

## REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

### **a) Social Affairs Select Committee – 8 March 2011**

Two progress reports were received from the Stag and Sencio

Linda Larter explained that the Stag Community Arts Centre, which gained its charitable status in August 2010, had outperformed its predicted targets for both the Theatre and Plaza Suite by a healthy margin. The cinema complex had benefitted from further investment and new initiatives with the installation of 3 D to Screen One and a Parent and Baby screening on Tuesdays. These were in addition to the screening of first release films, building up a Classic Film Club and enabling youth outreach groups to produce and show their own amateur films.

The theatre hosted a broad programme of events from the classical to contemporary, encompassing all forms of drama, dance and music. Improved technical equipment had been installed and a fundraising scheme to refurbish the seating had been launched successfully.

Youth Outreach is an important component of the centre's work both within the community at large and more directly with local schools. The Youth Theatre is expanding, there is a monthly band night for the under 18s as well as many, varied, activities during holiday times.

Overall the Stag Community Arts Centre is reporting a small profit at the end of this financial year.

Despite the many challenges faced by Sencio, Mark Whyman predicted that Sevenoaks should return a slight profit. 2010 had been a slow and difficult trading year. The severe weather had had a marked effect on turnover at the Lullingstone Golf Centre. All the greens had succumbed to disease and an incident involving a JCB had damaged three of them compounding the problem. However thanks to the expertise of the groundsmen the course was now playing better than ever. On the plus side the 'feel good' factor generated by the forthcoming Olympic Games was beginning to come through with 95% of people questioned believing in the importance of exercise. The Fitness Suite continued to attract and retain new clients with an almost 19% increase in adult participants. A 'Loyalty Award Scheme' had been introduced allowing members to enjoy additional activities.

Other initiatives had included a total rethink of the catering side, joint flexible purchasing through the Kent County Council scheme and expanded community programmes. These have included fun activities for those with disabilities and their families, and further opportunities for the over 50s. A recent survey showed a customer satisfaction rate of 83%, a steady increase for the sixth successive year.

The flumes at White Oak continue to attract customers and swimming programmes based on family fun such as Pool Discos which were proving popular.

The future however remains uncertain with particular concern over the rise in cost of fuel and the increasing squeeze on people's disposable incomes. Sencio has made significant savings in its running costs especially with improvements to its energy efficiency and it will continue to explore all avenues both to reduce cost and to attract more custom.

Members also received papers on the Service Level Agreement with the Citizens Advice Bureau, due for renewal in 2012 and the proposed responses to the Government's Public Health White Paper. Concerns were expressed over the adequacy of any funding and the willingness of upper tier authorities to work with District / Borough Councils. It was felt that they were far better placed to understand the needs of their communities and to target outcomes through effective local partnership and successful value for money delivery.

This was the last meeting of the committee before the elections in May and members expressed their thanks to the officers for all the work they had done on their behalf and for their support and guidance over the past four years.