



Tonbridge Civic Society

November 2023

NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



**TCS Chair
Tom Freke**

The Civic Society has finalized a new events programme, and we hope to see you at one or more of these. The first will be on 3 Dec at the Old Fire Station when we'll look at visions of Tonbridge past and present - particularly relevant given proposed changes to the town centre. From 5pm with mulled wine and other festive drinks available.

In the New Year we're restarting our programme of talks, with the first at the Angel Centre on 16 Jan in the evening. Further talks will then take place through the rest of the first half of the year. Our AGM will take place on 7 May.

We've also programmed two other events. On 21 April, we're proposing a walk around Tonbridge to review our Design Award winners, and on 26 June, we're lining up a visit to a nearby garden. Further details of these will be sent out in the New Year.

Future of the Angel Centre

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council have published a report as they consider the future of the Angel Centre. Councillors will be discussing options laid out in the report in committee on 14 Nov. The report can be found [here](#) and the meeting will be broadcast live on the council's [YouTube channel](#).

Would you like to help the Society?

There's lots you can do help the town by working with the Society and we've compiled this into a short guide, which you can find attached separately to this email.

[Email me](#) if you have any thoughts or ideas on what the Society can do for the town, and if you'd like to meet with us we're starting a regular, and very informal, monthly meet up. The next one is at the Ivy House on 28 Nov at 8pm. Following that we'll be at The Old Fire Station on 15 Dec at 11am.

Related, the Civic Society participates in the Tonbridge Community Forum, a quarterly meeting between councillors and various town societies and groups. If you'd like to raise anything to this group, do get in touch.



News

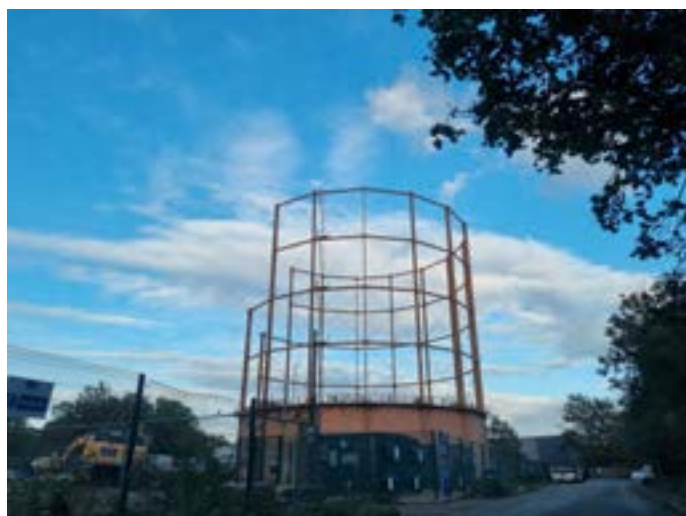
The Post Office has a new location, finally! It'll be at 13 Quarry Hill Road, the former site of the Arcadia picture framing shop. It's due to open on 3 Jan 2024.

The Nelson Arms is one of four pubs shortlisted to be [CAMRA pub of the year](#).

Proposals to close railway local ticket offices and change Tonbridge station into a travel centre appear to have been cancelled after the first phase of consultation.

Speaking of trains, local author Marie Cross recently published a novel, *The Permanent Way*, about the arrival of the railway in Kent. It is available on [Amazon](#).

The gas holders on the River Medway will shortly be a thing of the past. Work to demolish the last of these is underway.



The Medway gas holders will soon be a thing of the past

Civic Society Events

3 Dec	The Old Fire Station. 5pm. Visions of Tonbridge town
16 Jan	Talk at the Angel Centre. Speaker TBD
5 March	Talk at the Angel Centre. Speaker TBD
7 May	AGM. Speaker TBD
4 June	Talk at the Angel Centre. Speaker TBD
26 June	Visit to Long Barn Gardens
21 July	Summer party and Design Award

Town Events

19 Nov	Tonbridge Charity Firework Display – Racecourse Sportsground
19 Nov	Christmas Artisan Market – Tonbridge Castle
26 Nov	Tonbridge Rotary Christmas Festival – High Street
From 26 Nov	Illuminate – Tonbridge Castle

INTRODUCING ... Tonbridge Needs Access to Cash



Tonbridge's Sally Pearce is campaigning for a Banking Hub in Tonbridge following closure of several banks in the town. At present Tonbridge doesn't qualify for such a facility because it still has banks providing personal banking services. Sally's campaign is to change the criteria so that removal of business banking services is sufficient for such a hub to be set up. Such a hub would be run by multiple banks through the week and offer personal and business banking. We speak with her to find out more.

How did the campaign come about?

I think the first seed was planted when we lost the High Street Post Office last year. Since then, and like many other residents, I watched banks closing and noticed fewer businesses taking cash from their customers.

What kind of initial reaction did you get?

People have been supportive but initially it was mostly venting anger as many felt there wasn't much they could do. People wanted to do something.

What's been your most effective activity?

Meeting our MP to get his support to lobby for the rule change meant I could give people a clear and simple call to action. I was able to explain that if people email him their stories and explain why they want a high street Banking Hub, it gives him the ammunition to lobby for a change to the hub criteria, which would mean we get a Banking Hub.

What's the current status of the campaign?

I keep writing and sharing posts reminding people of the need to email our MP and sharing news. There's a lot happening and, sorry to say, a lot of speculation shared as fact. A recent news story implied Tonbridge is now on the list for a Banking Hub. Unfortunately, that's not correct (I checked with Link which makes the decision). It is true that changes to the criteria around a hub should be decided and announced within the next few months so that's why people should continue giving our MP their stories.

What are you watching for, and what do you hope for?

I'm waiting for an announcement (probably from the Treasury or the Financial Conduct Authority) confirming the new Banking Hub criteria. Once that is announced I will submit a new request for a hub.

How can people learn more and support the cause?

There's more information on the [Facebook page](#). We need people (and businesses) to [email Tom Tugendhat](#) telling him why they need a Tonbridge High Street Banking Hub. He needs stories. He needs businesses to explain how not being able to have local cash banking services has affected whether they can take cash.

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