

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

23 July 2024

Meeting commenced: 6.30pm Meeting ended: 8.15pm

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Fojtik) in the chair
Councillors:

Albon	Hunter
Alcock	MacDonald
Cleeve	Petrovic
Coles	Lee
I Fradgley	McNaught Barrow
J Fradgley	Smith

22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Duck, Harding, Rashwan, Rolfe and Vos and accepted for the reason given.

23 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Cleeve declared a Personal Interest in Minute 38 as an employee of VASA.

24 To receive written requests for dispensation

There were no requests.

25 Public Participation

There was none.

26 Town Council Election – Shottery Ward

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Steve Albon, the new Councillor for the Shottery Ward following the recent election on 4 July 2024. Councillor Albon was to take up membership of the Finance and Audit Committee and Planning Committee.

27 **Membership of the Council – late Councillor Chris Wall**

Councillors were invited to reflect on their memories of Chris, and following a minute silence, it was

RESOLVED: That the Council notes with regret the death of former Councillor, Chris Wall and extends its sympathy to all that knew him.'

28 **Presentation – Shakespeare Hospice**

Tracey Sheridan, CEO of the Shakespeare Hospice, attended the meeting and delivered a presentation to the Councillors regarding the hospice's work in providing palliative and end-of-life care to patients, their loved ones, and caregivers throughout the town and south Warwickshire over the past 25 years. Tracey discussed the challenges the team had encountered in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in regard to re-engaging volunteers. She also highlighted the newly established Children and Family Support Service, which was a free service available to children and young people (aged 5-18) who had experienced a sudden or anticipated bereavement, or who were facing the impending loss of someone close to them with a life-limiting illness.

The Mayor expressed gratitude to Tracey for her attendance and for the exceptional work done by the local team. He also reminded attendees that the Hospice was one of his selected charities for his mayoral year.

29 **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor made reference to a couple of the recent events he had attended, which included the Bishopton Community Day and the 100th birthday of Betty Wilson, Mother of the Town Council's Civic Officer.

He also wished to publicly thank Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom for the wonderful floral displays within the town. Additionally, he referenced a recent letter from a group of GCSE students studying Citizenship Action regarding river pollution. Since the Town Council did not have direct responsibility in this matter, he planned to write to and forward the letter to the appropriate organisation(s).

30 **To approve the Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 11 June 2024**

It was proposed and seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 11 June 2024 be adopted.

31 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

Councillors were advised that a high value invoice had been discovered to be raised in March for services in April which meant the income and general reserve figures in the 2023/24 Financial Statements had been overstated by this invoice amount (over £15,000).

Once this had come to the Town Council's attention and following advice from Warwickshire Association of Local Councils, the 2023/24 financial statements had been re-stated. This in turn meant part 2 of the AGAR needed to be revised, re-approved by Council and re-submitted to the external auditor.

The revised financial year end surplus/deficit was therefore £3,539 in deficit, compared to the original surplus figure of £11,926.

This has also changed the general reserve figure from £166,301 to £150,836 (with rounding).

Accordingly, it was proposed and seconded and

RESOLVED: That Council approve the revised Accounting Statement (Section 2) and Accountability Return for the financial year 2023/24.

It was not believed to be required, however as a precaution it was further proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That Council approve Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year 2023/24.

RESOLVED: That the revised Financial Statements for the year 2023/24 be approved.

32 To adopt the draft Open Minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 18 June 2024

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the draft Open Minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 18 June 2024 be adopted.

33 To adopt the draft Open Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meetings held on 7 May and 25 June 2024

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the draft Open Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meetings held on 7 May and 25 June 2024 be adopted.

34 To adopt the draft Open Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on 2 July 2024

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the draft Open Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on 2 July 2024 be adopted.

35 To receive the draft Open Minutes of the Cemetery Extension Task and Finish Group held on 16 July 2024

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the draft Open Minutes of the Cemetery Extension Task and Finish Group held on 16 July 2024 be adopted.

36 To receive a verbal update from the Cemetery Extension Task and Finish Group

Following a recent meeting of the Group, Councillor Lee has prepared a revised Cemetery Development Plan for the project, outlining key considerations and factors that need to be addressed.

The Town Clerk indicated she had contacted the Council's Solicitor to progress the purchase of the land and was currently awaiting a response.

Councillor Lee highlighted to the meeting several considerations that required attention, including the design, planning application process, and the use of the land as garden plots during the interim period of development of the site. An email would be circulated to Councillors after the meeting requesting their input on the design of the scheme. In addition, the possibility of offering the land, whilst the project progressed, as garden plots would be explored.

It was also noted that the funding for the project required further consideration in light of the costs associated with the upcoming stages, which will need to be factored into the future budget of the Town Council.

RESOLVED: That the Cemetery Development be noted.

37 To receive the following Policies for approval by Council

Consideration was given to the following policies, which had been recommended for adoption by the Personnel Committee:

- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Equality and Diversity
- Leave
- Sickness Absence

Following consideration, it was proposed and seconded and

RESOLVED: That the following policies be adopted:

- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Equality and Diversity
- Leave
- Sickness Absence

Appointment to Outside Bodies

Consideration was given to the appointment of Councillors to Outside Bodies for 2024/25. Councillor Cleeve was proposed and seconded for the vacancy on the CCTV forum. All other appointments remained unchanged.

Organisation	Councillor
Age UK Warwickshire	One Vacancy
Alveston Relief in Need Charity	Smith
CCTV Forum	Cleeve
Christmas Lights Co Ltd	Smith
Community Builder Project	Petrovic
Fred Winter Centre	Rashwan
Friends of Shakespeare's Church	Macdonald
Historic Buildings Preservation Trust	I Fradgley
Historic Spine	Macdonald
Shakespeare Line Promotion Group	J Fradgley
<u>StratFire</u> Historical Research Project	Harding
Stratford-in-Bloom	J Fradgley Duck
<u>Stratfords</u> of the World	Cleeve
Stratford-upon-Avon Town Trust Term of office is 4 years starting on 1 June and ending 31 May	Cleeve until 2028 Sarah Summers 2028* Lewis McNaught 2028*
Stratford-upon-Avon Strategic Partnership	Vos
Stratford Town Transport Group	Chairman of Planning (Deputy as substitute) MacDonald
VASA	One Vacancy

*non-councillors

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Councillors to the Outside Bodies, as detailed in the preamble, be approved.

Town Clerk's Open Report

39 Stratford-upon-Avon Strategic Partnership – Town Centre Strategy

The Strategic Partnership was preparing to publish its Strategy / Prospectus for consultation. The Strategy set out the agreed vision and direction of travel for the town centre, including identifying a list of projects and initiatives to deliver the vision.

The document referred to the vision, mission, key themes, strategic projects and priorities which had been identified. These had been identified through facilitated workshop sessions with a variety of stakeholders, including all local authorities. Some questions were raised on the timeline associated with the Strategy. It was clarified that publishing this strategy as a prospectus would help demonstrate community and stakeholder support and alignment for the identified projects and assist in pursuing funding opportunities to implement important initiatives for the town centre.

It was acknowledged that the Town Council had been identified for a number of the projects. The Council would need to reflect on the appropriateness of these as part of our response to the consultation.

Following discussion and general support

RESOLVED: To endorse the Strategy for public consultation.

40 Integrated Transport Strategy & Action Plan

Consideration was given to the Integrated Transport Strategy which had been produced by the Town Transport Group. The Strategy was aimed at enhancing transport solutions for Stratford-upon-Avon, improving the environment for residents and visitors, and making travel more efficient.

The Strategy aimed to revitalise the town centre by removing and relocating traffic, while increasing the use of sustainable forms of transport. Specific actions were proposed to deliver the plan and these were identified within the Action Plan.

The Transport Vision for Stratford-upon-Avon was for:

- a town that was easy to access and move about in; for all, no matter what their purpose, length of stay, or arrival and departure times.
- has a pedestrianised core which provided a safe, pollution free, and welcoming environment, which presented the town's heritage and assets in the best possible way.
- with multi-modal transport solutions, including both public and private modes, active travel and "last mile" solutions, designed to provide the access to, and mobility around, the town.

In reviewing the plan, Members expressed uncertainty about several identified issues and the specific steps required. Additionally, there were concerns that the strategy did not adequately address green transport considerations.

Accordingly, Councillors requested that the Chairman of the Transport Strategy Group be invited to the next meeting of the Council to present the report.

41 Climate Change Group / Community Services Committee

Following a discussion with members of the Climate Change Group (CCG), it has become evident that the current format of the Group was not yielding the desired results and struggling to reach a quorum at times. As a result of this dialogue, the suggestion had been made to incorporate the responsibilities of the CCG into the Terms of Reference for the Community Services Committee (CSC). The committee would subsequently be renamed, Community Services and Environment Committee to better reflect its expanded scope.

It had been noted that specific climate change activities could be undertaken by establishing task and finish groups, if required, this approach would offer a more focused strategy for addressing specific issues. Task and Finish groups would be encouraged to conduct thorough research and analysis and report their findings to the main committee upon completion.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Group be integrated into the Community Services Committee, with the newly formed committee designated as the Community Services and Environment Committee.

42 **Title given to the Councillor chairing meetings**

Consideration was given to the appropriate title to be used for the councillor chairing meetings of Council committees. Councillors also suggested that other Council documents ought to be reviewed on an ongoing basis with regard to cultural relevancy.

Accordingly, following consideration and in order to align with modern, inclusive language practices of using gender-neutral language to promote equality and inclusivity, it was

RESOLVED: That the term 'Chair' be used to address those Councillors presiding over the meeting

43 **To receive update reports on Outside Bodies from Councillors**

Stratford in Bloom – Councillor J Fradgley
Town Trust – Councillor Cleeve

44 **To receive verbal Ward Reports and notifications of important issues affecting the town**

There were no updates given.

45 **Town Clerk's Verbal Report**

There were no updates given.

Chairman: