

Reopening High Street Safely Fund

End of campaign report
July 2021

Background on the project

From the outset, the main objective of the RHSS team were to reassure the public that the town centres and other shopping areas of the Sevenoaks district were safe and open for business. It was also important to remind shoppers and visitors of the need for continued safe behaviour, and to bring visitors back to the four main shopping centres of Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Swanley and Westerham.

We were able to deliver a comprehensive marketing plan to support high street businesses by promoting town centres and shopping areas as welcoming and safe places to spend money, while responding to government guidance at all times.

The project team devised a virtual festival for the district to showcase the different businesses in each of the four high streets. Traders would either be filmed or film themselves showcasing their business and introducing the products, services and people to potential shoppers. The videos would be shared on YouTube from 12th April through to June and supported by a comprehensive social media, press and advertising strategy to encourage shares, engagement and incremental participation from further businesses.

Activity was split into two phases to coincide with the easing of lockdown restrictions and to benefit different local businesses.



Phase one

To tie into the reopening of retail and outdoor hospitality on 12th April, we launched the first phase of the Reopening High Street Safely campaign in Sevenoaks. This involved the creation of business videos which we rolled out on YouTube and social media, as well as graphics and messaging to support safety in the town centres.

Summary of activity

- Outreach to businesses across the district's four high streets to register interest in RHSS activity
- Creation of a filming and promotional guide circulated
- Creation and procurement of 11 videos, and creation of a new YouTube channel featuring the promotional videos
- 1 x master edit of videos to cover all retail businesses in the district
- Advertorial content to support the videos for two weeks across the local media, with supporting blog content for the council website and press releases for editorial opportunities
- Creation of an e-newsletter to key stakeholders, businesses and residents to promote the return to the high street and profile the participating businesses
- Weekly catch up meetings to review stats, uptake and direction of the content in line with Government guidelines.



Phase two

As hospitality businesses reopened on 17th May, we chose to capitalise on the growing confidence and interest in visiting town centres and created a fresh batch of video, social media and press content featuring local hospitality businesses.

Summary of activity

- 16 new videos featuring Sevenoaks' hospitality businesses and interview with key team members, as well as teaser videos
- Suite of graphics and assets for social media/web/print media to promote 'Book Your Table' message
- Advertorial features in the local media
- Press release summarising key quotes and messages to the public
- Resharing of phase one content to build momentum and interest



Business involvement in the RHSS campaign

22 retail and hospitality businesses across the district signed up to participate in the RHSS campaign.

Hospitality businesses:

- The Anchor, Sevenoaks
- Malabar Coffee House, Sevenoaks
- Brisket & Barrel, Sevenoaks
- The Olive Tree, Otford
- The Old Eden, Edenbridge
- The Courtyard, Westerham
- Piccalilly's Café, Swanley
- Dulce's Patisserie, Sevenoaks
- The Restoration, Sevenoaks
- Napoli é, Westerham
- The Minstrel, Edenbridge
- King & Queen, Edenbridge

Retail businesses:

- Knobbly Knees Deli & Eco Shop, Sevenoaks
- Schmidt Sevenoaks
- The Springbank Clinic, Sevenoaks
- Entre Nous Lingerie, Westerham
- Flowerworks of Swanley
- County Clothes, Sevenoaks
- Lennox Cato Antiques & Works of Art, Edenbridge
- The Vintage Home Company, Westerham
- Swanley Pet Centre
- Manuka Shoes, Westerham



Feedback from businesses and the public

While we were out filming, we received lots of positive feedback from the businesses about Sevenoaks District Council and the support it has given to the high streets through this campaign. Positive comments included Pat at Manuka Shoes, Maria at The Vintage Home Company and Jane at Entre Nous Lingerie.

Businesses have also shared their thanks for letting them be involved and praised the quality of the videos that have been produced. Positive comments included Barry at The Anchor, Julia at Malabar Coffee, Rebecca at Piccalilly's Café and Debbie at Napoli é.

The YouTube videos and social media posts have also received some extremely positive engagement, with people sharing their support for the businesses and saying it has made them want to visit the businesses.

“Thank you so much for including us in this project!”

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“Thank you Jane and all of the ambassador team for the amazing work you do. The Community Cupboard absolutely could not have managed to support the hundreds of families throughout the pandemic without you. Your dedication to your jobs is outstanding and always with a smiling face. Sevenoaks District Council Official you are amazing!”

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“What a lovely place – definitely going to pop in there!”

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“Thank you for this initiative SDC. It helps increase the profile of small independents like us ”

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“Oooo my favourite shop in town. Amy is lovely and so helpful and friendly. You really need to go in and see her and all the lovely local products she stocks”

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“I went in there for the first time last week. Lovely selection of high quality items and yummy treats!”

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“Great video well done to all involved.”

Impact of the RHSS campaign

The RHSS Fund enabled the council to engage with businesses and obtain quality digital content that conveyed stakeholders' unique services, stories and characters in a format that was easily accessible – and recognisable – to the public. The activity not only allowed us to share safety messages to the public in a variety of formats, but also re-introduced the district's high street businesses to them in a positive light.

Businesses felt supported and engaged with the council, and could see provision was being made to boost their marketing and profile both locally and further afield. Consumers were also given clear, positive information and reassurance about being able to return to the high streets safely. As the videos featured contained messages from real people they could see and hear from virtually, consumers could better identify and empathise with the need to support local.



YouTube video performance

As a platform for our campaign, we set up a dedicated YouTube channel - Shop Eat Drink Breathe Local, from which to share our videos.

6,100 video views since channel launch.

Over **11,000** video impressions with a **5%** click through rate.

20th May was the best day for video views, with a total of **470 views** on that day.

Facebook is the top performing traffic source, it contributes to **88%** of your total external traffic.

15 channel subscribers.

The Anchor video has received the most views with a total of **821 views** to date.



Sevenoaks Chronicle ad campaign performance

Across the two phases, we ran advertising campaigns with Sevenoaks Chronicle to raise awareness of our campaign to a wider audience.

April

Online Article - Reached 28,381 people.
145 people clicked through to the site, and
12 likes/comments/shares on social media.

May

Facebook Campaign - 23,747 impressions & 937 clicks to the site, from chosen target audience.

Optimised Impressions - 110,000 impressions & 363 clicks to the site. Optimised are extremely targeted and this will be people that fit within the campaign criteria.

In your area – 10,002 impressions and 83 clicks to the site - This is done by location so meaning 83 people located within the area went to the site, which is great for brand awareness.



Summary

With 6,100 video views so far to date, aided by supportive social media content and advertising campaigns, the campaign to promote Reopening High Streets Safely successfully reached a very large audience and engaged with residents about the benefits and ease of supporting the district's town centres.

The campaign's creative outputs encouraged people to spend time and money within the town centres of Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Swanley and Westerham, and reassured the public that the necessary safety measures were in place, businesses were also shown support from Sevenoaks District Council.

Our RHSS activity took place from the end of March until June 2021, across key reopening dates including non-essential retail and indoor hospitality and was a great collaborative effort with the Sevenoaks District Council teams. This was not only a successful campaign, but a great example of creative collaborative campaign work for a district and it has potential to be held up as a leading example of the RHSS scheme.

Looking ahead, the Welcome Back Fund provides Sevenoaks District Council with the opportunity to push the successes achieved with the business videos further in a new campaign.



Thank you