

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

CIVIC, HERITAGE AND EVENTS

Town Clerk's Open Report 16 July 2024

1) Shakespeare Birthday Celebration – 20/21 April 2024

- **To review and to note items relating to the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations 2024.**
- **Members are requested to put forward ideas to add additional colour and interest to the event.**

A meeting is to be scheduled to be arranged with the Royal Shakespeare Company, following their involvement with the Autin Dance Company in this year's parade. Discussions will take place with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Stratford-on-Avon District Council regarding next year's event.

Councillors are invited to put forward their suggestions for ideas for the parade. The Town Council has been approached verbally regarding the inclusion of a Polish international dance group who are interested in being part of the parade next year and this would bring some vibrancy to the town.

Members will be made aware later in the meeting of the increased costs of organising such events and reminded that public funds are being utilised.

2) Costings relating to Civic Events

- **To review the cost of civic parades.**
- **To consider setting-up a Task and Finish group to identify potential savings relating to Civic parades and to discuss the Christmas Lights Switch-on.**

The cost of providing Civic parades has escalated since covid, due to the requirements as advised by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) for the provision of traffic management, hostile vehicle mitigation, security and first aid for all events.

Attached as Appendix 'A' is a breakdown of all the associated costs, including H&S, for the year before covid and the current year, to give members an indication of current expenses.

Members are requested to determine areas where possible savings could be made.

- One suggestion for discussion is, whilst keeping the Civic Sunday church service, not to parade to it, which of all the civic parades is the least well attended by Councillors and guests. Guests could be invited to gather at Holy Trinity Parish Centre or go directly to the church, where the Civic Party would join them. This would alleviate the necessity for traffic management, road closures, security, first aid and a band. An alternative venue for the Civic Reception after the service may need to be identified, if members consider the Town Hall is too far from the church.
- Likewise, the service on Shakespeare Sunday be retained, but Councillors and guests could either assemble at the Parish Centre OR an alternative route via the Theatre and Avonbank Gardens could be explored to alleviate the need to close the roads and therefore the necessity of road closures.
- Remembrance Sunday are both retained, which are well supported and important civic occasions.

Please find attached as Appendix 'A' a breakdown of associated costs for the provision of traffic management, Hostile Vehicle Mitigation, security, first aid, health and safety and bands. These costs reflect the year 2019 prior to the pandemic and 2023.

3) Christmas Lights Switch-On

- **To note the information.**

Officers have discussed various options for the 2024 Switch-On, following uncertainty as to the future of Stratford-upon-Avon BID who have led on the arrangements for the past two years and have been the main financial contributors to the event. Various scenarios have been explored, listed below as options 1-3.

Since the Officers have discussed the options, confirmation has been received that BID will consider allocating funding, albeit at a reduced amount for 2023. However, members should be aware that if the decision regarding the future of BID is not successful,

that BID would not be able to deliver the project on the day or put together necessary documents for the SAG meeting, including the Event Management Plan and arrangements relating to Health & Safety, Traffic Management, Security and First Aid and this would fall to the Town Council.

Option 1:

A much reduced event compared to the previous successful Saturday events organised by the Town Council, with a Switch-On from the Town Hall balcony, The viability of this event is reliant upon staying within the allocated £5,000 budget, unless any sponsorship could be secured. No further entertainment to be provided.

Road Closures between 3-7pm, affecting Chapel Street, High Street and Sheep Street.

Option 2:

Closure of Bridge Street and Waterside along the lines of 2023 to allow space for a stage, big screen and entertainment, jointly funded between BID, LSD and the Council. Although the costs were significant last year, the event was well-received and well-attended. Any reduction in funding would necessitate a strong marketing strategy to avoid any disappointment. There could be little reduction on the previous footprint in the level of safety measures to ensure compliance with the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) regulations.

Possible opportunities for sponsorship to cover the cost of the screen and a stage could be pursued.

Option 3

No official Switch-On – Market would still take place as part of the contract.

4) D-Day 80 - Thursday 6 June

- **To review the event in the Garden of Remembrance.**

Several hundred people attended the commemoration in the Garden of Remembrance, marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings. It was good to have representatives present from

the armed forces, serving and retired, but sadly no D-Day veterans. Back in 2014, many of the Stratford based veterans were honoured by the French Government with the Legion d'honneur. This award was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte and is France's highest distinction, awarded in recognition of military and civilian merit.

We were delighted to have the Lord Lieutenant present to formally light the beacon on the 6 June, and to lay a wreath alongside the Mayor and the Chairman of the Royal British Legion (Stratford Branch).

This was a poignant and moving occasion, a fitting tribute to those who served and the many who did not return.

5) Avon Bowls Club Centenary 1924-2024

- **To note the report.**

Due to the General Election, the original date for the annual Mayor's bowls match was moved to 11 July. The Bowls Club is celebrating its centenary in 2024, and to mark the occasion, a commemorative brass plaque will be unveiled by the Mayor in recognition of the anniversary.

6) Mayor Making, Civic Dinner and Civic Sunday

- **To review Mayor Making, the Civic Dinner and Civic Sunday Events.**

The annual Mayor Making ceremony on Friday 17 May passed off without issue, and it was encouraging to see a good number in attendance to support the new Mayor.

In the evening, the Civic Dinner was well attended, and guests enjoyed an excellent meal provided by Stratford based caterers, Shakespeare Kitchen.

On Sunday morning, Council and guests processed to Holy Trinity Church for the Civic Service. The Mayor was introduced to the Congregation by the vicar of Holy Trinity Church, and he spoke eloquently about the two charities he would be supporting during his year in office, the Shakespeare Hospice and the UK Sepsis Trust. The UK Sepsis Trust being a particularly relevant

charity to the Town Council due to recent death of long standing Town Councillor, Bill Dowling.

7) Photograph to commemorate the Centenary of the death of Marie Corelli

- **To Consider whether to display a photograph of Marie Corelli in the Town Hall to recognise the centenary of her death.**

It has been suggested that a photograph of the novelist Marie Corelli, who lived in Church Street, should be displayed in the Town Hall to mark the centenary of her death in 1924. Earlier in the year, the Town Hall hosted a special event regarding the centenary, and this suggestion has been put forward to recognise this special anniversary.

A small and framed photograph could be displayed inside the glass cabinet in the Entrance Hall if members consider this to be appropriate.

8) Town Hall Functions 2024-2025

- **To note information regarding Town Hall bookings during 2024 and those booked for 2025**

Information is attached as Appendix 'B'

9) Free use of the Town Hall for a one-off charity event

Following the death of Hannah Alexander, former solicitor to the Town Council, her colleagues from Robert Lunn and Lowth are arranging a one-off fundraising event to support Warwickshire and Northants Air Ambulance and the Clopton Nursery Trust.

Free use of the Ballroom at a weekend has been requested, the Town Clerk will give a verbal report at the meeting.

10) Appointment to the Climate Change Group

In accordance with the Terms of Reference for this Committee it is customary that a representative of this Committee is appointed to the Climate Change Group (CCG). However, at Council on 23 July 2024 there will be a report tabled which will recommend the incorporation of the CCG terms of reference into the jurisdiction of the Community Services Committee. If this is not agreed, appointments can be made at the Council meeting.