <sup>th</sup> April 2021 (Tues)*		Planning		
12 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	External, Internal			
17 <sup>th</sup> April 2021 (Sat)	Meet Your Councillors Coffee Morning – 10am to 12 noon (To be confirmed)			
4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Tues) *		Planning		
10 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	Annual Meeting of the Town Council, including Mayor-Making – 7pm			

\* Please note these are Tuesdays due to Bank Holidays



TENTERDEN  
TOWN COUNCIL

## Tenterden Town Council Annual Report 2019/20

MAY 2020

## HOW TO CONTACT THE TOWN COUNCIL

Tenterden Town Council welcomes comments and feedback on its activities. This is how to get in touch...

If you would like to contact your local councillor, please feel free to call or email.

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**By phone:** 01580 762271

**By post:** Town Hall, 24 High St, Tenterden TN30 6AN

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

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### WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Working together to combat Covid-19
- Major projects update
- Planning - Fighting our corner
- Delivering value for money

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



# DEFENDING, PROTECTING, PROMOTING OUR LOVELY TOWN

For the first time in living memory, we have been unable to hold our Annual Town Meeting, when Tenterden Town Council briefs residents on our progress during the year, and our aspirations for the coming 12 months.

Despite the extraordinary impact of Covid-19, we have carried on working uninterrupted, thanks to Zoom videoconferencing technology and the commitment of our councillors and the Town Hall team – indeed, we actually held committee meetings via Zoom before the first online sitting of Parliament!

So I'm pleased to be able to present the Tenterden Town Council Annual Report 2019/20, explaining what we have been doing to defend, protect and promote our lovely town.

And I'm particularly pleased to be able to thank publicly the wonderful work done in recent weeks by the Helping In Tenterden team (HIT), which was brought together in March to deliver a wide range of services to those who need it most during the pandemic.

HIT combines the knowledge and commitment of the Town Council, Tenterden Social Hub, Tenterden Community Hub, St Mildred's Church and website MyTenterden, all working in close co-operation with Ivy Court Surgery and the Kent Family Food Bank charity.

Their appeal for support brought an outstanding response: more

than 200 volunteers, many of them young, came together to deliver services from making food deliveries to collecting prescriptions, from signposting help for those in financial difficulties to dog walking and providing a friendly voice on the end of a phone. At the time of going to press, they had answered more than 600 calls for help.

**The 21-strong HIT headquarters team and its volunteers worked every day to support the vulnerable and socially isolated, and it is the most profound illustration of how a community can come together and achieve wonderful things.**

Thankfully, the Council year has not been totally dominated by Covid-19, and we have worked hard to...

- **Protect the town from speculative housing developments**
- **Promote Tenterden as a great place to live and work**
- **Reduce low-level crime**
- **Spend our money wisely, and**
- **Progress our four major projects: Cinema; Town Hall; Recreation Ground; and IT improvements.**

It has been an eventful year in so many other ways, and it is easy to

forget that progress was made on all fronts before anyone had even heard of Covid-19. For instance, the excellent exhibition on our major projects, and another on archives and history, the Christmas Market, celebrations at Homewood School and much more, all went ahead successfully.

I am particularly pleased with the scheme to turn Kiln Field into a nature reserve for us all to enjoy, and with that goes a big thank you to our maintenance staff clearing the site, and who have managed to keep working, even through the lockdown period, while observing social distancing.

There are so many people to say thank you to that I don't want to leave anyone out – so I'd just like to say a big, big thank you to you all.

It has been a great honour to be your Mayor for the past 12 months, and I am delighted to be appointed for a second year, along with the Deputy Mayor Dr Lisa Lovelidge.

**Cllr Jean Curteis, Mayor**



## HOW TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL HAS WORKED WITH IVY COURT SURGERY TO COMBAT COVID-19

We are all living in unprecedented, deeply challenging and frightening times. These challenges have revealed the best, and far more rarely, the worst, of our society.

Ivy Court Surgery and its staff are absolutely up there with the best. They have stepped forward, once again, and shown us how incredibly lucky we are to have them at the heart of our healthcare in Tenterden.

Working from temporary premises while the new surgery is being built, as well as from our Pavilion to handle telephone and video appointments, they have calmly and professionally guided and cared for us all. They are also playing key roles in Helping In Tenterden (HIT) and supporting the Social Hub. The public outpouring of joy and relief that greeted the news that Dr Neil Pillai was recovering from Covid-19 is testament to Ivy Court's place in Tenterden life.

