

2024 / 25



Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT



www.stratford-tc.gov.uk

Welcome and Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read our Annual Report. It's both an honour and a responsibility to represent our town as the closest level of government to our community. While our official duties are limited, the Town Council plays an important role in serving residents, supporting local causes, and maintaining the unique character of our town.

The publication of the Government's English Devolution White Paper marks a key moment in changing the balance of power in communities. In this changing environment, we are dedicated to using our budget wisely to provide valuable services to our residents.

For the year 2025/26, we are looking forward to continuing to organise and fund beloved events such as the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations Parade, VE Day and VJ Day 80th Anniversary Celebrations, Remembrance Day, the festive Christmas Lights and Switch-On Event. In addition to collaborating with Stratford Pursuits following their inaugural event in 2024. We continue to support Stratford in Bloom, Christmas Lights and CCTV across the town.

As a Council, we aim to be responsive to the needs of the town, its organisations and its residents. None of this would be possible without the commitment of our Councillors and the hard work of our staff.

Town Clerk, Caroline Nash

The annual report reflects the work undertaken by Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council during the past twelve months. It offers an opportunity to reflect upon what has been achieved since March 2024, and the chance to reflect upon the highlights of the year just passed.

In March, we held the first Community Marketplace, giving local organisations the chance to showcase themselves, and hopefully sign-up new volunteers. The Council were also delighted to financially support the inaugural Pursuits Festival, held in the Recreation Ground in May.

I have enjoyed my mayoral year, which comes to an end in May 2025. I will be producing a separate report of the mayoral year.

Mayor, Councillor Jason Fojtik

Year in Review

This “*year in review*” will take us from March 2024 to March 2025

It was with deep regret, that the Town Council announced the death on Friday 22nd March 2024 at the age of 70 of Councillor, William John Dowling, Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon in 2011-2012.

The Mayor and Town Councillors extended their deepest sympathy to his family at this very sad time.



Councillor Bill Dowling

March 2024

The Town Council held its first Community Marketplace Event at the Town Hall ahead of its Annual Meeting. Local

organisations gathered and welcomed new volunteers to sign up.

Due to the success of the event, another is organised for 2025.

Everyone is welcome to attend from 5-7pm and to then stay for the Town Meeting on Thursday 6th March at 7:30pm.



Community Marketplace Event 2024

April 2024

Volunteers Reception

The Mayor hosts a reception in April on the evening before the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations to acknowledge the local clubs, societies and very worthwhile charitable organisations for their tremendous hard work within the town.



Volunteers Reception 2024

Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations

2024 marked the 460th anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth and events took place over the weekend of Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st April.

The Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations are a spectacular tribute to the Bard's enduring legacy. The annual event, steeped in tradition, brings together visitors from around the globe to honour William Shakespeare in the town of his birth. With vibrant parades, theatrical performances, and a rich programme of cultural activities, the festivities fill the streets with charm and modern creativity. Highlights include the traditional flag procession, special performances at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, and an array of family-friendly activities at Shakespeare's Birthplace.

Join us this year, on Saturday 26th April to celebrate the life and works of England's greatest playwright!



Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations 2024

May 2024

Cllr Jason Fojtik was formally elected as the 479th Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon on the 17 May 2024.

He has represented the community as Councillor for the Clopton Ward since 2015. Having spent 2023 as Deputy Mayor

and participating in various community events, it was a good introduction to what he knew would be a busy year ahead.

He was looking forward to the responsibilities and challenges that come with the role of Mayor and to working with the community. His charities for the year would be The Shakespeare Hospice and The UK Sepsis Trust.



Mayor, Councillor Jason Fojtik

Stratford Pursuits Festival

The inaugural Stratford Pursuits Festival was held on the recreation ground and invited locals and visitors alike to immerse themselves in a celebration of creativity, exploration, and community spirit. This exciting new festival featured a dynamic mix of workshops, live performances, artisan markets and interactive experiences. Designed to inspire curiosity and engagement, the festival showcased the talents of local artists, performers, and innovators, while providing opportunities for participants of all ages to discover new hobbies and passions.

The Town Council were proud to support the festival and initiative money was granted to support entertainment for the benefit of the community.



Stratford Pursuits Festival 2024

June 2024

80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings

The town formally marked the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings on Thursday 6th June with an Act of Commemoration in the Garden of Remembrance on the 6th June, with a service led by the Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Revd. Patrick Taylor. The evening incorporated the lighting of the Stratford-upon-Avon gas beacon. This event was livestreamed via the Town Council Facebook.

