

# Tonbridge Civic Society

## June 2023

### JUNE NEWSLETTER

#### Chairman's note



**TCS Chair**  
**Tom Freke**

Finally the sun is out and the town seems to be coming alive again, after such a tough few years.

May's bank holidays began with the Coronation and finished with the food and drink festival. Tonbridge's concentrated geography is a headache for traffic and other planning issues but has the upside of putting many of us in the same place for events and activities.

One of the busiest of these is the regular parkrun on Saturday mornings. In this month's newsletter, we interview organizer Anthony Lester. This is a free event that does wonders for people's activity levels but also brings a boost to our High Street. It routinely attracts 500 or more runners to the centre of town, and – as a regular Saturday morning shopper – I see many of these same people in our town's shops and cafes recovering from their efforts.

I'll also note there's a highly successful junior parkrun for 4 - 14 year olds at the Tonbridge Farm Sportsground

(Longmead) on a Sunday morning. This is a 2-kilometre run and routinely attracts 100 local children (and parents, including myself) come rain or shine.

Let's hope for a little more of the latter for some of the many events that are planned in the weeks to come (see further details below).

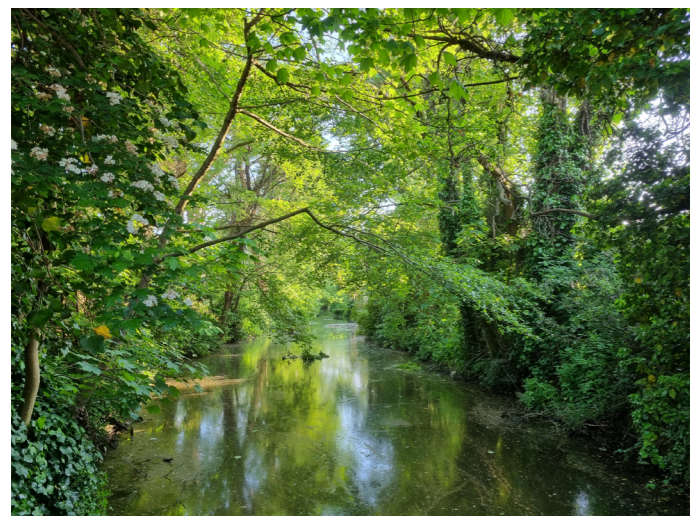


**Tonbridge town bridge**

## PHOTO COMPETITION

The Civic Society is running a photo competition ahead of the Tonbridge Calling event, on July 1. We want to see your best and most striking snaps celebrating the best (and worst!) of the town. Send entries to: [info@tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk). Terms and conditions can be found on the TCS website, [www.tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk)

Do come see us at Tonbridge Calling at the Racecourse Sportsground on July 1. We'll be there all afternoon.



The Medway in summer

## DESIGN AWARDS

And talking of awards, we're moving quickly toward the summer tea party on July 29 where we'll be delivering the annual design awards. We hope members will be able to come for this get together at Tonbridge School. Forms for tickets will be sent round in the next few days.

## PLANNING

Following the recent election, Councillor Mike Taylor is the new TMBC cabinet member for planning. Mike represents the Independent Alliance (Kent), which is in partnership with the Conservative Party after the election.

Shoppers will have noticed that there is some activity at the Beales site next to Sainsbury's. It's being boarded up and there are other indications things are afoot. One to watch.

We're also interested to find out more about the council's town centre asset review, which includes a decision on the future of the Angel Centre.

Meanwhile, ground has been broken at one of the last empty sites at the north end of the High Street, abutting the Fosse (planning application TM/21/01911/FL). Nearby, the building replacing the old Warders offices is moving ahead.

Meanwhile, many objections have been raised for revived plans for a house in the grounds of the vicarage in the

centre of town. The parish is opposing the new proposal on a number of grounds, including the impact on the parish church's car park. The Civic Society asked for attention to be paid to the historic artefacts in the area, both known and unknown. (TM/23/00796/FL)

One other application caught my eye, which is a proposal (TM/23/00974/FL) to replace Sturdey's motorcycle garage on Shipbourne Road with two new houses.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

As mentioned above, we have two upcoming dates in the diary:

Jul 1 TCS will be at Tonbridge Calling  
Jul 29 TCS summer tea party and annual design awards

Details of how to attend the Summer Tea Party will be sent to members shortly.

