

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

7 October 2025

TOWN CLERK'S OPEN REPORT

COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. To consider Initiatives Applications

To consider Initiative applications received from Slate Events (Appendix C), Stratford upon Avon Christmas Lights Company (Appendix B) and Stratford in Bloom (Appendix A).

Appendices are for members of the Committee only.

Slate Events have completed a form, requesting the sum of £5,000 (Appendix C).

<i>Description of project:</i>	The Stratford Pursuits Festival will enter its third year in 2026, building on the strong feedback and growing support we have received. In 2025, the event successfully hosted 28 community groups and charities, alongside 36 commercial vendors, creating an inclusive platform that supported both local organisations and small businesses. For 2026, we aim to expand participation further, enabling more groups to benefit while increasing the festival's reach across the community. The festival offers a vibrant programme of free workshops, performances, and family-friendly entertainment, covering sport, culture, art, and food. By ensuring something for everyone, the event promotes community pride, inclusivity, and participation. Slate Events' mission is to provide free, inspiring, and educational experiences in an enjoyable setting, making the festival a highlight of Stratford's community calendar. We gather feedback from both visitors and stall holders to ensure we can continue to improve, and make this festival something that Stratford residents can be proud of.
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<i>Payment preferred:</i>	After the event- you funding contributes to the free aspects of the festival. Please note this does not cover all free aspect, slate events also contribute to this.
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The total of £7,500 was paid to Slate Events after the event in May 2025, as a contribution towards the entertainment for the festival, following their application for funding received October 2024.

The Town Council had agreed initial funding for 2023/24 for the inaugural event on the stipulation that this was to cover the free entertainment on offer, which the Council has the power to provide for.

Slate Events had initially that grant funding from other bodies could then be sourced when the event had been successfully staged for one year.

The past two events have achieved a lot of positive comments.

Councillors may or may not choose to continue with a contribution for the free family activities, noting that under the Council's Grants Initiative Scheme, that applications will not be considered from a 'not for profit' organisation.

Stratford upon Avon Christmas Lights Co Ltd have completed a form, requesting the sum of £35,000 (Appendix B).

<i>Description of project:</i>	The Christmas Lights have been part of the town's heritage for over 40 years and an intrinsic part of the Christmas celebrations. The display is often thought to be one of the best in the UK and one of the largest, comparable to the size of the town with lights stretching from Swans Nest Island south of the town to Greenhill Street in the north. The display of lights uses the latest in LED technology reducing our energy usage and constructed using a biodegradable plastic printing method alongside recycled aluminium. We aim to: • Enhance the atmosphere of the time at night during the festive period • Make a huge contribution to the local economy • Create a sense of civic pride through the community
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	• Use the lights to improve the mental wellbeing of the community Climate change initiatives: The electricity cost has been reduced significantly over the last few years down from £7k in 2012 to just under £2k in 2024. This has been achieved by keeping pace with new technologies especially the changeover to LED. Consumption will reduce further as LED technology improves. We do not use any real Christmas trees as the size we would require cannot be sourced or disposed of sustainably. We always try to refurbish lights before buying new. Our suppliers use a Bio or recycle print in the construction of their products reducing the amount of steel used in construction.
<i>Payment preferred:</i>	£35,000 mid December 2026

A payment of £27,500 will be made in January 2026, following their application for funding received October 2024.

Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom have completed a form, requesting the sum of £25,000 (Appendix A).

<i>Description of project:</i>	To ensure that the Town Centre has wildlife friendly floral displays from the beginning of June until the end of September. We want to continue to support the town Council's Environmental initiatives. Depending on the Town Council's decision to use new balcony planters, we will ensure that we provide and maintain the plants. We encourage people across the town to get involved in environmental projects. To ensure the town looks vibrant and beautiful for residents and visitors. To work with schools and nursery schools and help guide them with their environmental projects. Climate change initiatives:
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	We use peat free compost where possible, use less water as we utilise planter reservoirs. We continue to educate people about the important of plants that attract our pollinators and bees.
<i>Payment preferred:</i>	In the same manner as previously.

A payment of £27,500 will be made in January 2026, following their application for funding received October 2024.

2. Terms of Reference

To review the Terms of Reference (Appendix D).

3. Holy Trinity Closed Churchyard – North Gates

- **To consider a request for refurbishment of gates**

By Minute 13(2004/5) a request had been made regarding the cosmetic refurbishment of the gates at Holy Trinity Parish Church (HT). The gates, located in a highly prominent position in Stratford-upon-Avon, are structurally sound, though it has been suggested that they would benefit from cosmetic improvement.

Accordingly, quotes have now been received and submitted for further consideration:

1. Quote 1 £2450.00+VAT
2. Quote 2 £2000.00+VAT
3. Quote 3 £3450+VAT
4. Quote 4 - declined to quote.

Legal

The Town Council's legal responsibility for the closed churchyard is set out in the Local Government Act 1972, s.215: *"to maintain it by keeping it in decent order and its walls and fences in good repair."* This duty extends to ensuring the gates are kept in good order and repair. However, any additional expenditure must be carefully considered.

The general principle remains that the churchyard should be maintained as a place which is safe and appropriate for its primary purpose, enabling the public to visit graves whether to commemorate, remember, or pray for loved ones, or for purposes such as historical research or local interest.

The decorative gates are listed in their own right (Grade II) [GATE IN CHURCHYARD WALL TO NORTH OF CHURCH OF HOLY TRINITY, Stratford-upon-Avon - 1298531 | Historic England](#) and are likely of mid-19th century date, constructed of cast and wrought iron (Historic England: *Gate in Churchyard Wall to North of Church of Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon – 1298531*).