The beacon was one of hundreds being lit across the UK and the Commonwealth, followed by the lighting of the principal beacon at the naval base in Portsmouth, the departure point from which many of the boats sailed in June 1944.



80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings

Armed Forces Day

Saturday 29th June, sees the Town Council gather outside the Town Hall at 10am to show their support for our Armed Forces – including those who are currently serving, their families, Cadets and veterans. This event was livestreamed via the Town Council Facebook.



Armed Forces Day 2024

November 2024

Remembrance Commemorations

The Town Council extended sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the Remembrance Service held on Sunday 10 November. Together, the community continues to uphold the solemnity of Remembrance Day, honouring the legacy of those who served and preserving it for future generations.

The parade and service in the Garden of Remembrance was a moving tribute to all those who have served and those who have given their lives in service to our country and was very well supported. The service was led by Rev. Patrick Taylor of Holy Trinity Church and Rev Dr Paul Edmondson, Chaplain to the Town Council.

Special appreciation goes to the Royal British Legion, whose commitment ensures that we honour our heroes with dignity and respect each year.

We also recognised the hard work of our Town Council's Open Spaces team, who maintain the Garden of Remembrance with care throughout the year. Their efforts provide a beautiful, tranquil space that allows for reflection and remembrance.



Garden of Remembrance

Armistice Day

An Interfaith Remembrance Day Service with wreath laying was also held at the Commonwealth War Graves at the Town Council owned Cemetery on Evesham Road. This service honoured the 177 servicemen laid to rest here, many where from the Royal Canadian Air Force. This service took place at 4pm which is 11am EST.

The Town Council, former Mayor Gill Cleeve and Rev Dr Paul Edmondson were responsible for organising the service and were joined by the current Mayor, Councillor Jason Fojtik.



Armistice Day

Civic Diary 2025

Event	Day	Date, Time and Venue	Year
Annual Town Meeting	Thursday	6 March at 7:30pm Town Hall	2025
Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations	Saturday	26 April from 9:45am	2025
Shakespeare Sunday Service	Sunday	27 April Service 11:15 Holy Trinity Church	2025
Mayor Making	Friday	16 May at 12:00 noon Town Hall	2025
Civic Sunday	Sunday	18 May Service at 10:00am Holy Trinity Church	2025
80 th Anniversary of VE Day	Thursday	8 May Time TBC Garden of Remembrance	2025
Armed Forces Day	Saturday	28 June 10:00am outside the Town Hall	2025
80 th Anniversary of VJ Day	Friday	15 August Time TBC Garden of Remembrance	2025
Opening of the Mop	Sunday	12 October	2025
Remembrance Sunday	Sunday	9 November Service at Garden of Remembrance 10:50am	2025
Armistice Day	Tuesday	11 November Details TBC	2025
Christmas Lights Switch-on	TBC		2025

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council Members & Ward Boundaries

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN WARD BOUNDARIES



Councillor
Victoria Alcock



Councillor
Roger Harding



Councillor
Richard Vos



Councillor
Toby Lee



Councillor
Jason Fojtik



Councillor
Iain Duck



Councillor
Zoe Rashwan



Councillor
Elizabeth Coles



Councillor
Letty Petrovic



Councillor
Lindsay MacDonald



Councillor
Gill Cleeve



Councillor
Steve Albon



Councillor
Jenny Fradgley



Councillor
Sam McNaught Barrow



Councillor
Ian Fradgley



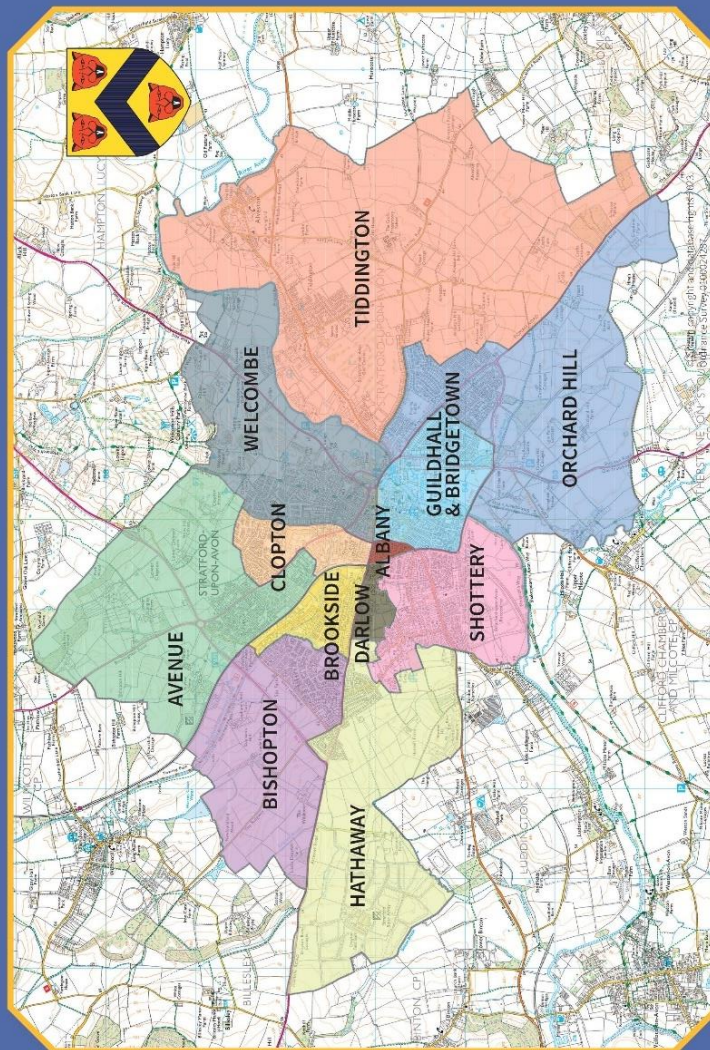
Councillor
Dani Hunter



Councillor
Kate Rolfe



Councillor
Louisa Smith



TOWN COUNCIL CONTACTS

ALBANY
Councillor Lindsay MacDonald
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Councillor Sam McNaught Barrow
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TIDDINGTON
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Councillor Louisa Smith
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Tel: 01789 269332 / 07462 208141

WELCOMBE
Councillor Iain Duck
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Tel: 01789 269332 / 07741 278595

Councillor Zoe Rashwan
Email: zoe.rashwan@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 269332

Calendar of Meetings 2025/26 at the Town Hall

Community Services & Environment Committee	Planning Consultative Committee	Finance & Audit Committee	Civic, Heritage & Events Committee	Personnel Committee	Town Council
Tuesday (6:30 pm)	Tuesday (6:30 pm)	Tuesday (6:30 pm)	Tuesday (6:30 pm)	Tuesday (6:30 pm)	Tuesday (6:30 pm)
4	16	5	5	6	8
24 June 25	20 May 25 10 June 25 (4pm)	3 June 25		6 May 25	Annual Meeting & Mayor Making Friday 16 May 25 (noon) (Annual photograph) 10 June 25 (To approve Annual Accounts only)
	15 July 25		8 July 25	29 July 25	22 July 25
	12 August 25				
	2 September 25 23 September 25	9 September 25	30 September 25		16 September 25
7 October 25	14 October 25			21 October 25	
	4 November 25 25 November 25	11 November 25			18 November 25
	16 December 25	18 December 25	2 December 25	9 December 25	
	13 January 26		27 January 26		20 January 26
17 February 26	3 February 26 24 February 26			10 February 26	
	17 March 26	3 March 26	31 March 26		Town Meeting Thursday 5 March 26 7:30pm 24 March 26
21 April 26	14 April 26			28 April 26	
	5 May 26 27 May 26				

Finance Information

The budget for 2024/25 earmarked funds for a range of community initiatives, this includes the renowned Stratford in Bloom, Christmas Lights and Shakespeare Birthday. Funding is also given for the CCTV provision for the town. For this year the Town Council further agreed to contribute to free entertainment and activities at the inaugural Stratford Pursuits Festival.