Tenterden Town Council has always supported the ground-breaking work done by Ivy Court Surgery, and in October agreed a grant of £5,000 to fund a community and wellbeing project to enable surgery staff to receive specialist training in 'social prescribing'.

This would enable specialist link workers at the surgery to 'prescribe' social connection, exercise and other wellbeing interventions rather than endless pills.

Events overtook delivery of the programme, designed to tackle isolation and loneliness, which as Dr Pillai told the council "spare no age or class". Never has this been more true, and the impact on physical and mental health caused by Covid-19, and the lockdown, will be felt for a very long time.

The Town Council will continue to support Ivy Court as it helps us all navigate a very different and challenging future.

**By Cllr Kate Walder**

## TOWN BUDGET ON TRACK

The town's annual budget (precept) of £603,839 for the year ended 31 March, 2020 is on track, with figures being finalised as the Annual Report went to press.

The budget, equating to £3.07 a week for the average Tenterden household, included more than £30,000 in 'first time' costs, such as legal bills for challenging contentious planning applications, a grant to Ivy Court Surgery for the social prescribing initiative (see story on this page) and the appointment of a professional gardener.

Additional costs have come with investment in our new green waste facility and the St Michael's unit for our maintenance team, while the impact of emergency expenditure as a result of Covid-19 makes the final budget outcome uncertain.

On the income side, £75,000 is due from the developers of Tilden Gill, which will help fund the Kiln Field wildlife reserve (see page 4). Additional contributions from housing developers will yield a significant amount, which will be targeted at the Recreation Ground project. The final outcome for the 19/20 accounts, and a 20/21 budget progress will be presented for council approval later this year.

## CLIMATE CHANGE HONOURING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

A significant initiative to help the town meet its environmental responsibilities has been agreed, committing the Town Council to carbon-neutrality by 2030, and evaluating a pollution monitoring scheme near our schools.

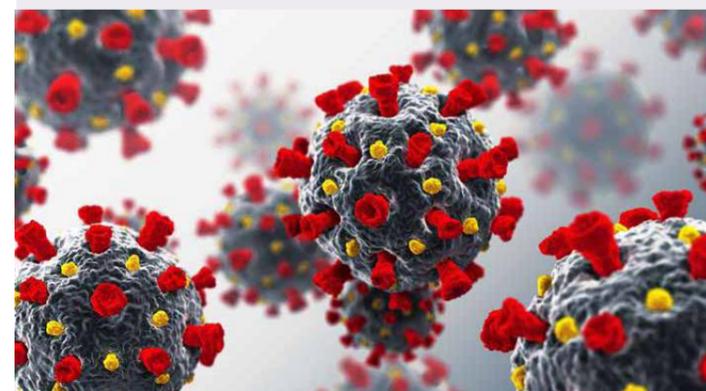
A sub-committee is to be set up to evaluate what can be done, and set priorities and targets. Monitoring of vehicle emissions, tree planting, the availability of car charging points and engaging the local community are among the issues to be discussed.

The council are acting on a report, written by Cllr John Crawford, which stated: "As a responsible Town Council, it is our duty to work tirelessly for our community to implement positive changes as a contribution to managing climate change".

The sub-committee – which will include Cllrs Crawford, Kate Walder, Lisa Lovelidge and Roger Quinton – will also examine a potential air pollution monitoring scheme in conjunction with the University of Kent's Centre for Health Service Studies, particularly focused on the area around Homewood School and St Michael's Primary School.

A report by Cllr Justin Nelson said that such an investigation "will give us some hard evidence as to the extent of pollution on Ashford Road outside the schools – we would then need to decide what (if anything) should be done about it, but without the baseline evidence we can do nothing".

The Town Council has already instigated two major environmental initiatives, through the Neighbourhood Plan group focusing on preserving the town's natural environment, and refurbishing the Town Hall's insulation and heating systems.





## TENTERDEN – A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE & WORK

Among the key debates and decisions taken in the past year to enhance the town’s reputation as ‘The Jewel in the Weald’ were.....

### TOWN CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR

A new Tenterden Town Centre Co-ordinator is being appointed as part of urgent backing for a strategy and campaign to ‘Support the High Street’, and help local shops and businesses recover once lockdown eases. At their meeting on 11 May, councillors emphasised the importance of local shops and businesses to the town’s position as a vital tourism centre.

### SUPPORTING LOCAL EVENTS

The council co-funded the town’s major events, including the May Fayre, Folk Festival, the first-ever Spirit of Tenterden, Tributes in the Park at St Michael’s, and the Christmas Market.

### KEEPING CRIME LOW

PCSOs Kate Richards and Carin Andrews have been the council’s prime contacts in helping keep Tenterden a low-crime town, and a drop-in session at the Town Hall was staged in February at which residents were able to discuss any concerns.

Supported by police officers from Ashford and police cadets, our PCSOs have held successful information sessions in the town, including two targeted at young people – on knife crime and bike marking – and a fraud detection

meeting in conjunction with Barclay’s Bank.

In her most recent report, PCSO Richards has highlighted the problem of fraudsters contacting the vulnerable via telephone, text and voicemails, claiming to be from HMRC.

### WILDLIFE AND WILD FLOWERS

The council has granted an additional £5,000 to convert Kiln Field into the town’s first wildlife habitat, a sustainable and accessible resource for the community.

Support has come from Kent Wildlife Trust, and work has continued throughout the year. The grass is being left uncut to see what plants grow through the seasons; the pond has been cleared and re-stocked with flora and fauna; wood from willows and storm-damaged trees, fences and donated logs will be used to create bat boxes and ‘bug hotels’; and locally sourced chestnut post and rail fencing is being put up, separating Kiln Field from the adjacent Redrow housing development to encourage wildlife to come through the growth of wildflowers.

However, progress is being undermined by inconsiderate dog walkers, and the council has appealed to them to clean up after their pets, particularly as it creates a serious health risk to schoolchildren using Kiln Field as a

nature study classroom.

Meanwhile, verges in Chalk Avenue, Craythorne, the meadow at the bottom of St Michael’s recreation ground, areas along the Appledore Rd and the verge opposite the Fax Ox pub have been designated as areas to encourage the natural growth of wildflowers and grasses.

### LOVELIER THAN EVER

The town is set to look lovelier than ever this summer, after the council agreed to spend an additional £1,500 on flowers and shrubs.

As well as the traditional hanging baskets, the town’s maintenance team and professional gardener Matt Summerfield will create a bedding display at East Cross Gardens

Part of the display may reflect the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, which is the theme of this year’s Parishes in Bloom competition.

Deputy Town Clerk Claire Gilbert said: “We’re really proud of our maintenance team and Matt, who kept working throughout lockdown to keep the town looking bright and uplifting”.

### INVESTING IN THE YOUNG

The council are investing heavily in the town’s young people.

Tenders have been received from two organisations to assist at the youth club at Highbury Hall

which will be considered once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

The council pledged £20,000 to employ a new youth worker; £4,000 to replace previous funding from Zion Baptist Church; and £6,000 to meet staff wages at the club’s youth café.

### FOOTBALL IN FOCUS

The town’s football teams are benefitting from a two-season, £3,000 council subsidy to help them pay fees for hiring the state-of-the-art 3G pitch at Homewood School, which was co-funded by the council via developer contributions at a cost of £240,000 .

In addition, the council has identified an area off Smallhythe Road and undertaken surveys for a new, full-size traditional grass pitch with two smaller training pitches. Investigations are continuing.

### TENTERDEN CYCLEWAY

Work has continued to identify a route for cyclists and pedestrians to enjoy, and the council has been meeting with Sustrans, the national cycling authority, and Ashford Borough Council.

Discussions have been held with local landowners, while the working group is keen to recruit more members.

### WASTE NOT

New measures have been put in place on the Recreation Ground to recycle green waste, while non-green waste is disposed of without going to landfill.

In the meantime, a new unit at the St Michaels Recreation Ground will house all the equipment used by the council’s maintenance team, and will include a water harvesting system.

### NEW RETAIL AND OFFICE UNITS

Proposals by the council to create four new retail or office units in Station Road, adjacent to the public toilets, have been approved by Ashford Borough Council planning. Negotiations continue with ABC over adjoining freeholds

Rental income from the units would provide new, low-cost premises for local businesses, and go towards reducing council tax.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



The past 12 months have seen several notable social occasions, and even a Royal visit . . .

### PRINCESS ROYAL OPENS DANEMORE

HRH The Princess Royal officially opened the new £7.5m Danemore sheltered housing scheme in February.

Prior to unveiling a commemorative plaque, Her Royal Highness was introduced to a number of dignitaries including our Mayor Cllr Jean Curteis.

The new-look Danemore, created by Ashford Borough Council, provides 34 homes for affordable rent for older people, together with four chalet bungalows which are being sold on the open market to subsidise some of the project’s costs.

Danemore is designed to be dementia-friendly throughout in recognition of the area’s ageing population – by 2026 it is anticipated that around 40 percent of people living in the Ashford and Tenterden area will be aged over 50.

Danemore residents enjoy a range of high quality facilities. There is a large cosy communal lounge and kitchen, laundry room, guest suite, buggy store and cycle racks. A treatment room provides hairdressing, nail bar, a podiatrist and chiropodist, massage chair and foot spa.

### HENRY’S FREEDOM

A record-breaking 40 years of service as a Tenterden town councillor was marked in November, when Henry Edwards received the Honorary Freedom of the Town and Hundred of Tenterden. A well-known figure in the town, Henry was first elected to the council in 1979, has been Mayor, a committee chairman, a frequent contributor to council debates and closely involved, a frequent contributor to council debates and closely involved with the Twinning Association and the May Fayre.

“I have some fantastic memories from my time on the council”, he says. “It’s been a great honour to have served, and I have never taken that for granted.”

A lifelong resident of Tenterden at Eastwell Farm, Henry’s family links with the town go back to 1872 when his great grandfather, Obadiah, bought the old Tenterden brewery and nine local pubs. Presenting Henry with his Freeman’s certificate and an inscribed shepherd’s crook, the Mayor Cllr Jean Curteis, commended him for his long service to the “welfare and preservation” of Tenterden, as well as being a mentor to many town councillors.

### MAYOR’S BALL FUNDRAISER

The annual Mayor’s Ball was held at the London Beach Hotel in November. and raised £2,221 for local charities. Sixty people attended the event, including Mayoral representatives from other Cinque Ports towns.





Thanks to Cllr Sue Ferguson, who took most of the images for this publication.

## PLANNING - FIGHTING OUR CORNER

At last year's Town Meeting, I highlighted that Ashford Borough Council (ABC) now has a Local Plan for borough-wide development sites.

For Tenterden, three large developments have been allocated. These are: Tent 1A which is expected to be complete by the end of next year; Tent 1B for an additional 225 homes; and finally, the Tilden Gill development by Shrubcote which has commenced and will contribute another 100 new homes. In total, we expect another 130 affordable homes for the town.

The Local Plan states: "The high quality of Tenterden's landscape setting and its intrinsic historic character are factors that suggest that new development in the town should be limited, phased and very carefully planned."

Unfortunately, it does not seem that developers have read this passage, or feel it can be ignored.

A number of large-scale applications have been submitted - Westwell Court for a 56 bed care home and 23 assisted living units; London Beach Hotel development for 60 flats for active retirees; and Appledore Road, known as Limes Land, for 250 homes.

In no way can these be classified as limited, phased and very carefully planned within our high-quality landscape and historic character. We hope that Ashford planning department will enforce the planning policy for Tenterden.

The Town Council is asking residents to please give their views on each of these large, unplanned development applications to ABC. The community's voice can and will be listened to by the Town Council and ABC. Our town is known as "The Jewel in the Weald", which makes us a very attractive tourist destination and contributes significantly to our economy.

We do not wish to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. We are very conscious that the community at large are against the Westwell Court and Limes Land developments. Both have been rejected by Tenterden Town Council as they do not comply with the National Planning Policy Framework nor the Ashford Local Plan. The decision is now up to ABC.

With regard to smaller applications, in the past 12 months ABC has approved about 23 new homes. Assuming this trend continues, Tenterden would contribute 230 homes towards ABC's total target of 1,000 'windfall' homes by 2030. This means we would have contributed four times the number expected, based on our population and area size. Together with the allocated sites above, the town's population will increase by around 1,550.

When the Ashford Local Plan was produced, unfortunately it only focused on identifying sites for development and an Open Space designation for our two recreation grounds. It omitted identifying sites for Local Green Space designation.

Eighteen months ago, the town's Green Space Focus Group approached the Town Council on the merits of establishing a network of valuable green spaces with routeways, including interconnecting green passages. In essence, to designate Local Green Spaces of verifiable value to the community - to promote the health and wellbeing of its residents and indigenous wildlife, protect its iconic landscape and to attract visitors to the town.

In March 2019, the Neighbourhood Plan steering committee was set up, currently consisting of three councillors and nine residents. With support from a professional community planner we have conducted a large number of community consultation workshops and events to share our findings at different stages of the project, with the view to gain feedback and confirmation that we are on track.

We now have a long list of potential local green spaces and are evaluating each of them using the National Planning Policy Framework criteria. Once we have a final list, robust evidence will be collated to ensure all selected sites pass the stringent assessment by the Neighbourhood Plan examiner.

In addition, work will commence shortly considering the type of policies we should consider based on the public consultations to date.

By Cllr John Crawford

## PROGRESS ON OUR FOUR MAJOR PROJECTS

Significant progress has been made on the four major town projects - a proposed new cinema, a re-vamped Recreation Ground, refurbishment of the Town Hall, and improvements to the council's IT systems.

The projects will be funded by £3.5m of land sales to developers, as well as additional contributions from developers as houses are sold (known as Section 106 money), grants and loans.

Each project has been driven by a Focus Group, led by local residents with support from town councillors.

### CINEMA

Two major studies into a proposed two-screen digital cinema and café at The Pebbles building in the High Street have been completed.

Specialist cinema designers Burrell Foley Fischer have submitted a full feasibility study into the building conversion, while consultants Craigmount have reported on the project's commercial potential.

In recognition that the cinema will be run as a commercial venture by a specialist operator, and not by the Town Council, a new company - Tenterden Cinema Ltd - has been established by the Focus Group to oversee the project, raise additional funds and liaise with the chosen operator.

### RECREATION GROUND

The Recreation Ground Focus Group has met regularly in the past year, developing plans which will transform the town's most accessible and popular park.

The current plans, which will shortly be submitted to Ashford Borough Council for planning permission, are scheduled to be rolled out on a phased basis and include.....



- A high-spec skate park, (see artist's impression above) which will also attract BMX and scooter riders, informed by meetings with local skateboarders and a skate park specialist. The design will blend in with the Recreation Ground landscaping, and the skate park is in the first phase of the redevelopment scheme.
- A youth hub, which has been presented to local young people and youth workers, housed in an eco-friendly building.
- A children's mixed play area, with features such as boulders, climbing walls, zip wire, trampoline and adventure park features; and
- A multi-use games area, including new tennis and netball courts.

Phase One of the Recreation Ground project has been costed at £1.6m.

### TOWN HALL

When Tenterden residents were canvassed in the original public consultation exercise, they said they felt the Town Hall was underused and unwelcoming, only served a small proportion of the public, and greater community facilities were needed.

Built in 1792 and one of the town's most iconic landmarks, the Town Hall is also subject to problems with old listed buildings, and requires major restoration and re-design.

The Kent peg tile roof is in an extremely decayed state, particularly over the Mayor's Parlour, minstrel's gallery and Assembly Room landing, and requires immediate replacement. Work has already begun under the supervision of architects Theis and Khan, who won a five-way tender. The new plans, costed at £1.75m, provide modest accommodation for Town Council staff at the front of the building, private and discreet offices at the back, and a multi-functional office and networking/exhibition space available for hire. The upstairs Assembly Room and Mayor's Parlour will be redecorated and given improved lighting and acoustics. Access for wheelchair users will be improved with a lift.

### IT

During the year, iPads were issued to all councillors and modern local government software was introduced, resulting in significant, and ongoing, savings on printing and stationery, and ending expensive photocopier contracts.

Work was also completed on the council's website, which now provides detailed information on public venues for hire, allowing visitors to see information such as capacity, bar and catering facilities, car parking, disabled access and key contacts.

## EXHIBITION SUCCESS

As the latest stage in the public consultation process, a major Town Hall exhibition was held in February to update residents on the cinema, Recreation Ground and Town Hall schemes.

It was a major success, with 448 people visiting the exhibition and more than 380 people completing a survey form to gauge their

opinions on each project, 84 of them submitting their responses online.

Post-event analysis showed that there was broadly equal support for all three projects, with an average approval rating of more than 79%, and more than nine out of ten visitors said they were 'satisfied' or 'quite satisfied' with the information at the exhibition.