



ANNUAL REPORT – 2020/2021

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

Message from the Mayor

Prior to my Mayoral year when everything was still 'normal' I decided that I would select three good causes to support (rather than individual charities).

My chosen Good Causes were:

- a) Volunteers
- b) People with Disabilities
- c) Exercise and Well Being

I also set myself a key objective of ensuring that progress was made towards delivering the Neighbourhood Development Plan that was adopted in 2018.

The arrival of Covid-19 changed the world as we knew it and the cancellation of the 2020 Shakespeare Birthday Parade was a harsh reality check on what I could expect in my Mayoral Year. An immediate priority arose to ensure that the Town Council could steer themselves successfully through uncharted waters and to manage my own expectations on what my year would look like.

Zoom meetings (who knew about these at the beginning of the year?) were suddenly the way forward as everybody adapted to a whole new way of working.

The first virtual Mayor Making ceremony was held and this heralded a Mayoral Year that was unprecedented. The following review captures my year as it developed.



YEAR IN REVIEW

MAY 2020

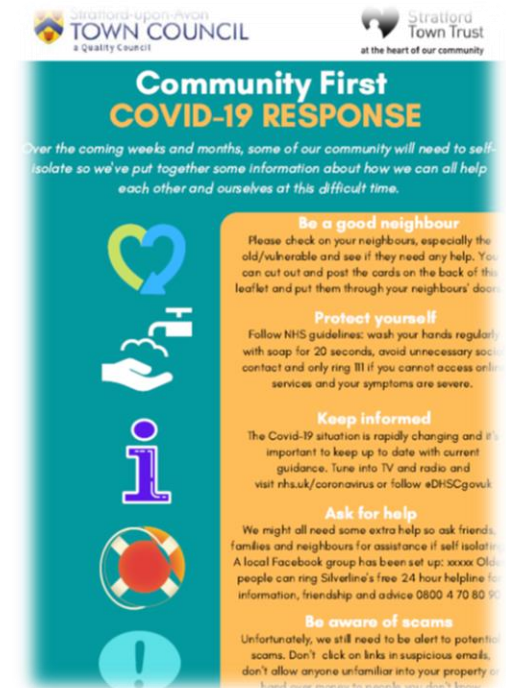
Although my Annual Report should cover Mayor Making 2020 to Mayor Making 2021, I do need to re-wind just a little to explain one or two important issues that came about as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

- When the country fully understood the seriousness of the Coronavirus pandemic and the nation experienced the first lock-down, I was incredibly proud to see, under former Mayor Kate Rolfe's leadership, how quickly the Town Council reacted to assist the community in a time of crisis. Even before the lockdown was certain, Stratford-upon-Avon and Stratford Town Trust had been collaborating regularly to discuss how to support the town during this unprecedented time. Multiple meetings between Councillors, Officers and Trustees were held which ultimately led to the Stratford Support website being launched on 24 March, 2020.

The website was created for local people to volunteer their services and get support if needed. From our initial shout-out for volunteers, a staggering 306 people signed up to offer help. In fact, so many individuals stepped forward we were not in the position to use them all - an incredible position to be in and as Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon and Deputy Chairman of the Town Trust, I would like to thank every single person that signed up to our website offering their service.

During the pandemic, Stratford Support completed 579 shops, groceries were delivered to 113 addresses and regularly picked up prescriptions and made telephone welfare calls on a daily basis. It was at this time that the Town Council was made a Foodbank referral agency so that those in need could be referred as quickly and seamlessly as possible.

Although most of the services that were provided are generally not called for anymore, the Support Group and its partners continues to meet every two months so we can keep abreast of the activity and support offered by the other partner organisations within the town. We all remain ready to spring back into action in the unfortunate event that this becomes necessary. I would like to thank all the organisations who joined the Town



Council and Town Trust to respond to the pandemic: Stratford-upon-Avon Food Bank, The Time Bank, Citizen's Advice South Warwickshire, Voluntary Action in Stratford-upon-Avon (VASA), Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) Age UK, Warwickshire Social Prescriber, Springfield Mind, Spring Housing Association, Orbit Housing Association and Morrisons.

- In late March 2020, s78 of the Local Authorities and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) England and Wales) Regulations 2020, came into force, enabling all Council Meetings to be held virtually. This involved a steep learning curve to get the Council and staff up and running using Zoom technology. But get there we did, and we have been very pleased with the increase in engagement by the public as a result. It has also been hugely beneficial and convenient for those who work full time or have children to manage/home school. Virtual meetings certainly complemented those with a hectic lifestyle and attendance at every meeting increased significantly. The benefit to the environment that virtual meetings brought should not be underestimated either which fits very comfortably with the Council's objective to respond positively to the Climate Change Emergency.



Town Council Meeting - 26.7.20 6:00pm

- So, just when the benefits of virtual meetings were fully realised, the legislation to continue using a virtual or hybrid platform was withdrawn on 7 May, 2021. Primary legislation is required for remote meetings to continue and the government did not have sufficient time to progress this through parliament before the 2020 Regulations, mentioned previously, ceased. Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council, like thousands of other councils across the country has responded to the government's 'call for evidence' in the hope that in future, legislation will be passed to give Councils the choice and leave it to them determine whether to hold a meeting virtually or face to face.
- Although the vast majority of my civic year has been spent in lockdown with little opportunity for me, as Mayor, to engage as actively with the community as I would have liked, I may still go down in history! My claim to fame is that I was the first (and hopefully the last) to be appointed Mayor with no one physically present. Mayor Making on 15 May 2020 saw me, sitting at home in front of a screen with just my wife, Mandy, and our two dogs as physical witnesses. Surreal to say the least. However, I have to say that I was still as proud as ever to have been made Mayor of this great town, I only wish I

had been lucky enough to experience all activities and events that are part and parcel of being Mayor in normal times. However, I did take part in the Civic Service at Holy Trinity on the Sunday after Mayor Making – virtually of course.

