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ISSUE 7



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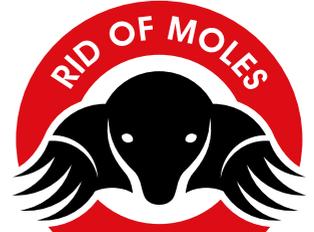
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'Seven Oaks Of Sevenoaks' Chosen As New Bligh's Sculpture

Residents voted in their hundreds to choose the new piece of public art for Bligh's Meadow, Sevenoaks.

Sevenoaks District Council's Public Realm Commission secured £17,000 for a new sculpture from property developers and invited artists to come forward with ideas for the busy site. They received more than 35 submissions.

The ideas were shortlisted down to two entries with the help of local artists, businesses and residents.

The two shortlisted entries were 'Three and Four' by Oliver Barratt and 'Seven Oaks of Sevenoaks' by Simone Tchonova and Matthijs la Roi.

Residents were asked to share their views on these proposals during April and May. Nearly 800 residents took part in the survey and 'Seven Oaks of Sevenoaks' was crowned as the people's choice.

The winning sculpture represents the oaks on Sevenoaks Vine, of which many were destroyed in the great storm of 1987 and then replanted. The piece signifies climate restoration and what is possible when people work together to protect the environment.

Community involvement is at the heart of the work. Up to 4,500 residents will have the chance to have a personal environmental promise engraved on one of the unique steel pieces that form the sculpture.

Cllr Roddy Hogarth, the Council's Commissioner of the Public Realm, says: "I would like to thank the hundreds of people who took the time to share their views on the two sculptures.

"As with all art, there are strong opinions one way or the other and residents had a lot to say about these proposals. But what is clear from our survey, 'Seven Oaks of Sevenoaks' captured the imagination of people who voted.

"I am really excited that thousands of people would be involved by inscribing an environmental pledge on the many steel pieces that make up the sculpture. We can't wait for work to begin on the installation."

Founder Director of Second Floor Studios and Arts and member of the deciding panel, Matthew Wood, adds: "I'm delighted the 'Seven Oaks of Sevenoaks' has been chosen for Bligh's Meadow Marks and Spencer site, being selected from such a strong field of entries.

What made the submission stand out is their vision to bring this new public artwork and sculptural monument right up to date. It fuses concepts with the most pressing of global climate emergencies and the vital importance of trees as part of a sustainable future now and for our future generations. But most importantly, the sculpture will bring thousands of residents voices to participate and engage with the artwork itself, allowing their thoughts, feelings, aspirations and words around climate change and action, clean energy, sustainability and more to be laser cut into the sculptural monument."

The Council is hoping to install the sculpture before the end of the year.

To find out more about the work, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/publicrealm



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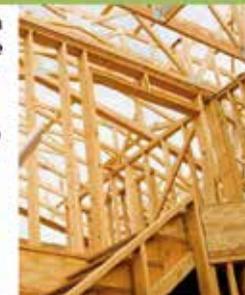
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Weight Expectations for New Gym in Riverhead

Fitness fanatic and Sevenoaks local James Farmer opened the doors to his new personal training studio, Hollow Rock Fitness (HRF), this July. Located in Riverhead, the sparkling new studio welcomes people of all ages to take part in one-to-one personal training or to participate in group classes, running on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 6pm and on Saturdays at 10am.

The studio comprises two training rooms kitted out for all manner of exercise, with everything from free weights and barbells to squat racks, rowing machines and an assault bike. A smoothie bar ensures clients get their nutrition hit following a training session, while outside there is a boxing bag and pull-up bar, with James already eyeing up the potential to set up outdoor suspension training, too. In renovating his new studio, James had the help of his Hollow Rock community of clients, the youngest of whom is a 15-year-old boy training for rugby trials and the oldest an 86-year-old woman.

"I've been mostly doing it by myself but with the help of the people I train, which has been great. It's like a community – we're all in it together," James says.

The sense of community between James and his clients is critical to his way of working. Clients come to the club to work hard but the social aspect and the sense of camaraderie is what people love about their visits.

James's journey towards opening his own training studio began four years ago, when he started building up his fitness family. He gained his personal training qualifications in 2018 and has trained freelance clients outdoors, come rain or shine, both one-to-one and in groups, as well as offering training at the local leisure centre and over Zoom. Outdoor training is still a part of his approach to this day.

"We still like to use the common to do some of our classes if the weather is really nice or depending on what sort of thing we're doing," he explains. *"It's three minutes' jog up the road to the common, which is where it all started four years ago in the depths of winter."*

A lover of outdoor fitness himself, James's sport of choice is Obstacle Course Racing (OCR) and he along with three of his clients have qualified to compete in this year's OCR World Championship in North America. A small group of Hollow Rock Fitness clients have also formed a further club called X Terrain Fitness, which partakes in activities from kayaking and mountain biking to cliff jumping and cold-water swimming. All keen and capable Hollow Rock clients are welcome to join.

Many Hollow Rock Fitness classes are indoors, of course. Currently offering Metabolic (interval training), Barbell and Sweat & Core classes, James is already looking to add more to the list.



OCR Athlete Mark Dickson officially opening the new studio on 5th July

All training is focused on improving posture, working on weaknesses and correcting muscle imbalances and not on superficial muscle gain. As for his style of training, James regularly updates his programme to keep things interesting and he says positivity is also key.

"To me, it's more like a change of lifestyle as opposed to coming into the gym because you've been told you have to lose weight. Something I believe in and that I always try to put into my training is to smile and most of all enjoy it."

It is through these classes that James hopes to make a high standard of training affordable to everyone. Clients can benefit from a personal training session, and they can join a small group and gain further direct technical instruction. Having been a chef for more than 20 years, James is also able to help clients understand their food and nutrition: a crucial aspect of any training regimen. As for the future, he is already setting his sights on bringing in other PTs to instruct at the studio, by giving his valued fitness community members a more active role.

"I've just looked into obtaining gym instructor and personal trainer qualifications for a couple of clients that have been training with me for about two and a half years, so that they could begin to take classes for Hollow Rock Fitness," he enthuses. *"So it keeps it in the family."*

He's also undertaking a qualification in the management of lower back pain and in exercise referral, to enable him to work with patients referred by their GPs on medical grounds. Already off to a flying start, Hollow Rock Fitness clearly has plans to keep growing its offering. Whether you're looking to start your fitness journey or to up your gym game, the Hollow Rock community is waiting to welcome you.

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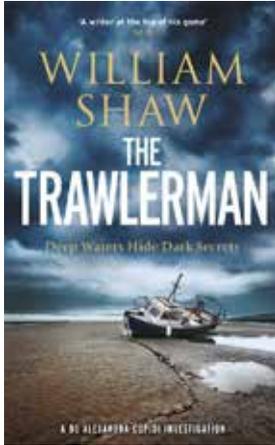
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Sevenoaks Literary Festival 2021

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Sevenoaks Literary Festival

As always, we've sought out the brightest minds and most interesting voices and brought them together to create inspiring conversations for our community of Sevenoaks. An ensemble of brilliant writers spans poetry, politics, biography, lifestyle and fiction in both live and online events.



Details of programme are correct at time of going to print but may be subject to change.

For further details of this year's line-up and to sign up for email updates please check out the Festival website www.sevlitfest.com

And keep up to date via The Festival's social media pages:
Instagram: @sevenoaks_literary_festival
Twitter: @Sevenoakslit
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SevenoaksLitFest/>

As always Sevenoaks Bookshop – the UK's Independent Bookshop of the Year – will be making books available for purchase and signing.

Festival tickets are available for purchase from 31st July Book online at: ticketsource.co.uk/sevenoaks-literary-festival There is no charge for booking online. Or book by telephone: 0333 666 3366 for which there is a charge of £1.80 to cover p&p

We are very much looking forward to seeing you at this year's Festival!

Saturday 25 September
St Mary Kippington Parish Centre at 14.30
The annual Literary Tea
Paula Byrne - The Adventures of Miss Barbara Pym
To discuss the latest of her distinguished literary biographies, Paula is in conversation with Jill Webster.

Monday 27 September
Zoom meeting at 19.30
Cecilia Knapp - Poetry Workshop
Cecilia is Young People's Laureate for London.

Tuesday 28 September
Zoom meeting at 19.30
Bryony Gordon - You Got This: A Fabulously Fearless Guide to being YOU
Bryony offers down-to-earth discussion about what people really need to feel better.

Wednesday 29 September
Bat & Ball Centre, John London Hall at 19.30
Robert Martineau - Waypoints: A journey on foot
An immersive account of a 1000 mile walk through Ghana, Togo and Benin ending at the spiritual centre of Ouida. Robert is in conversation with Julia Wheeler.

Friday 01 October
Bat & Ball Centre, John London Hall at 19.30
William Shaw - The Trawlerman
The Kent coastline is the backdrop for a tale of corruption, mental health and the complexities of human connection. Rising star of UK crime fiction William Shaw is in conversation with Nick Varley.

Monday 04 October
Bat & Ball Centre, John London Hall at 19.30
Ian Dunt - How to be a Liberal
Discussing his sweeping history of liberal thought and ideas Ian is in conversation with Jon Alexander.

Tuesday 05 October
Walthamstow Hall, Ship Theatre at 19.30
Mel Giedroyc The Best Things
Like her, Mel's novel is warm, witty and entertaining. She is conversation with her friend, radio host Andy Bush.