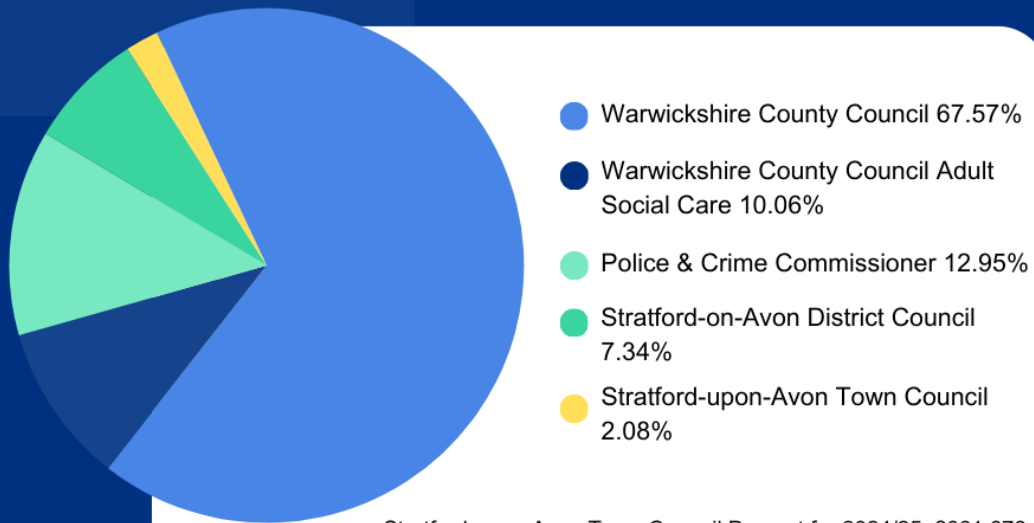
This is all funded by Council Tax income £661,678 and commercial income and fees and charges for Council services.

The Town Council has for a number of years endeavoured to keep the precept as low as possible. However, Councillors were minded that to achieve a more balanced budget and to maintain funding for initiatives the relatively small increase was necessary this year.

The Council anticipated an average rate charge of £46.49 for taxpayers, reflecting a modest increase of £4.61 compared to the previous fiscal year. This equated to an 8p per week increment for residents and will ensure continued support for vital community projects and services.

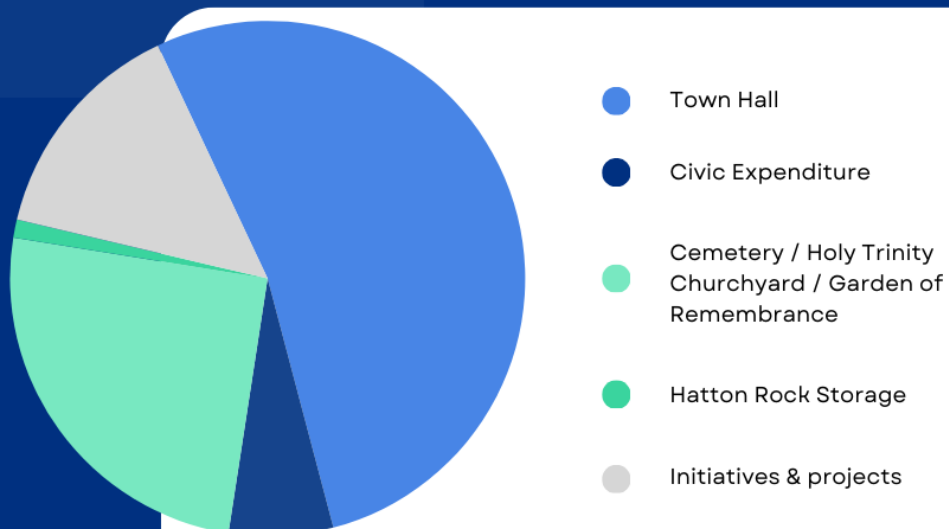
This modest increase in the average rate charge underscores the Council's commitment to fiscal responsibility and delivering value to its residents.

Where does my Council Tax go?



Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council Precept for 2024/25 £661,678
 Band D Property per year £46.49
 Band D Property per week £0.89

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council Major Expenditure



Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council expenditure includes:

Town Hall Expenditure:

- Staff costs
- Public liability insurance
- Website / IT and Comms
- Planning Consultant fees
- Legal & professional fees
- Maintenance Grade II of the Town Hall
- Running costs of the Town Hall
- Election costs
- Audit fees

Civic Expenditure:

- Civic Receptions
- Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations
- Christmas activities
- D-Day Commemorations and Remembrance Day
- Traffic Management & security for events

Cemetery Expenditure:

- Upkeep of Holy Trinity Churchyard
- Staff costs
- Upkeep of Tranquility Garden
- Upkeep of Garden of Remembrance
- Upkeep of Evesham Road Cemetery
- Grave digging costs
- Maintenance costs

Initiatives & Projects Expenditure:

- Christmas Lights Committee
- Stratford Pursuits
- Stratford in Bloom
- Climate Change initiatives
- Youth Council

Section 1 & 2 – Annual Governance and Accounting Statement 2023/24

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		Yes means that the authority prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
	Yes	No	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	☒	☐	
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	☒	☐	made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to ensure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its financial affairs.	☒	☐	has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for external auditors to express their views on the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	☒	☐	during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	☒	☐	considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	☒	☐	arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	☒	☐	responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	☒	☐	disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable, in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities in relation to financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	☒	☐	has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

11/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

M/20/6 REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk

ENTER PUBLICLY <https://www.stratford-tc.gov.uk/SE-ADDRESS>

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3
Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and calculation
	31 March 2023	31 March 2024	
1. Balances brought forward	99,632	139,001	Positive and all figures to be signed by the Chair and Clerk of the authority. Do not include any figures for the year ended 31 March 2024. All figures must be signed by the Chair and Clerk of the authority.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	556,242	582,238	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
3. (+) Total other receipts	448,031	448,031	Total amount of precept (for for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
4. (+) Staff costs	404,787	415,093	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
6. (-) All other payments	560,117	526,469	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (-) Balances carried forward	139,001	206,462	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	218,059	221,049	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – to agree with bank reconciliations.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	11,168,328	11,163,783	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including FHLB).

For Local Councils Only

Yes No

11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)

11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by the authority on this date:

11/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

M/20-2 REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

SIGNED OFF AT T.C. ON 23/03/2024

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Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*

Responsibilities

The Town Council is responsible for:

- American Fountain Clock
- Churchyards
- Initiatives & Events
- Supporting Crim Prevention (CCTV)
- Avon Mooring
- Dog Hygiene/Litter Bins (*supply only*)
- Planning (*Consultee only*)
- Town Hall
- Cemeteries
- Garden of Remembrance
- Shelters
- War Memorial

Evesham Road Cemetery

Nestled along the Evesham Road, the cemetery provides a tranquil space for reflection and remembrance, surrounded by mature trees and greenery. Burial plots and ash burial plots can be found within the Cemetery.

Tranquility Garden

The Tranquility Garden, located within the Evesham Road Cemetery, is a setting which offers a place for ash burial plots, as well as a dedicated area for the scattering of ashes. Additionally, there are also opportunities to commemorate those who may be interred or scattered elsewhere, by purchasing memorial slate plaques, granite paving stones, and bench plaques.

For further information please contact Emma Evans at the Town Council on 01789 269332 or email emma.evans@stratford-tc.gov.uk

Cemetery opening hours:

8:00am – 4:30pm from 1st October – 28th February and
8:00am – 7:30pm from 1st March – 30th September

Town Hall Hire

Hiring the Town Hall offers a unique opportunity to host events in a building steeped in history and charm. Located in the heart of the town, the Town Hall is a Grade II listed building that combines elegant Georgian architecture with modern amenities, making it a versatile venue for a wide range of occasions.

The Town Hall is licensed for Civil Weddings* and features several rooms available for hire, including the grand Ballroom with its high ceilings, period features, and beautiful chandeliers, ideal for weddings, formal dinners, or large gatherings. Smaller rooms provide an intimate setting for meetings, workshops, or community events.

With its central location, the venue is accessible and for those with needs, you can be accommodated and made welcome. Ramp wheelchair access is provided upon request and a through the floor lift provides easy access to the beautiful first floor rooms. An accessible toilet is sited on the ground floor.

For your Weddings, Celebrations, Concerts and Meetings please call 01789 269332 or email info@stratford-tc.gov.uk We look forward to welcoming you to our historic Town Hall.

**we are only the venue and the Registrars must be booked independently.*



Council Chamber



Town Hall



Ballroom



Ballroom

Community Sponsorship

The Town Council is proud to support the following organisations by way of initiative grants:

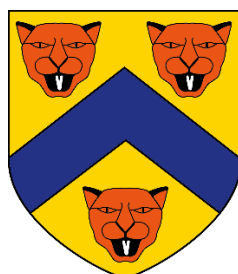
Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom

Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights Company

Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations

CCTV





Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council
Town Hall, Sheep Street, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6EF
Tel: 01789 269332 E: info@stratford-tc.gov.uk W: <https://www.stratford-tc.gov.uk>