- The Town Council collaborated with Escape Art and Welcombe Radio to stage a Virtual VE Commemoration on 8 May.
- BT Phoneboxes were adopted in Tiddington and Bridgetown wards.
- Contractor appointed to undertake work to repair the Garden Remembrance wall which had been damaged due to a car accident (the work was completed by the end of July).
- Council undertook the first review of its Committee Structure/Decision Making Process and Appointment of Members to Standing Committees.
- The Town Council and The Municipal Charities of Stratford-upon-Avon and St Joseph's Homestead reached agreement to reduce the number of Town Council representatives on their Board from two to one. The Mayor's involvement is as a civic ceremonial supporter and is no longer an ex-officio Trustee.
- Clarity was sought from Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP regarding the letter sent to the Town and Parish Sector apropos the government's intent that this sector should see a share of the £1.6 billion tranche of additional government financial support given to the higher authorities during the Coronavirus crisis. Unfortunately, no Town or Parish Council across the district received a share of this money.
- Council worked collaboratively with Warwickshire County Council, Stratford on Avon District Council, Stratford BID and Shakespeare's England to agree a workable plan to ensure that the town would be able to re-open safely and responsibly once the lock-down was lifted.





- I was Interviewed by Welcombe radio.
- Prepared a video for Warwickshire Vision Awards.
- Opening of Cycle Hire.
- Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 5 May.
- Mayoral, Civic Ceremonial & Events Meeting held on 12 May.
- Annual Meeting and Mayor Making held on 15 May.
- Town Hall Income, Facilities and Wellbeing Panel Meeting held on 13 May.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel Meeting held on 20 May.

JUNE 2020

- Interviewed by BBC CWR.
- Visit to Boat Club (Adaptive Squad).
- Visit to Stables to see Racehorse and Syndicate.
- Planning Consultative Committee Meetings held on 2 June and 23 June.
- Finance & Scrutiny Committee held on 9 June.
- HR Committee held on 30 June.
- Stratford Support Meetings held on 2 June, 9 June, 16 June, 23 June and



30 June.

- Climate Change Emergency Panel meeting held on 25 June.
- Market Forum meeting held on 4 and 12 June.
- Town Hall Income, Facilities and Wellbeing Panel held on 11 June.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel held on 9 and 30 June.

JULY 2020

- Council approves the Annual Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return for financial year ended 31 March, 2020.
- Implementation of The Town Centre Strategic Partnership which is a Town Centre project in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), intended to comprise key stakeholders tasked with preparing and implementing a Town Centre strategy to address key issues outlined in the NDP. The Partnership was initiated and continues to be facilitated by the Town Council and comprises representatives from: Accessible Stratford, Bell Court, RSC, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Shakespeare's England, Stratford on Avon District Council, Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council, Stratford Society, Stratford Town Trust, Town Transport Group and Warwickshire County Council. I am particularly pleased that this was set up during my Mayoralty and I'm delighted to see it working at such a pace. Such cohesive and co-operative partnership working has to be the way forward for the town.
- Instigation of a Task & Finish Group to consider future Town Centre plans and traffic initiatives.
- Council considered that the conduct of Councillors needs to be above repute and that it is important they are transparently accountable for their actions. It was determined that Council would respond to the new Model Member Code of Conduct consultation sighting the need for a Code that was as robust as possible and specific to the parish sector and supported the proposed new Code in principle.

- Council was requested to consider the proposal to set up a Stratford-upon-Avon Youth Council with the aim of including young people in the local decision-making process and giving them the opportunity to have input into shaping the future of the town. A Steering Group was instigated to take this forward.
- Presentation from the Community Heartbeat Trust on how to install and maintain defibrillators throughout the town.
- It was agreed that the Council's newsletter, 'Bridging the Gap', would be published mainly online, with 1,000 copies available outside the Town Hall and for Councillors to distribute in their wards.
- Represented the Mayoralty and Town Council in the Guard of Honour at the funeral of former Mayor, Tessa Bates.
- Meeting with Lion's Chairman.
- Zoom meeting with Stratford Lions.
- Visit to Lifeways.



STRATFORD UPON AVON
YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL



- Visit to Samaritans.
- Opened Ping table tennis table on Waterside.
- Re-opening of the Refill Box.
- Re-opened and enjoyed an informative and entertaining Stratford Town Walk.
- Attended Warwick Mayor Making.

- Planning Consultative Committee held on 7 July.
- General Purposes Committee held on 14 July.
- Mayoral, Civic Ceremonial & Events Meeting held on 21 July.
- Town Council Meeting held on 28 July.
- Climate Change Emergency Panel held on 30 July.
- Market Forum held on 31 July.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel held on 21 July.

August 2020

- The Town Council collaborates for a second time with Escape Arts and Welcombe Radio with additional support for the JAVA Far East Prisoners of War Association to commemorate VJ Day on 15 August.
- Interview on Welcombe Radio for VJ Day.



Stratford upon Avon VJ Day Celebration Programme

All VJ Day Celebrations are digitally pre-recorded

Saturday 15th August

9.15am

VJ Day Commemorative Music - Paul and May Hines aka Soots and Sweets, Welcombe Radio

10.15am

Welcome - Penny Keynton-Hook, Presenter at *Welcombe Radio*, Karen Williams CEO *Escape Arts*, Lesley Clark, Chairman for *Java FEPOW* and Charles Wilson Civic Officer for *Stratford Town Council*
Introduction to Stratford upon Avon VJ Day Commemorations - Lesley Clark, Chair of Java FEPOW Club
Tribute to the Millions - Poem written by Bruno Peek and performed by Mayor, Cllr Tony Jackson
Stratford Honours the end of WWII - Address by Pauline Simpson Chaplain and Secretary for the *National FEPOW Fellowship Welfare Remembrance Association*
Act of Remembrance - led by Pauline Simpson
The Exhortation
The reading of the names on the Stratford upon Avon WWII Far East Campaign War Memorial - By David Hope, Friend of Welcombe Radio
The Affirmation
Last Post Silence Reveille - Performed by Cpl Nigel Jane
Nations Two Minute Silence
The Kohima Epitaph - Read by Pauline Simpson
The FEPOW Prayer - Read by Pauline Simpson

11.30pm

Memories from Veterans & Families - William Mundy & Harold Pleasance talk about their time in the East
Battle's O'er and VE Day 75 - a specially commissioned pipers lament performed by Joe Moore

12.30pm

Tribute to Vera Lynn - Presented by Chris Last of Welcombe Radio
Civilian Life in the Jungle - An extract from *PAI NAA* by Dorethy Thatcher and Robert Cross (Monsoon Books) read by Cat Williams, friend of Welcombe Radio

1.20pm

Poperasops - Tora Wilson and Philippa Lay sing at *Lower Meadow Residential Home*

2pm

Peace Poetry Corner - Poems and short story written by the local community performed by *Tread the Boards* actors Catherine Prout, Joe Deverell-Smith, John-Robert Partridge, Martin Tomms, Phillip Leach, Pete Meredith, Lesley Wilcox, Alexandra Whitworth and Maltida Bott.
Tribute - Colonel J N Williams, RLC, Head of Establishment/Commanding Officer/Defense Munitions Kineton
VJ Tribute - Mayor, Cllr Tony Jackson
Moving Towards Peace - The forming of the United Nations by Caroline Hurst Williams, *AUN Warwick*
A Cry For Peace - Performed by Beadle Emma Davis, Stratford Town Council Beadle
Closing Words - Karen Williams, Charles Wilson, Lesley Clark and Penny Keynton-Hook
The Kohima Epitaph - Read by Archie Nixon representing the children and young people of Stratford
Bells of Holy Trinity Church - Recorded in 2007, played with permission from the *Guild of Bellringers*

3pm FINISH

Listen in at www.welcomberadio.co.uk and Facebook: **Stratford-upon Avon VE & VJ Commemorations**
 Contact: connectingstratfordonavonwr@gmail.com












- The NMTF's Young Trader's Market took place on Waterside on 29 and 30 August. Winners included: Lauren Charlton, Arts and Crafts (pictured), Aaron Gent, General Retail, Aaron Earley, Food and Drink and overall Young Trader of the Year, Emma Rus.
- We said goodbye to our Outside Spaces Operative Barry Lytollis who retired and welcomed David Lawley as his replacement.
- Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 4 August.
- Re-opened Shakespeare Walking Tour and enjoyed a good march with them.
- Opened Carluccios.
- Visit to Town Trust's Community Orchard.
- Visit to Escape Arts.
- Re-opened Waterside Upmarket.
- Video for Rotary Club Duck Race.
- Opened Burger Priest.
- Participated in the Guard of Honour at the funeral of former Mayor, Geoffrey Lees.
- Re-opening of Café Rouge.
- Re-opening of Billesley Manor with the District Council Chairman, Tony Dixon.

- Stratford Support Meetings held on 4 August and 18 August.
- First Youth Town Council Steering Group Meeting held on 5 August.
- Town Centre Task & Finish Meetings held on 5 August and 17 August.
- Governance and Policies Panel held on 11 August.
- Market Forum held on 21 August.
- Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel held on 4 August.

September 2020

- Presentation by Sara Aspley, the Chief Executive of the Town Trust on the socio-economic profile of Stratford-upon-Avon.
- Councillors considered whether we should accept a members' allowance as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel. Concern had been raised that by not having an allowance in place, it may present a potential barrier and prevent greater diversity of representation going forward. Although it was agreed that this issue would be kept under review on an annual basis, it was decided that Council would not implement a members' allowance. Albeit entitled to do so, Stratford-upon-Avon Town Councillors have never received remuneration for their work which we all undertake purely on a voluntary basis.
- Appointment of Town Council Representatives to Outside Bodies.
- Although we all looked forward to returning to face-to-face meetings when it was safe to do so, Council agreed that streaming meeting had made them more accessible to the public and it was considered essential that this should continue. We agreed that a system should be installed to allow streaming of meetings, although it was not clear at this stage whether remote attendance by members would count as being present. The High Court has since ruled that as of 7 May, 2021 members will only be in attendance if they are physically present.

- In 2019 Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council entered into a Lead Partner Agreement with Table Tennis England to bring the 'Ping' initiative to Stratford-upon-Avon. Ping aims to bring members of the community closer together and inspires them to lead more active and sociable lifestyles, irrespective of ability or background. Due to Covid-19, the agreement that had expired in March 2020 had not been renewed and as all members considered that Ping was an excellent initiative, it was unanimously agreed to sign a new twelve-month agreement with Table Tennis England.