### Other events:

To learn more about events going on in town, and to see details of the below, see the events page maintained by the Town Team: <https://www.tonbridge-ourtown.org.uk/>

Jun 11 Tonbridge Lions Club Community Fetes and Fund Dog Show  
Jun 17 Tree of Hope Summer Fair at the Castle  
Jun 18 Jon Hamilton Big Band at the Castle  
Jun 22 Japanese Architecture, Gardens and Teahouses - at the Angel Centre  
Jun 23 Robin Hood at Tonbridge Castle  
Jun 25 Tonbridge Castle Artisan Market and West Kent Big Band  
Jul 1 Tonbridge Calling  
Jul 2 Second Wind Concert Band at Tonbridge Castle  
Jul 7-8 Tonbridge Music Festival  
Jul 9 Bollywood Festival at the Castle  
Jul 21-23 Luna Cinema at the Castle



One of several 'ghost signs' that can be spotted around the town centre

## INTRODUCING ... Tonbridge parkrun

One of the biggest community events in Tonbridge takes place every week, at 9am on a Saturday morning in the middle of town. Parkrun is now in its 10th year in the town so I followed up with the organizers to learn more about what they are about, and what they have coming up. Thanks to Tonbridge Parkrun's Anthony Lester.

### What's the main purpose of Tonbridge Parkrun?

Tonbridge parkrun is a free, weekly, timed 5-kilometre run, jog or walk around Tonbridge park (The Racecourse) and Haysden country park. Taking place every Saturday morning at 9am, participants of all abilities and ages are welcome and should you wish not to take part but still get involved, each week we have a team of 30+ volunteers that are needed to put on the event. It truly is a community event put on by the community. A Junior parkrun event is held at 9am every Sunday at the Tonbridge Farm Sportsground, Longmead, with a flat, 2km course specifically for children between 4 and 14 years old.



Anthony briefs parkrun volunteers at the Tonbridge Racecourse park

Parkrun provides a safe and encouraging space to exercise with others, from elite Olympians to those attempting their first ever 5-kilometre run, 4 year-olds to 94 year-olds everyone is made to feel welcome. But parkrun offers more than physical exercise, it offers time outside away from modern life, to spend time with family members, build new friendships, and feel part of a productive community. The mental health benefits are immeasurable and form the cornerstones of the wider mission statement of 'a healthier happier planet'.

Whilst we are a community event run by volunteers from Tonbridge and the surrounding areas we are part of a much larger community, with over 1700 other events in the UK and 2500 around the world.

### What do you think is the best thing about it?

Whilst parkrun started as a 5-kilometre time trial, the event has evolved into something much more, so much so that we have banned the words 'race' and 'winners', there are no time limits and you will never come last.

The timing provides a gauge to measure yourself against yourself, your position is largely irrelevant. Of course you are welcome to do your run and then get on with your day, but those that get the most from Parkrun are those that support others when they have finished, have a chat with the people they have run or walked with, go for a coffee or just spend time with friends and families. Parkrun provides that point of commonality.

### How long has TMC been around?

Tonbridge parkrun started in November 2013, so this year will be our 10th anniversary. In the past 10 years we have put on 411 events, and welcomed 16,175 different people, covering 845,875km, all supported by 1,269 different volunteers.

### What are your plans for the next few months?

We will keep doing what we do, meeting our mates in the park for a chat and a bit of exercise. We hope to have a couple of special events coming up, one celebrating the 75th anniversary of the NHS and of course our own 10th anniversary at the beginning of November. In the meantime we are hoping to be able to enjoy some sunshine and a dry course.

### How should people get in touch if they want to learn more?

Website: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/tonbridge/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tonbridgeparkrun>

To take part all you need is an athlete barcode, this can be downloaded and printed off as part of your one-time registration. Registration like the event is free and only takes a couple of minutes and can be done using this web address:  
<https://www.parkrun.org.uk/register/>



Tonbridge junior parkrun

Tonbridge Civic Society 2023  
Charity registration 227956  
[info@tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk)  
[www.tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk)