

STRATFORD TOWN TRUST Board Meeting – 11 December 2024

Report to Stratford Town Council

Overview

In the final board meeting of 2024, the Trust's three committees (Grants & Community Engagement, Audit & Governance, and Finance, Investment & Property) presented their end of year reports. The CEO reported on progress with several ongoing Trust initiatives, including the Community Hub, Stratford upon Avon Local Nature Reserve and other community engagement activities. The Board was briefed on developments at Stratford Play House, following that Company's decision to terminate their lease agreement on 31 January 2025. Preparations have begun for writing STT's next Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2030.

Current Initiatives

- Community Hub Steering Group: Several options for the future location of the Trust's Community Hub are under consideration by a dedicated steering group.
- Stratford upon Avon Local Nature Reserve: Although SDC has secured funds for work taking place in 2024/25, the long-term management of the LNR is contingent upon income from the sale of biodiversity net gain units (BNG).
- Community Engagement: Along with other successful activities held at the Community Hub, the Trust enabled two sell-out performances of the entirely volunteer-led production of *The Dance of Death* at the Guild Chapel, both of which received a rapturous response.

Stratford Play House

While STT is disappointed to have received notice from the Play House operator (Stratford Play House Limited) of its intention to terminate the lease agreement early on 31 January 2025, the Trust is looking forward to starting the tender process to identify a new operating company.

The board of STT is fully committed to this much-loved Stratford venue remaining a valued community resource. Despite efforts made by STT's executive to find a way for this venue to remain open, none of the options

offered by the operator were realistic. As a result, the venue will close on 31 January 2025. Stratford Play House Limited will contact anyone with tickets for performances after that date to arrange a refund.

An experienced temporary resource has agreed to act for STT to oversee the winding-up of current operations. Meanwhile, the Board is encouraged by the dozen enquiries it has already received for operating the venue in the future. The tender process will commence formally in the New Year.

Strategic Plan

The Board was briefed on the direction of travel, key dates and responsibilities for writing the Trust's next Strategic Plan covering the period 2026-2030. Trustees will be reviewing the structure and outcomes of the current plan (2021-2025), together with the structure and overarching themes of the new plan at a Board Away Day to be held in February.

As part of this process, a public and member consultation involving a questionnaire will take place between 16/01 and 13/03, when the Trust aims to achieve as many respondents as possible.

STT is grateful for those contributions made previously by members of STC and is keen to receive contributions to the new Strategic Plan.

Lewis McNaught

20 Dec 2024