Since signing the agreement, the Ping initiative has expanded across Stratford-upon-Avon which includes the creation of 2-A-Side Table Tennis League and TTKidz. This is a programme designed to introduce young people to the game of table tennis in a fun, engaging and inspiring way. Table tennis is a great game for young people to be introduced to in school, and a programme was set up for Stratford-upon-Avon schools during lockdown and a programme for Stratford-upon-Avon's primary schools. Negotiations are currently underway to create a Stratford-upon-Avon Schools Table Tennis League and an annual tournament.

- The Town Council remains very supportive of the Fred Winter Centre and agreed to award an additional £5,000 in support to combat the shortfall of funds from the National Lottery.
- The Town Council supports the District Council in providing a financial contribution to retain the trees in containers that were placed around the town to make it look as aesthetically pleasing as possible during the Covid-19 crisis. The hire of the temporary trees was too expensive to sustain but the Council's Environment Panel has resolved that it will continue a programme of providing a tree in a container for somewhere in the town on an annual basis.
- Adoption of BT Phone Box in Clopton ward.
- Council was provided with a list of under-utilised green spaces within the town boundary that could be used for wildflower planting. These were the first 'green shoots' for the Council's 'Stratford-goes-Wild' programme with pilot planting of wild-flowers set for the spring.
- Grants awarded to Christmas Lights, Stratford-in-Bloom and the Fred Winter Centre.

- Restructure of the Council's Standing Committees and approval of new Terms of Reference for each Committee.
 - Finance and Scrutiny Committee became Finance & Audit Committee
 - General Purposes Committee became Community Services Committee
 - Human Resources Committee became Personnel Committee
 - Mayoral, Civic Ceremonial & Events Committee became Civic, Heritage & Events Committee
 - Planning Consultative Committee (PCC) remained unchanged.

The purpose of the restructure was to make the remit of each committee clearer for the public, easier to understand and more efficient. This was not a re-naming exercise but a careful review of the role and responsibility of each committee. In general, every committee, except for the PCC, relinquished or took on additional responsibilities from other committees.

- Budget process commenced which was challenging given the ongoing budget deficit and the impact of lost income from markets and Town Hall events due to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.
- Attended Christmas Lights AGM and the presentation to Committee Members who were standing down.



Mayor Cllr Tony Jackson and
Avon BC chairman Peter Jones.
Photo: Martin Hollands

- Participated in the Alveston Manor Table Tennis Challenge.
- Enjoyed the Bowls Club 'Mayor versus Chairman's Challenge' match.
- Inaugural Zoom meeting of the 'Chain Gang'.
- Hosted cream tea in the Mayor's Parlour for invited guests on two occasions in September.
- Attended Stratford Athletic Club T&F Club Championships.
- Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 1 September.
- Finance & Audit Committee held on 8 September.

- Civic Heritage & Events Committee held on 15 September.
- First Youth Town Council Steering Group Meeting with younger members/applicants in attendance was held on 17 September. There were also meetings of the Youth Town Council Steering group on 8 and 24 September.
- Town Council Meeting 29 September.
- Town Centre/Town Transport Task & Finish Group held on 2 September.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel held on 8 September.

October 2020

- Town Council's contribution and support of the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations was reaffirmed.
- Council's Reserves Policy was amended to be based on budgeted expenditure rather than on the precept received.
- Community Services Committee approve the 'Green' Advent Calendar put forward collaboratively by two of the Town Council's sub-committees, Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel and the Environmental Sustainability Panel to create a Christmas 'Eco' Advent Calendar. This interactive image appeared on the Town Council website in December 2020, where a sustainable fact or piece of advice was available each day of advent.





- Although the MOP Fair throughout the streets of Stratford-upon-Avon in 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic, one ride was positioned in Rother Market so the tradition could live on. Together with the Chairman of the District Council, Tony Dixon, we enjoyed a ride on a kiddie's roundabout, which isn't easy when you are over 6ft tall! The 'Fair' was officially opened by the Chairman and I read the proclamation.
- Helped Rotary with their bulb planting to commemorate Polio Day.
- Presented Stratford-in-Bloom awards.
- Visited Bridgetown Primary School to present their Stratford-in-Bloom award.
- Participated in the Volunteer Fair organised by WCAVA on zoom.
- Attended Leamington's Civic Sunday Service.
- Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 6 October and 27 October.
- Personnel Committee held on 19 October.
- Community Services Committee Meeting held on 20 October.
- Environmental Strategy Panel (formerly Climate Change Emergency Panel) held on 7 October.
- Market Forum held on 2 October.
- Town Centre/Town Transport Task & Finish Group held on 12 October.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel held on 6 and 27 October.

- Youth Town Council Steering Group held on 1, 7 and 22 October.

November 2020

- Newsletter 'Bridging the Gap' published featuring A Different Kind of Christmas, Keeping Safe in Winter, Stratford Support, Christmas Lights etc.
- Presentation from the Engineering Project Manager at WCC, Julie Crawshaw, on the A3400 Birmingham Road Proposals.
- Presentation from the Chief Executive of Stratford Town Trust, Sara Aspley and the Deputy Chief Executive of SDC, Tony Perks, on the Stratford Riverside Project.



- Although detailed plans were drawn up to commemorate Remembrance Sunday, it became clear that the regulations in place meant that the event could only go ahead with a very restricted number of invited guests and representatives of local organisations. As the pandemic worsened, it was agreed that the Act of Remembrance would have to be filmed with only principal representatives in attendance. This actually worked well and the ceremony which was broadcast via YouTube on Sunday 8 November was rather moving.

- On 19 November, the town's award-winning Christmas Lights were switched on – sadly without an audience this year.
- Crime Commissioner, Philip Seccombe, accompanied Inspector Allison Wiggin at the Town Council Meeting. They responded to a series of questions from Councillors and members of the public on issues such as anti-social behaviour, drug use, CCTV, speeding etc.
- The first official Youth Town Council Meeting was held on 12 November. Members elected were Kerry Alcock (Deputy Chair), Amelia Betts, Danni Cleeve (Clerk), Aiden Drinkwater (Chair), Hope French (since resigned), Oli Hughes (Deputy Treasurer), Eva Key, Saul McDougall, Bianka Pawlowska, Alfie Walker (Treasurer) and William Winter (since resigned.)



- Joined Stratford Primary School on zoom to judge the Paint a Portrait of the Mayor competition.
- I learned to knit so I could take part of the Yarn Bombing project and was pretty pleased with my knitted square attempt!
- Civic, Heritage and Events Meeting on 3 November.

- Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 10 November.
- Finance & Audit Meeting on 17 November.
- Environmental Strategy Panel (formerly Climate Change Emergency Panel) held on 4 October.
- Town Centre/Town Transport Task & Finish Group held on 9 November.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel held on 13 November.

December 2020

- Concern was raised regarding anti-social behaviour in Holy Trinity Churchyard and Garden of Remembrance. It was agreed that a liaison with Stratford Police and Stratford-on-Avon District Council should be set up in order to address these issues.



- Took part virtually in Holy Trinity's Christmas Service via video.
- Recorded a Christmas message which was uploaded to YouTube and the Town Council website.
- Met with Warwickshire Vision on zoom.
- Met with the Youth Council for a photo opportunity.

- Enjoyed Rotary Club's virtual Christmas Party celebrations on zoom.
- Participated in the Guard of Honour for the funeral of former employee, Dave Roberts.
- Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 1 and 15 December.
- Community Services Meeting held on 8 December.
- Town Centre/Town Transport Task & Finish Group on 21 December.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel on 4 December.

January 2021

- Signage in Holy Trinity Churchyard was amended and installed in an attempt to deter dog fouling. Why do people behave so irresponsibly in not picking up after their dog?
- Planning the 2021 Shakespeare's Birthday Celebrations begins.
- Appeared in the Town Trust/District Council's video on the Riverside Project. I am the Deputy Chairman of the Trust.
- Opening of Poundland at the Maybird Centre.





- Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 19 January.
- Additional Community Services Meeting held on 7 January.
- Town Council Meeting held on 26 January.
- Environmental Strategy Panel (formerly Climate Change Emergency Panel) held on 27 January.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel on 12 January.

February 2021

- Officers and Councillors attended the NABMA Virtual Conference on 4 February. The Conference theme was 'Markets in Crisis'.
- Youth Town Council welcomes new member Isabel Lambourn on 4 February.
- Greeted participants of the Safeline Walk at the finish line.

- Took a boat trip with the Adaptive Squad.
- Personnel Meeting held 16 February.
- Environmental Strategy Panel (formerly Climate Change Emergency Panel) held on 25 February.
- Town Centre/Town Transport Task & Finish Group held on 9 February.
- Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel held on 9 February.

March 2021

- Presentation on the White Ribbon Campaign given by Dr Bob Williams. The Town Council are currently looking at ways they can support this campaign.
- Presentation of Project Damascus given by Simon Herko and Adam Tapley.
- Presentation by Town Trust CEO Sara Aspley on their 5-year strategic plan.
- Finance & Audit Committee Meeting held on 9 March.
- Joined Bishopton School assembly to present world book day prizes.
- Judged Alveston School's Mr Mayor Story competition via zoom. Two days later I also judged a similar competition at Stratford Primary School.
- Town Council Meeting held on 30 March.
- Civic, Ceremonial & Events Meeting held on 16 March.
- Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on 2 and 23 March.

- Asset Register Review Group held on 11 March.
- Environmental Strategy Panel (formerly Climate Change Emergency Panel) held on 17 March.
- Town Centre/Town Transport Task & Finish Group held on 3 March.
- Market Forum held on 12 March.
- Town Centre/Town Transport Task & Finish Group held on 3 March.
- Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel held on 9 and 30 March.

April 2021

- Presentation from Stratford-upon-Avon Foodbank on their 5-year Strategic Plan.
- The Town Council formally supports the work of Fairtrade Stratford and appoints two Council representatives to the Fairtrade Steering Group.
- Members appointed to Standing Committees for the ensuing year 2021/2022:

Civic Heritage & Events:

Mayor Ex-officio, Alcock, Cleeve, Curtis, J Fradgley, Mackenzie, Rolfe, Vos, Wall, Warren-Howles.

Community Services Committee:

Mayor Ex-officio, Councillors Cleeve, Coles, J Fradgley, How, Jackson, Mackenzie, Rolfe, Vos, Wall.

Finance & Audit Committee:

Mayor Ex-officio, Councillors Coles, Curtis, Dowling, Dyer, Fojtik, How, Jackson, Lee, Vos.

Personnel Committee:

Councillors Alcock, I Fradgley, Mackenzie, Vos, Wall, Warren-Howles.

Planning Consultative Committee:

Mayor ex-officio, Councillors Alcock, Curtis, Dowling, Fojtik, I Fradgley, J Fradgley, Jackson, Lee.

- Members appointed to sub-groups for the ensuing year 2021/2022:

Asset Register Review Group – Finance & Audit

Mayor Ex-officio, Councillors Cleeve, Coles, How, Lee, Warren-Howles

Emergency Response Group – Town Council

Mayor, Councillors Alcock, Cleeve, Coles, J Fradgley, Jackson, Rolfe

Environmental Strategy Panel – Community Services

Mayor Ex-officio, Councillors Coles, Curtis, Dyer, J Fradgley, Lee Warren-Howles.

Market Forum – Civic, Heritage and Events

Councillors I Fradgley, Taylor, Rolfe.

Town Centre & Town Traffic Group – Town Council

Mayor Ex-officio, Councillors Curtis, Coles, J Fradgley, How, Lee, Rolfe, Vos.

Town Hall Maintenance/Repairs – Community Services

Mayor Ex-officio, Councillors Cleeve, Coles, How, Jackson, Mackenzie, Vos.

Town Hall Fees/Income Task & Finish Group – Civic Heritage & Events

Mayor Ex-officio, Councillors Coles, Curtis, J Fradgley, How, Jackson, Mackenzie, Rolfe, Vos.

Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel - Community Services

Mayor Ex-officio, Councillors Alcock, Cleeve, Curtis, Dyer, How, Warren-Howles.

- We were all very sorry to say goodbye to our excellent Committee Clerk, Joanne Mayes. She will be a hard act to follow but we are confident that her replacement, Margo Galvin, is well able to rise to that challenge. Welcome Margo.

- Took pleasure in starting the race at the Junior Park Run.

- I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the filming of the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations. The Town and District Councils were determined to commemorate the Bard's Birthday, despite all the restrictions. In keeping with tradition, flags were flown in Bridge Street and there was a parade to church to lay flowers on his grave, but only by a very few invited participants. The film, which was released on YouTube on Shakespeare's birthday, 23 April, was viewed by more than 2,300 people but received much greater awareness when Shakespeare's England shared the link. Helen Peters, CEO of Shakespeare's England advised that it was their second highest performing LinkedIn post of the month, was the most clicked across all social posts, helped highlight reopening news to a wider audience and was the highest reaching Facebook post of the month, and the year so far. Dead for 405 years and still topping the charts!



- Attended the Shakespeare Service on Sunday 25 April at Holy Trinity Church.



- To mark what has been extremely difficult and sad times for many, the Town Council gathered momentums of the past year and locked them away in the Town Hall archive. The Covid-19 time capsule is filled with our experiences of what life was like during the pandemic and how we had to adjust to a new way of living.
- Kenilworth Castle was a great venue for a reunion of the 'Chain Gang'.
- Opening of Crew & Co.
- Opening of 'Much Ado about Shoes'.
- Environmental Strategy Panel (formerly Climate Change Emergency Panel) held on 28 April.
- Town Centre/Town Transport Task & Finish Group held on 13 April and 17 April.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the past 12 months have been dominated by Covid, which has hugely impacted all our lives. My heart goes out to everybody who has suffered the loss of a loved one, incurred financial hardship or who has just missed the comforting hug or conversation with family and friends.

Whilst the Mayoral diary has been adversely affected it is important to put into context that missing a couple of ceremonial dinners is completely inconsequential to the wider hardship that residents have had to battle against. That is the philosophy that I have carried with me throughout my year.

Yes, there have been disappointments, but they are mentioned here to ensure the Annual Review is correct rather than to try and get your sympathy.

The over-arching regret is that the Town Hall has been out of commission and as a result, I have not had the opportunity to share my pride with family and friends nor could I throw open the doors for the Christmas Lights switch on or invite children to meet Father Christmas.

Wearing the full regalia and travelling in the mayoral car were made all the more special by their scarcity as Civic engagements were few and far between. Let us hope that all the events that had to be cancelled last year will return during the next 12 months.

To conclude the review, I would like to focus on the key positives that have happened both from a Town Council and personal perspective.

I mentioned in the introduction that Zoom meetings were 'forced' upon us and I would like to say a huge thank you to the officers and Councillors who adapted so quickly to the challenges of virtual meetings. It is a credit to all involved that this has been such a success and it has had the added benefit by making meetings available for the public to watch (via Facebook / Zoom). This has greatly increased our 'reach' giving greater exposure and transparency of our meetings and is something that will continue even when to return to meeting in the Town Hall.

Stratford Support, developed through collaboration between Town Council and the Town Trust and supported by a multitude of willing volunteers enabled us to operate throughout the year to ensure that help was provided to the vulnerable. For example, by doing shopping, collecting prescriptions, or just providing a welcome chat as required. As the need for help declined in the last couple of months the group has successfully morphed to bring together key support organisations from within the Town. I attended the inaugural meeting, and it was great to see such positivity and a willingness to collaborate and share issues going forward.

My objective of progressing delivery of key projects from the Neighbourhood Development Plan has seen the Town Council facilitate the Strategic Partnership Group which has brought together the various decision makers and influencing groups. Driven by a Town Council working group and funded by the Town Council, a design consultancy firm have been appointed and a range of preliminary designs for Bridge Street and High Street have just been presented and well received by the Strategic Partnership group. This is something that will progress over the coming months and far exceeds what I had hoped for at the beginning of my term of office.

My decision to include People with Disabilities as one of my Mayoral Good Causes enabled many discussions with different organisations and I was particularly pleased to pay recognition to two who received prestige awards in the year – Warwickshire Vision received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service and Stratford Rowing Club Adaptive Squad were voted Parasport Club of the Year.

Notwithstanding all the negative aspects of Covid there has been a real positive spin off as it has driven an increase in volunteers / volunteering that has been heart-warming to witness. This is one of my many quotes paying tribute "Volunteers were one of my chosen good causes and promoting the value of the work they do has been a highlight of my Mayoral Year".

A combination of reduced Mayoral engagements and the move to Zoom meetings has enabled me to attend a wide range of meetings and meet on a one-to-one basis on various subjects with different organisations. This insight has proven incredibly informative and interesting and has enabled me to see a completely different perspective of how the town functions and the difficulties everybody faces in adapting to or implementing change.

Prior to my year, we had already had discussions about a much-needed external refurbishment of the Town Hall. Unfortunately, Covid restrictions prevented this happening during 2020 but we are in the process of finalising the contract with our approved contractor and all being well, work will start during the summer. However, we took advantage of the Town Hall closure to bring forward a full redecoration programme of all the rooms. This work was completed a couple of months ago and the building looks absolutely superb. When the external works are completed, we will have a beautiful building ready for the doors re-open to the public.

On a personal level, there are a number of mementos that will provide me with lasting memories of my time in office and the following are particular highlight.

I had great pleasure in opening the Youth Market and I was hugely impressed with the quality of their work and made a number of purchases. One of the stalls was selling bespoke drawings of major cities and towns in a unique global perspective but unfortunately Stratford upon Avon was not one of the Towns. However, so impressed was I with the design I commissioned a drawing of the Town and the original artwork hangs in my home and I have presented a copy to be displayed in the Town Hall.

Engaging with Stratford Primary School (where our children were taught) I initially organised a Paint a Portrait of the Mayor competition which produced some lovely entries and a winning entry by Sara Clewer, that I have had framed. So successful was this competition that a second competition followed to write a Mr Mayor story and Alveston Primary also took part. The outcome was over 75 different stories to read, and it was great to be invited (virtually) to both schools to meet the children and announce the winners, Lottie Whiting (Stratford Primary) and Charlie Miles (Alveston Primary).

I cannot end the review without a special mention to Mandy who has been at my side throughout the year and who, in her inimitable style, has kept everybody amused through her monthly article in the Herald.

And last but not least I need to say a huge thank you to the Officers and Councillors who have given me so much support during the year and who, in very difficult circumstances have continued to do an excellent job in serving the residents of Stratford upon Avon.

So, to recap on my year, let us start with the negatives for I always like to end on a positive note:

Negatives:

- Not having any opportunity to meet and / or invite my family to the Town Hall to share my pride in being elected Mayor.
- No opportunity to wear my full regalia in public and / or lead the full Council in a procession through the Town.
- The Town Hall being closed preventing any chance to host an event and invite friends, dignitaries, and groups.
- Although there has been plenty to keep me busy, the opportunity to share my experiences with Mandy have been very few. She had a new wardrobe prepared which should last her for years to come.
- There would normally be lots of formal engagements involving the “Chain Gang” who are the dignitaries from neighbouring towns. Apart from a rare outing in the Mayoral car to a remote distanced Civic Service in



Leamington these events have all been cancelled. As an alternative I was pleased to initiate a regular Zoom meeting where we could all meet up to share experiences.

- Not necessarily mayoral related, but the whole lockdown experience has meant that visiting local establishments from pubs / restaurants to live performances have all been curtailed.
- Restrictions have forced the cancellation of many high-profile occasions and whilst some were replaced with virtual events, these clearly could not replace the experience of the 'real thing'. This was particularly true of the event that I was most looking forward. This was the Switch-On of the Christmas Lights which is always incorporated with opening a festively decorated Town Hall for children to come and meet Father Christmas. This cancellation was hugely disappointing for me personally but also to all the people who would normally have shared this experience.
- Cancellations – Mayor Making, Civic Dinner, The Mop, Victorian Christmas Market, Stratford's of the World visit to Canada, Remembrance Sunday.

Positives:

- How the Council adapted quickly to the need to hold virtual meetings and how we have successfully managed issues remotely during a very difficult year. As one Councillor put it 'there is something about carrying on, carrying on'.
- Making meetings available for the public to watch (via Facebook / Zoom) which has greatly increased our 'reach' giving greater exposure and transparency of our meetings.
- Stratford Support which provided help and support to the vulnerable during times of need arising from covid / lockdown.
- Strategic Partnership which has kick started the delivery of key projects as identified in the NDP.
- Attending all the various Committees and working groups and seeing / hearing first-hand all the various initiatives and the excellent work being done both by the Councillors, office workers and all the community groups that have contributed to or been part of those discussions.
- Engaging with the primary schools who were involved in different competitions – Paint the Mayor, Mr Mayor story.
- Meeting lots of Community Groups some in person and some remotely and getting a greater understanding of what they do and how they were managing to adapt during the Covid crisis.
- Cutting a few ribbons – in a way made more special because of the limited number.
- Getting the Town Hall decorated and putting in place plans for the external refurbishment.

- Youth market and some notable purchases that will be lasting memories – particularly the drawing of the Town in a unique globe style – a copy of which I have presented to be displayed in the Town Hall.
- The whole experience has given me a completely different perspective of how the town functions and the difficulties everybody faces in adapting to or implementing change. If nothing else my knowledge is greatly enhanced.
- As Mayor, I take on the role of President of Christmas Lights and Stratford-in-Bloom, so I have experienced first-hand the year-round work of the respective Committees. Both have done sterling work in bringing colour and vibrancy to the Town – always a pleasure to see, but doubly so in this difficult year.
- My decision to include People with Disabilities as one of my Mayoral Good Causes enabled many discussions with different organisations and I was particularly pleased to pay recognition to two who received prestige awards in the year – Warwickshire Vision received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service and Stratford Rowing Club Adaptive Squad were voted Parasport Club of the Year.
- The Rotary Club were forced to cancel their annual duck race, but this was replaced by a Virtual Duck Race which I was pleased to support via the Mayor's Gold Cup which provided an opportunity for various volunteer led organisations to participate in a novel event.
- Because everything seems to have been done remotely, I have been able to capture a lot of my experiences as videos or pictures which will provide a lovely virtual scrapbook (in addition to the traditional scrapbook of newspaper cuttings) which I know will help me relive many of my experiences for years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jackson'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'J' and a long, thin tail that extends downwards and to the left.

Tony Jackson
Town Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon
May 2021

Appendix 'A'

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council Members



Avenue Ward
Cohl Warren-Howles
Richard Vos



Bishopton Ward
Victoria Alcock
Chris Wall



Bridgetown

Ian Fradgley
Roy Dyer





Clopton Ward
Cllr Jason Fojtik
Cllr Phil How



Guildhall
Cllr Jenny Fradgley
Cllr Tony Jackson (Mayor)



Hathaway
Gill Cleeve (Deputy Mayor Elect)
Toby Lee





Shottery
Cllr David Curtis
Cllr Bill Dowling



Tiddington
Kate Rolfe
Eva Mackenzie



Welcombe
Cllr Elizabeth Coles
Cllr Kevin Taylor (Mayor Elect)



Appendix 'B'

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020/21 AT THE TOWN HALL

Community Services Committee Tuesday (6:30 pm) 4	Planning Consultative Committee Tuesday (6:30 pm) 16	Finance & Audit Committee Tuesday (6:30 pm) 5	Civic, Heritage & Events Committee Tuesday (6:30 pm) 6	Personnel Committee Tuesday (6:30pm) 3	Town Council Tuesday (6:30 pm) 8
	5 May 20 2 June 20	9 June 20	12 May 20		Annual Meeting & Mayor Making Friday 15 May 20 (noon) 16 June 20 (To approve Annual Accounts only)
14 July 20	23 June 20 7 July 20		21 July 20	30 June 20	28 July 20 (Annual Photograph)
	4 August 20 1 September 20	8 September 20	15 September 20		29 September 20
20 October 20	6 October 20 27 October 20 10 November 20	17 November 20	3 November 20	13 October 20	24 November 20
8 December 20	1 December 20 15 December 20 19 January 21	12 January 21	5 January 21		26 January 21
	9 February 21 2 March 21 23 March 2	9 March 21	16 March 21	16 February 21	Town Meeting Thursday 4 March 2021 7:30pm 30 March 21
6 April 21	13 April 21				27 April 21

Annual Meeting and Mayor Making (unless General Election decrees otherwise) Friday 21 May 2021 at noon at the Town Hall

Appendix 'C'

STRATFORD UPON AVON TOWN COUNCIL
CONSOLIDATED REVENUE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

		2020		2019	
		Gross expenditure	Gross income	Net (income)/expenditure	Net (income)/expenditure
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Environmental Services					
Cemetery	11	172,628	73,745	98,883	100
Maintenance of Holy Trinity Churchyard		4,576	-	4,576	
Park Road	12	-	165	(165)	
Cultural and Related Services					
Town Hall	13	130,225	25,932	104,293	62
Civic expenses	14	60,038	-	60,038	55
Other Services					
Market	15	103,227	142,119	(38,892)	(34)
Initiatives	16	105,107	-	105,107	110
Central Services: Corporate Management					
Unapportioned overheads:					
- General administration	17	289,511	-	289,511	275
Net cost of services		865,312	241,961	623,351	570
Investment income		1,161	23,591	(22,430)	(21)
Rental income		2,184	10,724	(8,540)	(8)
Net operating expenditure		3,345	34,315	592,381	540
Precept				(509,112)	(505)
Deficit for year				83,269	34
General Reserve brought forward				(520,711)	(505)
Transfer to/(from) designated reserves	6			(4,948)	(49)
General Reserve carried forward				(442,390)	(520)

Appendix 'D'

STRATFORD UPON AVON TOWN COUNCIL

BALANCE SHEET

31 MARCH 2020

		2020		2019	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	1		15,039,541		11,083,998
Investments	2		584,205		-
			15,623,746		11,083,998
Current Assets					
Debtors	3	41,366		68,962	
Short term investments	4	167,778		810,501	
Cash at bank and in hand		6,342		28,229	
		215,486		907,692	
Less Current Liabilities:					
Creditors	5	(48,706)		(82,543)	
Net Current Assets			166,780		825,149
Net Assets			15,790,526		11,909,147
Financed by:					
Fixed Asset Restatement Reserve	7		15,039,541		11,083,998
Designated Reserves	6		308,595		304,438
General Reserve			442,390		520,711
			15,790,526		11,909,147

Approved and authorised for issue on 28th July 2020 and by:

S Summers
Town Clerk

The notes on pages 3 to 10 form part of these accounts.

Appendix 'E'