Wednesday 06 October
Bat & Ball Centre, John London Hall at 19.30
Rachel Clarke - Breathtaking: Inside the NHS in a Time of Pandemic
Rachel is a palliative care doctor coping with the pandemic. She is in conversation with Dr Rindy Bakker.

Thursday 07 October
Walthamstow Hall, Ship Theatre at 19.30
Marina Wheeler - The Lost Homestead: My Mother, Partition and the Punjab
In conversation with Rupert Lancaster Marina tells how her Sikh-born mother's story of loss and new beginnings reflected the broader and often harrowing history of partition.



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News from the Palace

Outwardly, there has been little change over the past few months. However, beneath the surface the Trustees have been very busy investigating sources of funding for the restoration work and on community engagement throughout the Darent Valley.

Changing circumstances at the Parish Council have led us to bring forward the move of the Heritage Collection from the School House in the High Street to the Gatehouse. This will free up the room for the Council, and make it easier for us to catalogue the Collection.

Another palace, at Charing, was one of the string of archiepiscopal palaces on the route between London and Canterbury. The Trust was formed as a charity in June 2017 with a view to restoring, reviving and revitalising Charing Palace for the benefit of the community. Despite a favourable Viability Study and Project Scoping exercise in 2018 funded by the Architectural Heritage Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund the project stalled. Sadly, by October 2019 it was becoming increasingly unlikely that they would be able to achieve their objectives and, as a consequence, in May 2021 the trustees decided to wind up the project. They have very generously transferred their remaining assets to the Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust for which we are most grateful. We would like to thank the trustees for thinking of Otford Palace.

A key aim of the Otford Palace Trust is to use the site and buildings of the Tudor Palace and the Otford Heritage Collection, to engage with a wide range of people from North-West Kent, and London in the



The Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust
A Safe pair of hands

heritage of the Darent Valley. The intended impacts are that our audience will learn about this heritage, and thus change their attitudes and behaviours. Those directly involved as volunteers will acquire new skills, particularly as visitor guides, and museum tasks. The physical focus of this activity will be the North-West Tower of the Palace and the Gatehouse. This will create a centre for the interpretation of the Darent Valley with its 4000-year history a secure educational study centre for field study visits to the Heritage Village of Otford. The Otford Heritage collection will be the focus for educational outreach and exploration.

Alongside physical works we will extend our existing programme of activities to include a digital resource and open access community workshops. These opportunities and new resources will enable people to learn new curating and volunteering skills which we anticipate will add to social and community cohesion and local pride.

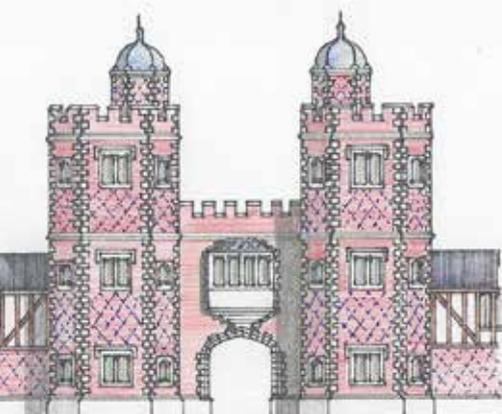
Our proposed project will bring the former Archbishop's Palace buildings back into good condition, carefully repairing their fabric, minimising their environmental impact, and sensitively adding new facilities, to bring them back into a wide range of community, educational and heritage uses.

This raises the question: What uses would you envisage for the Palace site and buildings?

Rather than offering you a survey asking you to tick or rank the possible uses that we have envisioned, we are asking individuals and organisations to write us a short email (a long email if you prefer!) using your imagination about the activities that we could organise with you, uses that would help you meet your aims and aspirations. Don't be put off by financial constraints: we have a budget (albeit not unlimited!) to support us in these activities. We look forward to hearing from you.

Nick Rushby, Secretary

secretary@otfordpalace.org
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An indicative drawing of the Otford Palace Gatehouse before its collapse in the late 18th Century (with acknowledgement to Patrick Phillips)



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West Kent Mind Finalists in Kent Charity Awards 2021

Local mental health charity West Kent Mind has been announced as a finalist in the Kent Charity Awards for Disability and Mental Health Charity of the year 2021.

The charity provides support to people in West Kent to get well, stay well and thrive with better mental health and the awards showcase the hard work and perseverance that charities undertake to make the lives of others better. It is wonderful recognition of the incredible work that West Kent Mind staff, volunteers and our community fundraisers have undertaken in the past year during such challenging circumstances.

Covid-19 has changed so much of our lives and our behaviours, and we will see the impact of it for many years to come. Depression and anxiety are still highest in young adults, women, people with lower household income, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with a physical health condition, and people living with children. People with a diagnosed mental illness are still reporting higher levels of depression and anxiety symptoms (as might be expected). It's therefore no surprise that last year saw a significant uptake in services. During the year West Kent Mind delivered 3,297 counselling sessions which was a 37% increase on last year. We supported over 100 people experiencing domestic violence with counselling and group therapy and referrals across our wellbeing programme increased by 39%. Attendances at our social activity groups were up 55%.

The passion, commitment and determination of the staff team to continue supporting those in the local community who needed it throughout the last year has been recognised with this prestigious nomination.



Stevie Rice, CEO says, "We, at West Kent Mind, are thrilled and delighted to be finalists in the Kent Charity Awards Disability and Mental Health category. Our mental health can fluctuate and this year many more people in our community have found their mental health has deteriorated and they have turned to us for support.

Despite the challenges that the pandemic has brought I have been extremely buoyed by the passion and enthusiasm of our staff and volunteers to ensure we deliver the right services in the right way and for the right people.

We are always in awe of the people we work with for sharing their journey with us – through the highs and through the lows.

Their openness, receptiveness and commitment to better mental health for themselves and for others is the starting point of everything we do."



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Sevenoaks School IB Results 2021

Many congratulations to the Class of 2021 on their outstanding International Baccalaureate results.

Sevenoaks School's 235 strong cohort have achieved the school's highest ever average Diploma score of 41.3 points, more than eight points above the world average.

Thirty students achieved the maximum 45 points, with 48 securing 44 points and another 38 securing 43 points. Almost 75 per cent of the cohort achieved 40 points or more – another truly remarkable result.

Mr Jesse Elzinga, Headmaster, said: 'In a year of disruption, our students' hard work, professionalism and dedication was phenomenal, and we are proud of their creative, inquisitive and committed approach to their studies and co-curricular activities.'

'The IB Diploma, the global gold standard of education, will enable our students to proceed to the world's best universities, with 94 per cent achieving a place at their firm-choice university.'

Over 170,000 students from more than 150 countries took the IB Diploma last year. The IB's outlook is invaluable, empowering our students to flourish in the global community. Our school leavers of 2021 are inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who will help to create a better and more peaceful world.



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Otford Village Fete

Bank Holiday Monday 30th August

Sevenoaks Marks

Armed Forces Day



We are very excited about this year's fete, not only as it's been more than 15 months since our last one, but because of what's in store.

We have kept The Olympics Theme and as usual Elvis and Frank (Sinatra) have promised to make their regular appearance. We have several new attractions and activities and before the opening of our very popular Dog Show a group of young cheerleaders will get the show on the road.

Whilst Becket, Otford's named Guide Dog, is unable to make a special appearance we are still hoping to raise lots of money to help him continue the invaluable support he is giving his new owner. It's hard to believe that it takes around £60,000 to breed, train and keep a guide dog during its working life, so your support really does mean so much to this wonderful charity.

Keep up to date with all our latest news by visiting our website www.otfordvillagefete.org

Doors open at 11.00am. Entry fee adults £2.00, children 10 years and under free. Parking on site, subject to availability, £2.00 per vehicle in addition to the entry fee.

Patty Chatterjee
Chair, Otford Village Fete Committee

On Monday 21st June, local veterans joined the Chairman for this year's Armed Forces Day at Sevenoaks District Council's offices.

This year's event was scaled back due to the pandemic but included prayers and readings as a thank you to the nation's serving troops, service families, veterans and cadets for their sacrifice and dedication.

Other guests included Lord Sackville (representing the Lord Lieutenant of Kent), Rev Anne Bourne and District Councillors and staff.

Sevenoaks District Council Chairman, Cllr Diana Esler, says: "Armed Forces Day gives us the chance to show our appreciation for the men and women who have and continue to protect us all.

"I want to say a big thank you to our local veterans who came out and supported the event despite the unpleasant weather."

The flag raising was the start of this year's Armed Forces Day that took place on Saturday 26th June 2021.



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Where reputation matters

An interview with senior audiologist, Sandra Rodrigues, Hearbase at Sevenoaks Medical Centre, part of KIMS Hospital

What is an audiologist?

An audiologist is a clinical health care professional responsible for helping those who have problems with their hearing and balance disorders. It's a highly qualified role, and each day an audiologist could be assessing and fitting hearing aids, providing ear protection, tinnitus support and advising on balance and wax removal.



How long have you been at Hearbase?

I have been at Hearbase for over 7 years now and I enjoy my work, especially meeting and helping so many people in the local community, old and young, including children, from all walks of life. I am based at the new Hearbase clinic at the wonderful Sevenoaks Medical Centre, Beadle House, London Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 2JD.



What are the first signs of a hearing problem?

Some of the early signs are when you struggle to keep up with conversation in noisy places, when your family tell you the TV is too loud, or when you have difficulty hearing people clearly. If you experience ringing or buzzing in your ears, or head, or a feeling of blockage, these can also be early signs of hearing loss. Also, if you find you can hear better when you look into people's faces that is also a red flag and you should get your hearing tested.



Why should I have my hearing tested?

Not being able to hear, seriously impacts your quality of life, not to mention talking with friends, family and others. I recommend if you show any of these early signs, you should get it checked. If you are concerned about someone close to you who struggles to hear, speak to them about getting a free hearing test and why not join them to offer support if they need a little bit of encouragement?



Why should I go to Hearbase at Sevenoaks Medical Centre?

Well, to start, our hearing tests are completely free. This isn't unique to us, you can get your hearing tested elsewhere, but as we are expert audiologists, if we find anything of concern after your free hearing test, we will point you in the direction of specialist services quickly. We are a really friendly bunch of people and our focus is to listen and help you to manage your hearing.

How should I look after my hearing?

If you notice any change to your hearing, large or small, then always get it checked. Having a hearing test should be done regularly like you do with your teeth and eyes. This is important however old or young you are. If you work in a noisy place or have a history of hearing loss in your family, have a hearing test, it only takes 30 minutes.



FREE Family Fun Days Are Back

After a year's break, Sevenoaks District Council's free Family Fun Days return with four weeks of fun and games during the school summer holidays.

They include everything from crafts and games, to sports and face painting in a friendly, safe environment. Best of all, they won't break the bank as all the activities are completely free.

No booking is necessary as families can simply turn up and have fun!

Activities are aimed at children aged 12 and under, but they may not be suitable for very young children. Residents are urged to bring waterproofs, sunscreen and their own refreshments. Children must be supervised by a parent or guardian at all times.

The days are subject to current Coronavirus restrictions and the weather so residents are advised to keep an eye on the Council's website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/summerfun or its Facebook and Twitter accounts before setting off.

Cllr Lesley Dyball, the Council's Cabinet Member for People and Places, says: "Our Family Fun Days are packed full of activities, crafts, fun and games. They've become a firm favourite with parents, grandparents and anyone else who looks after children.

"We know the summer holidays can be an expensive time, but our Family Fun Days give parents the chance of a cheap day out while giving children the opportunity to try a new activity, get creative, have fun and enjoy the lovely summer weather we're hoping for. I'd urge families to bring a picnic and make a day of it."



This year's Family Fun Day dates and locations are:

Monday 2 August 10am to 2pm
West Kingsdown, Gamecock Meadow TN15 6BZ

Tuesday 3 August 10am to 2pm
New Ash Green, The Minnis DA3 8HH

Wednesday 4 August 10am to 2pm
Knockholt Recreation Ground TN14 7LD

Thursday 5 August 10am to 2pm
Hextable Gardens BR8 7LT

Friday 6 August 10.30am to 2pm
Chipstead Recreation Ground TN13 2SA

Monday 9 August 10am to 2pm
Four Elms Recreation Ground (behind Four Elms Primary School) TN8 6NE

Tuesday 10 August 10am to 2pm
Hartley, Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground DA3 7DB

Wednesday 11 August 10am to 2pm
Halstead Recreation Ground TN14 7HG

Thursday 12 August 10am to 2pm
Crockenhill, Harvestfield BR8 8LH

Friday 13 August 2pm to 5pm
Leigh, The Green TN11 8QL

Monday 16 August 10am to 1pm
Fawkham Village Hall, Valley Road, Fawkham DA3 8NA

Tuesday 17 August 10am to 2pm
Sevenoaks, Greatness Recreation Ground TN14 5BU

Wednesday 18 August 10am to 1pm
South Darenth, Heathside Recreation Ground DA4 9AZ

Thursday 19 August 10am to 2pm
Westerham, King George's Playing Field TN16 1BN

Friday 20 August 2pm to 5pm
Chiddingstone Causeway, Sports Field TN11 8JN

The days are funded and organised by us and run by Play Place with support from town and parish councils, who are providing the venues.



In August many of us just go into the garden to relax, drink and glass of wine and watch the kids in the paddling pool. We might cut the grass, but for most of us August is about last days and chilled summer evenings.

So, this month I'm taking a pause from work to pass on a few interesting garden facts you can pass on over a gin and tonic.

A sunflower is not one flower

Believe it or not each individual petal and the brown centre comprise 1,000 – 2,000 individual flowers, held together on a single stalk. Every "petal" is actually an individual flower, comprising of a single floret with male and female parts!

There are more microorganisms in one teaspoon of soil than there are people on earth

Seriously...microbes are important for keeping the soil full of nutrients. There are at least 7.5 billion people on earth so that teaspoon of soil is alliiiiive.

Plants really do respond to sound

The Myth Busters published a video comparing a silent greenhouse to one where they piped in a voice soundtrack and found that plants in the latter grew more. So, speak sweetly to your plants... or maybe sing to them.

A little bicarbonate of soda can help you grow sweeter tomatoes

I have tested this theory after reading it in a magazine and it works! A regular light sprinkling of bicarb your plant's soil helps reduce acidity and produces a sweeter crop.

The Rose Family is the largest contributor of ornamental plants

Trees in the rose family that bear fruit: apples, pears, plums, cherries, apricots, and peaches. Also, blackberries, raspberries and strawberries are all members of the Rosacea Family.

There is an orchid that smells of chocolate

This is because the vanilla bean derives comes from the orchid family. The Oncidium hybrid called Sharry Baby has a rich chocolate smell...like baking choc chip cookies, and is also exceptionally beautiful.

If you haven't got room for a composter...cheat!

Used coffee grounds, crushed eggshells, and chopped-up banana peels, can be applied direct to the soil and offer plants nutrients as they decompose. You can bury them a few inches under the earth in already planted beds, so they don't spoil the look of your plot.

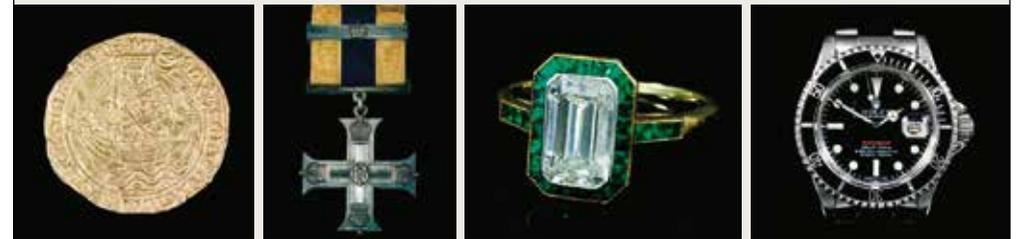


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Why You Should *make a will*

✓ If you are a single person

You may want your estate to go to friends and charities as well as family.

✓ If you are living as a couple

But officially not married, you may be treated as a single person and surviving partner may get nothing at all.

✓ If you are married

Don't assume 'my other half' will get everything. Brothers, sisters or parents may have a claim. Often children have a right to part of your estate.

✓ If you are a parent

You should consider who would look after your children in the event of your death. This is particularly important in the case of 'one parent families' and unmarried parents living together.

A valid will nominating guardians is invaluable in such cases. If no one knows what you wanted, the court will decide on the future of your children.

✓ If you are retired

Possibly you made a will a long time ago. It probably needs updating to include additional grandchildren.

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West Kent Mind Spectacular Fundraising Online Auction

West Kent Mind are excited to announce a new fundraising event for 2021, an online auction! The online auction will take place over one week from 15-24th October, and the charity is appealing to Kent businesses and individuals to donate amazing prizes for the fundraiser.

The local mental health charity decided to run the online auction to plan a fundraiser that supporters could engage with, despite the uncertainties faced around running and attending events at the moment due to the pandemic.

Kate Barnes, Fundraising Manager said, "An online auction felt like the perfect event for 2021; holding it online means that we won't face last minute cancellations due to Covid-19 restrictions and it's an exciting new event for our calendar which we hope will enable us to continue engaging with our community during these times."

Having been unable to run the usual programme of fundraising events, West Kent Mind need the

support of the local community now more than ever so they can continue to provide vital support to people experiencing mental ill health in the community. 100% of the profits raised will go towards helping local people to get well, stay well and thrive.

Kate said "There is no set theme for the auction, but we are looking for fabulous prizes that will generate interest, excitement and most importantly bids! This can be anything from weekend getaways, spa packages, golf memberships, home or car services, jewellery, a bike, signed sports memorabilia to VIP event tickets and experiences. If you have an idea for a prize donation, we really would love to hear from you!"

Anyone who wishes to donate a prize can email kate.barnes@westkentmind.org.uk and those interested in bidding can follow @westkentmind on social media for updates on all the lots, and details of how to sign up for updates.

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Council Makes Plans Should Leisure Trust Fold

After an independent report found financial and management problems at Sencio, alongside concerns about its recovery planning, the Council has taken the difficult decision to make urgent plans to provide leisure services should the trust become insolvent.

Sencio Community Leisure is a not-for profit organisation that operates Sevenoaks District Council's three leisure centres and its golf course. They are independent of the Council and have their own board of trustees that are solely responsible for the day-to-day running of the leisure facilities.

In common with other leisure providers, Sencio has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns and has sought urgent financial support.

To date, the trust has received £792,958 in public funds to support it through the pandemic, with £411,950 of this coming from the Council.

The Council has been in regular dialogue with Sencio over the past year, and there has been an ongoing concern over how it can finance itself moving forward.

Last year, Councillors expressed concerns about Sencio's recovery plans. In consultation with the trust, Max Associates, a nationally recognised leisure consultant, was appointed to review the business and to draw up plans to move it on to a sustainable financial footing.

The Max Associates report highlighted a number of serious concerns about the trust. Sencio was trading at a loss in the pre-COVID period and now has a budget shortfall of £2 million. The Council had not been told of the serious nature of its financial situation prior to the publication of the report.

In light of the trust's precarious situation, Max Associates recommended that the Council consider alternative management options to ensure the best value for the community.

At its meeting on Thursday 8th July, the Cabinet agreed to start the process of appointing a contractor to take over the running of the Council's leisure facilities should Sencio hand back the contract.



The Cabinet also agreed that no additional funding should be made available to Sencio at this time given the significant risk to tax payers.

Cllr Lesley Dyball, the Council's Cabinet Member for People and Places, says: "This is clearly a very uncertain time for Sencio's staff and customers.

"We have done everything we can to support Sencio. But we also have a duty to our taxpayers to ensure local services are operated efficiently.

"Sencio has a £2 million budget black hole in its finances and according to Max Associates, it would need to make management reforms at pace to have any chance of operating sustainably in the future.

"We have taken the difficult decision to make arrangements for another company to take over from Sencio should they go into liquidation. It is only right that we should do everything possible to reopen our leisure centres and golf course as soon as is practicable should the Trust go out of business."



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The Smarter Way To Collect Litter

Sevenoaks District Council will soon be rolling out the first of their 'smart-bins' throughout rural areas of the district.

Earlier in the year, the Council secured £25,000 in grant money to pilot fifty smart-bins. The new, larger, wood clad bins will include sensors that alert the Council when they need clearing. This means a quicker, reactive service when the bins are full and fewer wasted journeys when bins are not at full capacity. The new bins can also hold more waste than the current ones.

Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, Cllr Margot McArthur says: "As a Council we are always looking for innovative ways to improve the lives of residents and contribute to our Net Zero 2030 commitment. The smart-bins include a recycling compartment and are much friendlier to the environment as it means our Street Cleaning team will only travel to rural areas when necessary.

"We currently spend roughly £1.4m a year, 10% of our annual budget on street cleaning. This new technology will allow us to work smarter and faster for our residents, businesses and visitors.

"This project is part of our overall litter strategy to help reduce rubbish across the District."

The bins are due to be installed from late July and are located in the following places:

Bough Beach - Chequers Barn
 Chiddingstone - Causeway
 Cowden - Butterwell Hill
 Crockham Hill - Devils Elbow
 Eynsford - Riverside
 Fawkham Green - Opposite the pub
 Fordcombe Green - By the bridge
 Four Elms - By Rec
 Hartley - St Mary's car park
 Hever - Opposite Castle
 Hodsoll Street - High street
 Horton Kirby - Franks Lane, River bridge
 Ide Hill - Goathurst Common
 Leigh - River bridge
 Markbeece - Cow Lane
 New Ash Green - Millfield
 Otford - TBC
 Penshurst - Smarts Hill
 Sevenoaks - Godden Green
 Stone Street - By bus stop
 Underriver - Back of Knole Park





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Kentish Soap Company Scoops Two Prizes at European Skincare Award

The Kentish Soap Company has won two awards at the tenth annual Free From Skincare Awards.

The Europe-wide Awards were founded to encourage and reward manufacturers of skincare products that are 'free from' many of the allergens, preservatives, additives and fragrances associated with skin sensitivities, allergies, and ethical, environmental and health concerns.

The Kent based company, recently recognised by the government-backed Thames Estuary Scheme as visionary business for good, green sustainable growth, has won a silver award for one of the newest additions to its range, the Rose Clay facial bar and a bronze award for its Sunshine soap bar.

John Waddy, co-owner, said, "Wow, we're so proud. We love that people love our artisan products. Our heart and soul goes in to making them as ethically and as sustainably as we can. It's wonderful that 2021 is bringing us award success like 2020. Our facial bar is the newest addition to our range and we've got plans for more skincare products, all following the same sustainable ethos that we go by. And it's marvellous that our Sunshine bar has brought a little sunshine to our customers' lives."

The announcements were made on 7th July, and followed a long judging process which included a rigorous month-long assessment by four experienced skincare testers, and concluded with round-table expert judging sessions.

The Free From Skincare Awards launched in 2012 to encourage and reward manufacturers of skincare products that are 'free from' many of the allergens, ingredients, additives and artificial fragrances associated with skin sensitivities, health concerns, as well as ethical, personal and environmental issues.

They were founded by Michelle Berriedale-Johnson, director of the Free From Food Awards) and Alex Gazzola, a writer specialising in allergies and 'free from'.

For the full set of results, see the Awards website at www.freefromskincareawards.co.uk



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Guide Dogs for the Blind - 90th Anniversary

All charities will have suffered during this pandemic; Guide Dogs had to stop the breeding programme and the ongoing training of existing pups was difficult as they were unable to socialise or visit shops, public transport and many other places. This has had a tremendous effect on the charity, as has the fact that the volunteer fundraisers had been 'grounded'.



Guide Dogs is now celebrating 90 years of helping people with sight loss. This all began in a humble lock up garage in Wallasey on Merseyside. Three years later Guide Dogs for the Blind was formed, and since then the organisation has transformed 36,000 lives through guide dog partnerships. It all started with just 4 dogs, but now the charity is responsible for 8,400 puppies and dogs at any one time.

Sevenoaks Branch is marking this anniversary with two big events, a luncheon and a Charity Golf Day. We have also invited our MP to complete a blindfold walk through the town. It was in October 1931 when Muriel Crooke and Rosmund Bond started training dogs to support men who had lost their sight in the First World War. All four dogs were German Shepherds (pictured).

Back then the idea was considered pretty radical, but the impact was immediate, and within 6 months of meeting Flash, Folly, Meta and Judy, their new owners reported finding a freedom and an independence they had not known since before the war.

We will be attending a few of the local events this summer as we usually do. That is Otford Fete, Riverhead Carnival and the Heavy Horse show.

Marion Clayton
Chair Sevenoaks Branch
01732 457217 | www.guidedogs.org.uk

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PREPARATION TIME: 15-20 MINUTES COOKING TIME: 15-20 MINUTES SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS

2 eggs, beaten
4 tbsp flour
75g panko breadcrumbs
4 thick pork loin steaks
Oil for frying (sunflower or ground nut)
½ Chinese cabbage, finely shredded
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper.

For the Tonkatsu sauce

125g tomato ketchup
75ml sake or rice wine (dry sherry makes a good substitute).
2tbsp Worcester sauce
2 tbsp dark soy sauce
1 clove of garlic, finely grated
1tsp finely grated fresh root ginger
1 tsp Japanese mustard (Dijon makes a good substitute)
1tbsp mirin
1tbsp sugar

METHOD

The Sauce

Place all the sauce ingredients into a small saucepan and stir well. Heat until simmering and allow to simmer for about 5 minutes or until the garlic and ginger are soft and the sauce has a good pouring consistency. When its ready strain it through a fine sieve and allow to cool to room temperature.

The Pork

You'll need four plates. Pour the flour (seasoned with salt and pepper) on to the first; pour the beaten eggs on to the second and the breadcrumbs on to the third. NOTE - Panko breadcrumbs are crisper than normal breadcrumbs. The recipe will work with normal breadcrumbs, but you might prefer to use finely crushed cornflakes or crackers.

Coat each pork loin generously in the seasoned flour, then dip it into the beaten egg so its covered, then finally coat each loin steak in breadcrumbs. Transfer them all to the fourth plate.

Pour enough oil into a frying pan to shallow fry the pork steaks and allow the pan to heat up over a moderate heat. When hot enough add the steaks and fry until golden on each side (4-5 minutes per side). Don't overcrowd the pan as this will cause the steaks to steam and the breadcrumbs will become soggy.

Place the cooked steaks on a plate and cut into thick slices. Drizzle the Tonkatsu sauce over the steaks and serve with some shredded cabbage and Japanese pickles.



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Arkiton offer the best Quality and Service -

PRICE Promise Guarantee - Arkiton Roofing & Building will beat any like -for-like roofing quote in Tunbridge Wells and Throughout Kent



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WILLIAMS

FASCIAS, SOFFITS & GUTTERING

GUTTERING PROBLEMS?

New guttering supplied and fitted or repaired.

Damaged fascia boards repaired or replaced with UPVC.

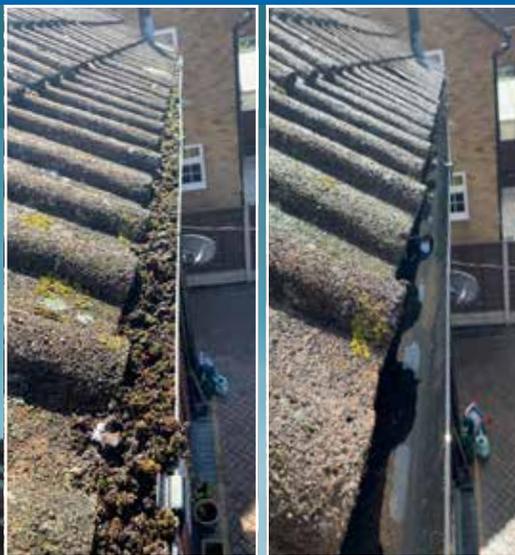
Includes no quibble 10 year guarantee.

Annual clean out and checks available.

UPVC, fascia, soffit and guttering system installed.

Complete roof overhauls and repairs carried out as necessary.

We are a locally based company and have been trading for over 30 years. All our work is carried out using only top quality materials, skilled tradesman and leaving no mess.



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