

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

30 January 2024

TOWN CLERK'S OPEN REPORT

1) Community Infrastructure Levy - Cemetery

- **To consider the request to use the Community Infrastructure Levy to fund the kerbing scheme at the Cemetery.**

At the last meeting, Council was reminded of the sum of money held by this Council within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) budget being £162,890.84.

The purpose of this report is to formally request funds from this pot to address the pressing issue of increased erosion of the cemetery verges and damage to headstones, primarily caused by irresponsible driving within the cemetery premises. The deteriorating condition of the cemetery verges has negatively impacted the landscape and compromised the stability of some graves.

Community Services Committee on 5 December 2023, considered a report from the Town Council's Health and Safety Advisor who,

Recommended: That the kerbing be installed in the areas as per the quotations received.

This report and the quotations can be viewed at: [Community Services Committee, Town Council, Stratford-upon-Avon \(stratford-tc.gov.uk\)](https://stratford-tc.gov.uk/Community-Services-Committee)

The Advisor had also gone on to identify that the areas of the cemetery which had already been installed were not suffering the same fate.

Three quotations had been submitted and evaluated. The Committee deliberated on the matter, taking into account the related damages, safety concerns, and the Council's commitment to maintaining its role as the burial authority. In light of these considerations, the Committee deemed it justifiable to allocate funds for the project, suggesting that such funding could be drawn from reserves or incorporated into the budget for 2024/25.

Following the meeting, it was determined that this project indeed fulfilled the criteria for the CIL.

*CIL monies can be spent on the **provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure**, or anything else that is concerned with addressing demands that development places on an area.*

The Town Council's CIL policy was agreed in October 2021 and can be viewed at [Policies and Documents, Stratford Town Council \(stratford-tc.gov.uk\)](https://policiesanddocuments.stratford-tc.gov.uk)

Accordingly, it is recommended that the project for the repair and enhancement of cemetery kerbing be met from CIL funds being £29,470.

2) Community Builder Initiative

- **To consider the request to continue with the Community Builder Initiative**

The Town Council was very recently made aware that the Community Builder Project which had been jointly funded by the Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Stratford Town Trust and Orbit, is nearing the end of the initial pilot period in June 2024. The District Council has asked whether the Town Council wished to continue with our contribution to the project. For the benefit of all a copy of the initial proposal is attached at **Appendix 1**.

This request was raised as a verbal item at the recent Finance and Audit Committee. Members expressed concerns about the timing of the request, considering it was presented late in the budget-setting process. Additionally, there were concerns about

the original project's intention to investigate whether the post would become self-funding.

The Town Council had contributed £5,000 towards the £66,000 contract. Following the Finance and Audit Committee the District Council were approached with the question of the project's self-funding aspect.

The District Council explained that the original tender for the project had included the possibility of identifying a funding model. WCAVA, had explored various funding streams and grants to sustain the project. However, they advised that due to timing and criteria constraints, no applicable options were found within the required window.

While a broader application for the project to the UKSPF and CIL was considered, the timescales and available budget for the UKSPF were deemed unviable, and the CIL was not feasible for revenue funding. As a result, funding the continuation of the project in a manner similar to the pilot appears to be the most viable option at this stage.

The District Council suggested that the self-funding/funding model element could be revisited as part of a new tender, provided it is agreed upon by contributing partners. Due to the time required for a tender process, the evaluation work and tender preparation are being conducted simultaneously to avoid a gap between the pilot's conclusion and the potential continuation, contingent on the successful tenderer.

3) Proposed Renewal of Stratford-upon-Avon Business Improvement District (BID) – Ballot

- **To consider the Town Council's vote at the forthcoming ballot and to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to cast the vote.**

Notice has been given of the forthcoming ballot for the proposal put forward by the Stratforward Business Improvement District LTD. This proposal is for a renewal of the Business Improvement District (BID) for a new five year term.

The Local Government Act 2003 set out the operation of BIDs as a means of enabling businesses to invest in their local trading environment. A BID is a statutory designation which can come into being following a successful ballot in which all eligible business ratepayers in a defined geographic area are invited to vote on proposals to invest collectively in local improvements that are additional to those currently provided by local government and other public service providers.

Stratford-upon-Avon has held BID status since 2009. The Town Council is a levy payer, and the proposed levy would in the first year amount to £739.37. According to their Business Plan, the levy rate may increase by up to 3% from year two onwards, to reflect annual inflationary impacts.

The Town Council was previously represented on the BID Board, with the Town Clerk acting as an observer, however, the Council member resigned from the Board last year and the observer post was withdrawn. Following on from this, regular meetings have taken place between the BID Manager and representatives from the local authorities, so that the Council's can be kept aware of the BID business activities. Additionally, this Council collaborated with the BID on the recent Christmas light Switch-on Event.

The Business Plan has been circulated to all Councillors in advance of the meeting and can be viewed at

[SUAB BusinessPlan2024 v08 DIGITAL.pdf \(stratforduponavonbid.co.uk\)](https://stratforduponavonbid.co.uk/SUAB_BusinessPlan2024_v08_DIGITAL.pdf)

Members are requested to thoroughly review the document and evaluate the accomplishments of the BID, as well as their future strategy, with regard to the Town Council's forthcoming vote.

4) Stratford Town Trust – Appointment of Town Council Representatives

- **To appoint three Council representatives to the Town Trust as from 1 June 2024 for a four-year term.**

Currently the three Council representatives are former Councillor Tony Jackson and Councillors Cleeve and Coles. Councillor Cleeve is seeking re-election for a second term.

Trustees usually serve a four-year term, with the opportunity to stand again.

Whilst most appointments to outside bodies take place at the July Council meeting, it is necessary to appoint to the Town Trust earlier in the year so that an induction process can be undertaken prior to commencement on 1 June.

Councillors have been notified of the request and timescale to consider the nominations

Councillors are reminded that there is no requirement that our appointed representatives needed to be Councillors, namely

three persons appointed by Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council (“the Council”) who may (but need not) be members of the Council (“the Nominated Trustees”);

Accordingly, with Councillor Cleeve the only Councillor indicating that she is willing to seek re-election, the Town Clerk has engaged in conversations with two additional members of the community who have conveyed an interest in serving as the Town Council's appointed representatives on the Town Trust. Details of these nominations will be presented at the upcoming meeting for consideration.

5) Calendar of Meetings

- **To approve the Calendar of Meetings 2024/25 and to agree a date for the annual photograph.**

The proposed calendar of meetings for 2024/25 is attached as **Appendix 2.**

In order for the Planning Consultative Committee Meetings to remain synchronised with the District Council's Planning Meetings, it proves necessary to treat these meetings as the starting point when determining the Calendar of Meetings for the Town Council.

Only Council can approve the Accounts and Annual Return, and in order to comply with accounting deadlines, it continues to prove necessary to include a Town Council Meeting in June. Ideally, no other business will be transacted at that meeting, but this often proves impracticable.

In addition, Civic Events are included on the calendar as the attendance of Councillors is requested at these. The date of the official photo also requires determining as it has been pointed out that the July meeting falls within the school holidays and may prohibit some Councillors from attending. There is the May Annual Council meeting, the June meeting and also the September Council which could be considered as alternatives.

**Town Clerk
24 January 2024**