

## Westerham Food Bank

Food Banks have been much in the news recently: many words have been written and spoken about them by politicians, clergymen and commentators. Views are many, varied and often contradictory. So we'd like to share the experiences of the first month of operation of Westerham's own Food Bank.

The need for a Food Bank emerged from conversations with the Childrens Centre and others which highlighted the fact that here in apparently comfortable Westerham, there were families who struggled to put sufficient food on the table. The organisations which came together to make a Food Bank a reality were determined that this situation should not continue. But it was not an enterprise to be undertaken lightly – for once started it would have to be sustained. There were concerns and worries: would anyone donate food? Would we find enough willing volunteers to open it every week? How would we make sure that families in need were put in touch with us? Where would we find the money to buy the essential start up equipment? Where could we hold it, and where would we store food? We should not have worried.

We were reassured by Sevenoaks Food Bank who unstintingly shared their experience and advice with us; "Start small" they said; so we have. We were heartened by those who came forward with financial donations to help with the purchase of cupboards, collection baskets, bags and other essentials. Westerham Town Council, Sevenoaks District Council, St Mary's Church, Biggin Hill Lions, Westerham Rotary all dipped into their pockets to help. We were delighted by those who gave in kind – the Rotary volunteers who collect the food weekly, Westerham Hall who found space for us, and all the shops and other venues which willingly made a place for our collection baskets: Waitrose in Biggin Hill, the Spar shop at Wolfe Garage, the Co-op, Nisa, St Mary's and the Congregational Church, the CHYPS shop, Churchill School and the Library all host a collection basket. And most of all, we have been encouraged by the numbers who have volunteered to be part of the team which turns up every week to sort food, to meet our families, to pack the bags and to do the behind the scenes admin.

But perhaps above all, we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of Westerham citizens who have unfailingly every week filled our collection baskets with tins and packets of all sorts, shapes and sizes. It has enabled us to offer to those families referred to us by the Childrens' Centre the assurance that there is always somewhere they can turn to for food. More importantly, we are able to contemplate the New Year with confidence trusting that that generosity will continue and that as and when the need grows, Westerham's Food Bank will be able meet it.

*Thank you all.*

## **Sevenoaks District Council's Christmas refuse services 2014**

### **Let the Council collect your tree for free!**

After this year's festivities have ended, Sevenoaks District Council will collect and recycle your real Christmas tree for free throughout January.

The Council will collect trees with a trunk of up to 90mm (3.5 inches) in diameter with its Garden Waste Collection Service until Friday 30 January.

Simply leave your tree by the boundary of your property, where you'd usually put your refuse and recycling sacks, by 7am on the day the Council's Garden Waste Collection service visits your road.

If you're not sure when the service is scheduled for your area then visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays) and search for your road name.

The good news is that all the trees will be turned into environmentally-friendly compost. For this reason the Council cannot take trees that are decorated or in pots or stands.

If your tree is too big for this service, you can take it to one of Kent County Council's Household Waste Recycling sites. Call KCC on 03000 417171 for locations and opening times or visit [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk).

### **Your Christmas and New Year refuse collections**

The Council's refuse crews will be going the extra mile over the festive period, working most of the break between Christmas and New Year to minimise inconvenience to residents.

Some collections will be one day later than usual over yuletide with one collection, Thursday 25 December, deferred for just over a week.

See the revised collection dates. And remember, please put your bags out by 7am on your collection day.

To review your revised refuse collections online visit:  
[www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays)

Monday 22 December - Normal collection

Tuesday 23 December - Normal collection

Wednesday 24 December - Normal collection

Thursday 25 December - Next refuse collection on Friday 2 January. Garden waste (Week 1 / green week) next collected on Thursday 8 January

Friday 26 December - Collected the next day, Saturday 27 December

Monday 29 December - Normal collection

Tuesday 30 December - Normal collection

Wednesday 31 December - Normal collection

Thursday 1 January - Collected the next day, Friday 2 January

Friday 2 January - Collected the next day, Saturday 3 January

### **Domestic abuse services: one stop shop**

A free, drop-in session for men and women is now available at Sevenoaks Library every Tuesday between 10am and 12pm.

Advisors are on hand to offer confidential support and advice to anyone who needs help with domestic abuse issues.

There's no need to book; just head for the large print books (library staff can direct you) and you will be seen in private.

### **Country Roads – Kent County Council**

#### **Don't take speed to the limit - Read the Road – See the Hazards**

The National Speed Limit sign sets out the legal maximum for the road. This can vary depending on vehicle or the type of road. The maximum limit for a car is 60, but this is the maximum limit not a target. Drive according to the conditions of the road, look out for hazards and read the road ahead and expect the unexpected. Country roads can present an array of hazards many of us aren't used to seeing on urban roads and motorways - a pedestrian on a narrow lane, a farm vehicle moving slowly or a car overtaking on a blind bend.

Please drive at an appropriate speed, it could save your life.

## Shutting the Gate on Rural Crime – Kent Police

Kent Police has produced a helpful leaflet on “Shutting the Gate on Rural Crime”. It can be downloaded via the following link:

[www.kent.police.uk/advice/business/attachments/shutting\\_the\\_gate.pdf](http://www.kent.police.uk/advice/business/attachments/shutting_the_gate.pdf)

## FORTHCOMING TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Planning & Development
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> January	Finance and General Purposes
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> January	Planning & Development
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> January	Allotments Playing Fields & Open Spaces
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February	Highways and Lighting
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> February	Youth and Community

Members of the public are very welcome to attend these meetings. The first ten minutes of every meeting are available for members of the public to raise any issues with Councillors. All meetings start at 7.30 p.m. - except Planning which is held at 9.30 am - in the Town Council Chamber in Russell House.

**Visit our website [westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk) for more information.**