Councillor MacDonald's comments on behalf of HT:

The original request for "cleaning and restoring" the gates came from one of the Church Wardens. Two years ago the churchyard maintenance team tried to clean them with buckets of soapy water and small brushes to get into the crevices, but with only limited success. A jetwash machine was then used to blast the surfaces with high pressure water. This removed the algae and lichen, but also flakes of paint in many places, revealing rusting ironwork underneath. The deterioration is more than cosmetic. However, the gates are not yet disintegrating.

Options:

Councillors are asked to note that, for health and safety reasons and at the request of the Church, an application is currently in progress for tree works in the churchyard at a cost to be confirmed at the meeting, demonstrating that the Council takes its responsibility seriously and uses the precept to cover essential works required to keep the churchyard safe and in decent order.

Councillors are asked to consider whether the refurbishment of the gates is warranted against the current budget.

Should the Town Council agree to fund such works, formal confirmation would be required that Listed Building Consent is not necessary and that a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Works can be issued. It is suggested that in this case, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) would need to apply for a faculty, rather than the Town Council, as PCCs are not normally charged the faculty fee (currently £327.40) that would otherwise fall to the Council.

4. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Remembrance Garden

- **To consider the use of CIL Funds for the replacement of path in the Remembrance Garden**

The Remembrance Garden provides a valued and peaceful public space used by local residents and visitors alike. It is regularly accessed by individuals of all ages, including elderly users and those with mobility issues. The pathway within the garden also serves as a thoroughfare for access and circulation.

Following routine inspections and ongoing maintenance observations, the Open Spaces Foreman has reported that the existing path surface has become uneven in several locations due to wear, weathering, and minor subsidence over time.

Health & Safety Context

The uneven nature of the path now presents a potential trip hazard to users. This is particularly concerning given the demographic of visitors to the Remembrance Garden, many of whom may be more vulnerable to falls. Under the Council's duty of care, there is an obligation to maintain the Town Council's public open spaces in a condition that is safe and accessible for all users. The current state of the path risks non-compliance with basic health and safety expectations and may lead to liability concerns if not addressed. Remedial work to the path will mitigate these risks and improve accessibility for all, including wheelchair users and those with pushchairs.

Use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

It is considered appropriate and in accordance with CIL guidelines to use these funds for improvements to public open space infrastructure.

The Committee has delegated authority to recommend expenditure of CIL funds to Council, and in light of the identified need, proposes that funds be allocated to replace the path in the Remembrance Garden.

Quotes for work should be available at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION to Council

It is recommended that the Council approve the use of Community Infrastructure Levy funds for the remedial work to the path in the Remembrance Garden, on the basis of the health and safety concerns highlighted by the Open Spaces Foreman and the need to maintain safe, accessible public infrastructure.

Quotes for Remembrance Garden paths will be tabled at the meeting.

5. Open Spaces Team

- **To review a quotation for new equipment for the Open Spaces Team**

The Town Council's Health and Safety Advisor had recently identified a potential health risk to the Open Spaces Team arising from exposure to hand-arm vibration (HAV) from the use of current machinery. The Council has a duty of care to protect staff from long-term conditions such as Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Action is required where exposure thresholds are likely to be reached or exceeded.

Following consideration by Personnel Committee it was

RECOMMENDED **That appropriate budget be put in place for 2026/27 and beyond for replacement equipment for the Open Spaces Team.**

In light of these Health and Safety implications, a review of the Open Spaces Team's current machinery has been initiated.. The Council has been advised that, while interim measures such as anti-vibration gloves can mitigate risk for short periods, longer-term solutions should be considered. Specifically, the purchase of electrical equipment and associated battery backup with reduced vibration levels is recommended to protect staff from ongoing exposure and comply with the Council's duty of care obligations. A quote has been sought from Hunts Engineering, our current equipment provider who have surveyed the current market.

Quotation provided at Appendix E.

6. Town Hall Maintenance

- **To review a quotation for a Maintenance Plan and a Fire Heritage report for the Town Hall**

This Committee has a specific delegation (4.9) to undertake a maintenance review and compile an ongoing Maintenance Schedule for the Town Hall, ensuring that it is sustainable and in line with the Town Council's fair-trade ethics and objectives. To date, this has not been happening. It is important that a structured plan is in place to enable scheduled works to be planned proactively, rather than waiting for issues to arise.

The Town Council's Building Consultant has provided a quotation for the preparation of a five-year Maintenance Plan, which would assist the Council in setting its annual budget. In addition, a quotation has been received for a Fire Heritage Report, which will provide a detailed assessment and mark up plans to show existing measures and, where necessary, recommend

improvements that are sympathetic to the character and historic fabric of the building.

Quotation Appendix F and G.

7. Cemetery Fees 2026/27

- **To consider the fees for the Cemetery**

In order to ensure that the service remains sustainable and that charges continue to reflect the costs incurred, consideration needs to be given to an increase in fees for the financial year 2026/27.

The Committee is invited to consider the recommendation or suggest a lower or higher adjustment, or retain the fees at the 2025/26 level

RECOMMENDED: **That the fees for the Cemetery and Tranquility Garden are increased by 10%.**

Website link: <https://stratford-tc.gov.uk/cemetery-information/>

8. Bus Shelter Provision

To receive a verbal update on the provision of a bus shelter at Brookside Road agreed at previous meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

9. Climate Change Working Group Meeting Notes

To review the meeting notes of the Climate Change Working Group meetings held on 26 March and 29 September 2025 (*to follow*).

10. Bio-Diversity Policy.

To receive the Bio-Diversity Policy and to recommend its approval to Council.

RECOMMENDATION to Council

That the Bio-Diversity Policy be recommended to Council for approval Appendix H.

Town Clerk
01.10.2025