



Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT



2025 / 26

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Welcome and Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read this Annual Report for 2025/26. It remains both an honour and a responsibility to represent our town as the closest tier of government to our community. While this Council's statutory powers are limited, our role in serving residents, supporting local organisations and safeguarding the character of the town is significant and longstanding.

Across the country, parish and town councils are taking on greater responsibilities and rising expectations, under financial pressure and amid the uncertainty of local government reorganisation. Strong governance, financial accountability, transparency and professionalism is essential to maintaining public trust and council credibility. With the ongoing Government's English Devolution White Paper shifting local powers further, this Council remains committed to using its budget wisely to deliver value to residents.

During 2025/26, the Council continued to organise and support key civic and community events that are central to the life of the town, including the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations Parade, Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Day and the Christmas Lights and Switch-On. We continue to work with partners such as Stratford Pursuits, build on established initiatives including Stratford in Bloom and support essential services such as CCTV across the town.

As a Council, we aim to be responsive, realistic and focused on what can genuinely be delivered. None of this is possible without the commitment of our Councillors and the professionalism and dedication of our staff, whose work underpins everything the Council does on behalf of the community.

Town Clerk, Caroline Nash

My Mayoral year has been a reminder that the strength of Stratford-upon-Avon lies in its people and in the many ways they come together to support one another. As Mayor, it has been a privilege to spend time with residents, volunteers, community groups, schools, and charities who quietly and consistently make a difference across the town.

Over the past year I have been welcomed into spaces that reflect the full life of our community. From inclusive sports sessions and social clubs, to memorial events that ask us to pause and reflect, to the reopening and celebration of cultural spaces that will serve Stratford for years to come.

I have seen first-hand the impact of volunteers, staff, and organisers who give their time and care so generously.

A particular highlight has been meeting so many young people through schools and community projects. Their thoughtfulness, creativity, and willingness to get involved gives real confidence in the future of our town. It has also been a year where supporting local charities has felt especially meaningful, seeing how vital their work is to families and individuals at every stage of life.

Being Mayor is, at its heart, about listening, showing up, and helping to shine a light on the good work already happening. As this year draws to a close, I am grateful for the warmth and openness I have been shown, and proud to represent a town that continues to look out for one another.

Mayor, Councillor Dani Hunter

Year in Review

This “*year in review*” will take us from March 2025 to March 2026.

March 2025

The Town Hall hosted its second Volunteers Fair ahead of the Annual Meeting. Organisations gathered and welcomed new volunteers to join them.



Volunteers Reception 2025

April 2025

Staff Retirement

The Town Council said farewell to Dave Lawley from the Open Spaces Team as he retired after 5 years dedicated service.



Dave Lawley retires

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 2025

Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations

2025 marked the 461st anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth and events took place over the weekend of Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th 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 25th April 2026 to celebrate the life and works of England's greatest playwright!



Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations 2025

May 2025

Councillor Dani Hunter was formally elected as the 480th Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon on the 16th May 2025.

The Mayor has represented the community as Councillor for the Orchard Hill Ward since 2023. Having spent 2024 as Deputy Mayor and participating in various community events, it was a good introduction to what she knew would be a busy year ahead.

She was looking forward to the responsibilities and challenges that come with the role of Mayor. Her charities for the year would be Stratford Family Club, Welcombe Hills School and Birmingham Children's Hospital.



Mayor, Councillor Dani Hunter

V E Day 80th Anniversary

The Town Council and Stratford Town Trust joined together to host a special event to commemorate this historic occasion.

2025 was the 30th anniversary of the Peace Memorial Bandstand, which was constructed and installed by the Royal Engineers. It opened in 1995 to mark 50 years of Victory in Europe Day. To honour this anniversary, Stratford Town Trust has carried out a complete refurbishment of the bandstand.

Following the re-opening of the bandstand, a procession took place to the Garden of Remembrance, which was followed by a short Service of Commemoration, wreath laying and the lighting of a Beacon. The well attended events were also livestreamed via Facebook.



Peace Memorial Bandstand Re-opening



V E Day 80th Anniversary

Stratford Pursuits Festival

Stratford Pursuits Festival returned for its second year in the town and was once again held on the recreation ground where locals and visitors alike immersed themselves in a celebration of creativity, exploration, and community spirit. This exciting new festival featured a dynamic mix of workshops, live performances, stalls 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.

This Council are proud to financially support the festival.



Stratford Pursuits Festival 2025

June 2025

Armed Forces Day

Saturday 28th June, saw this Council gather organise an event outside the Town Hall to show their support for our Armed Forces – including those who are currently serving, their families, Cadets and veterans. This event was livestreamed via Facebook.



Armed Forces Day 2025

August 2025

V J Day 80th Anniversary

The Town Council held a short Service of Commemoration in the Garden of Remembrance to mark the 80th Anniversary of V J Day which included wreath laying and lighting of the Beacon.



V J Day 80th Anniversary

September 2025

The Town Hall opened its doors to the public as part of the Heritage Open Day scheme, welcoming local residents alongside visitors from across the globe. Throughout the day, the Mayor and Councillors greeted guests and showcased the Town Hall, celebrating its heritage and importance to the community.



Mayor, Councillors & Visitors for Heritage Open Day

October 2025

In collaboration with Magic Alley, the Mayor and this Council produced a Halloween Trail in the town for visitors and residents to enjoy over half term week.

November 2025

Remembrance Commemorations

The Town Council extended sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the Remembrance Service held on Sunday 9th 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 located 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 Councillor Gill Cleeve and Rev Dr Paul Edmondson were responsible for organising the service and were joined by the Mayor, Councillor Dani Hunter.



Armistice Day

Staff Retirement

Mr Mick Love MBE, former Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon, stepped down from the role of Sadler Mace-Bearer, following the Council meeting in November 2025.

Mick served as a Relief Mace-Bearer initially and in July 2011 was formally appointed as Ludford Mace-Bearer before being promoted to Sadler Mace-Bearer in 2019.

He has served the town with dedicated service which has been greatly valued. The Council extended its sincere thanks to Mick for his commitment and contribution to the civic life of Stratford-upon-Avon.



Presentation from the Mayor to Mick Love MBE

New bus shelter

This Council arranged for the provision and installation of a new bus shelter on Brookside Road - improving facilities for residents in Brookside Ward.



New bus shelter

Warwickshire Wedding Showcase

This Council joined the Warwickshire Registration Service in celebrating 30 years of ceremonies held at licensed venues, marking the occasion at the Warwickshire Wedding Showcase. The event provided an opportunity to promote the Town Hall as a distinguished and welcoming venue, highlighting its role in hosting memorable ceremonies.



Town Hall presentation stand

Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights

The Mayor officially switched on the Christmas Lights alongside Father Christmas and Mrs Claus. With a flick of a switch, the town lit up in festive glory – a magical start to the Christmas season which also included entertainment throughout the day and a festive market. This event was brought to you by the Town Council, Christmas Lights Committee and Stratford Upon Avon BID.

This Council are proud to support the Christmas Lights Committee and to recognise the dedication and hard work of its volunteers. Their efforts help to deliver a festive display that brings the community together, enhances the town centre and creates a welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors during the Christmas season.



The Mayor and Father Christmas switch-on the lights



Bridge Street lights and festive market

December 2025

Stratford Christmas Markets

The Stratford Christmas Market weekends were delivered in collaboration with this Council, Stratford District Council and LSD Promotions and proved to be highly successful. Over two weekends, the markets attracted large numbers of visitors who supported local and independent traders, and created a vibrant atmosphere in the town, contributing positively to the local economy and the overall Christmas programme.



Christmas Markets 2025

January 2026

New Mace-Bearer

The Town Council extended a very warm welcome to Glyn Slade its new Ludford Mace-Bearer – this is a civic ceremonial role. This Council has two Maces, the Sadler and the Ludford. The older of the two, the Sadler Mace, was presented in 1632. The Ludford Mace was given in 1746.



Mr Glyn Slade – Ludford Mace-Bearer



Mace-Bearers and Beadle

February 2026

Mayor's Silent Disco

The Town Hall held its second Silent Disco, with not one but two events on the same day! The Mayor ran a family disco during the afternoon and an adult disco in the evening. The events were enjoyed by everyone who attended. The events supported the Mayor's Good Causes – Stratford Family Club, Birmingham Children's Hospital and WHS Trust Fund.



Mayor's Silent Disco

March 2026

The Mayor's next fundraising event at the Town Hall will be a Murder, Mystery Evening on Saturday 14th March – don't miss out on tickets!



THE MAYOR OF STRATFORD-UPON-AVON INVITES YOU TO

MURDER AND THE HIGHWAYMAN!

*"A Murder Mystery Evening ?
with Comedy and a Fish & Chip Dinner"*

Rip-Roaring Event at Stratford-upon-Avon Town Hall,
Sheep Street, CV37 6EF
in aid of the Mayor's Good Causes

Saturday 14th March - 7.30pm

Tickets: £25

Logos: Stratford Family Club, Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity, Welcombe Hills School

A QR code is located on the left side of the poster.

Mayor's Fundraising Event

Civic Diary 2026

Event	Day	Date, Time and Venue
Annual Town Meeting	Thursday	5 March 7:30pm Town Hall
Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations	Saturday	25 April from 9:45am Town Centre
Shakespeare Sunday Service	Sunday	26 April 11:15am Holy Trinity Church
Mayor Making	Friday	15 May 12noon Town Hall
Civic Sunday Service	Sunday	17 May 10am Holy Trinity Church
Armed Forces Day	Saturday	27 June Location TBC
Opening of the Mop	Monday	12 October Town Centre
Remembrance Sunday	Sunday	8 November 10:50am Garden of Remembrance
Armistice Day	Wednesday	11 November Details TBC
Christmas Lights Switch-on	Saturday	14 November Details TBC
Stratford Christmas Markets (weekend 1)	Saturday & Sunday	28 & 29 November Town Centre
Stratford Christmas Markets (weekend 2)	Saturday & Sunday	5 & 6 December Town Centre

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



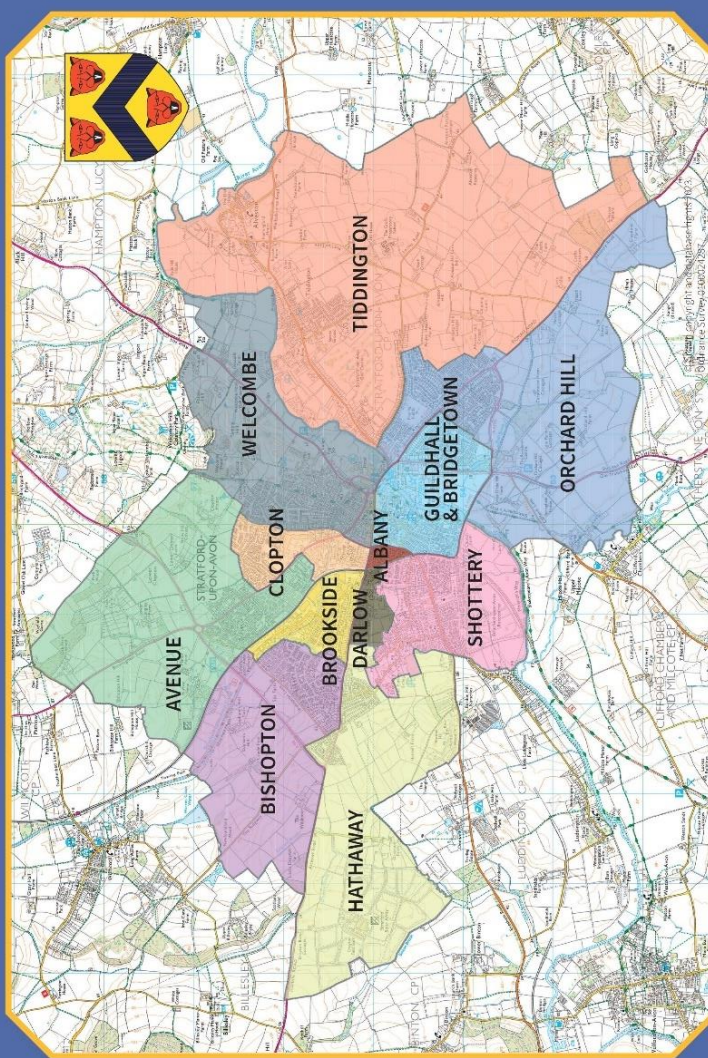
Councillor
Dani Hunter



Councillor
Kate Rolfe



Councillor
Louisa Smith



TOWN COUNCIL CONTACTS

ALBANY
Councillor Lindsay MacDonald
Email: Lindsay.macdonald@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 07753 661610

AVENUE
Councillor Richard Vos
Email: richard.vos@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 07989 189144

BISHOPTON
Councillor Victoria Alcock
Email: Victoria.alcock@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 551072 / 07904 352133
Councillor Roger Harding
Email: roger.harding@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 07927 387715

BROOKSIDE
Councillor Toby Lee
Email: toby.lee@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 07525 778560

CLOPTON
Councillor Jason Fojtik
Email: jason.fojtik@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 551267 / 07521 128638

DARLOW
Councillor Letty Petrovic
Email: letty.petrovic@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 269332 / 07980 918201

GUILDHALL & BRIDGETOWN
Councillor Jenny Fradgley
Email: jenny.fradgley@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 266369 / 07941 225464
Councillor Sam McNaught Barrow
Email: sam.mb@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 565155

HATHAWAY
Councillor Elizabeth Coles
Email: elizabeth.coles@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 07449710132

ORCHARD HILL
Councillor Ian Fradgley
Email: ian.fradgley@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 266369 / 07712 809252
Councillor Dani Hunter
Email: dani.hunter@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 269332

SHOTTERY
Councillor Gill Cleeve
Email: gill.cleeve@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 333999
Councillor Steve Albon
Email: steve.albon@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 07798 806255

TIDDINGTON
Councillor Kate Rolfe
Email: kate.rolfe@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 550624 / 07855 197138

Councillor Louisa Smith
Email: louisa.smith@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 269332 / 07462 208141

WELCOMBE
Councillor Iain Duck
Email: iain.duck@stratford-tc.gov.uk
Tel: 01789 269332 / 07741 278595

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

Calendar of Meetings 2026/27 at the Town Hall

Committee 1 (TBC)	Committee 2 (TBC)	Committee 3 (TBC)	Planning Consultative Committee	Town Council
Tuesday (6:30pm)	Tuesday (6:30pm)	Tuesday (6:30pm)	Tuesday (6:30 pm)	Tuesday (6:30 pm)
2 June 26	23 June 26	12 May 26 30 June 26	27 May 26 16 June 26	Annual Meeting & Mayor Making Friday 15 May 26 (noon) (Annual photograph) 9 June 26 (To approve Annual Accounts only)
	21 July 26		7 July 26 28 July 26	14 July 26
		4 August 26	18 August 26	
2 September 26			8 September 26 29 September 26	15 September 26
	6 October 26	13 October 26	20 October 26	
3 November 26			10 November 26	24 November 26
	8 December 26	15 December 26	1 December 26	
5 January 27			12 January 27	19 January 27
	9 February 27	16 February 27	1 February 27 23 February 27	
2 March 27			16 March 27	Town Meeting Thursday 4 March 27 7:30pm 23 March 27
	20 April 27	13 April 27	6 April 27 27 April 27	
			25 May 27	

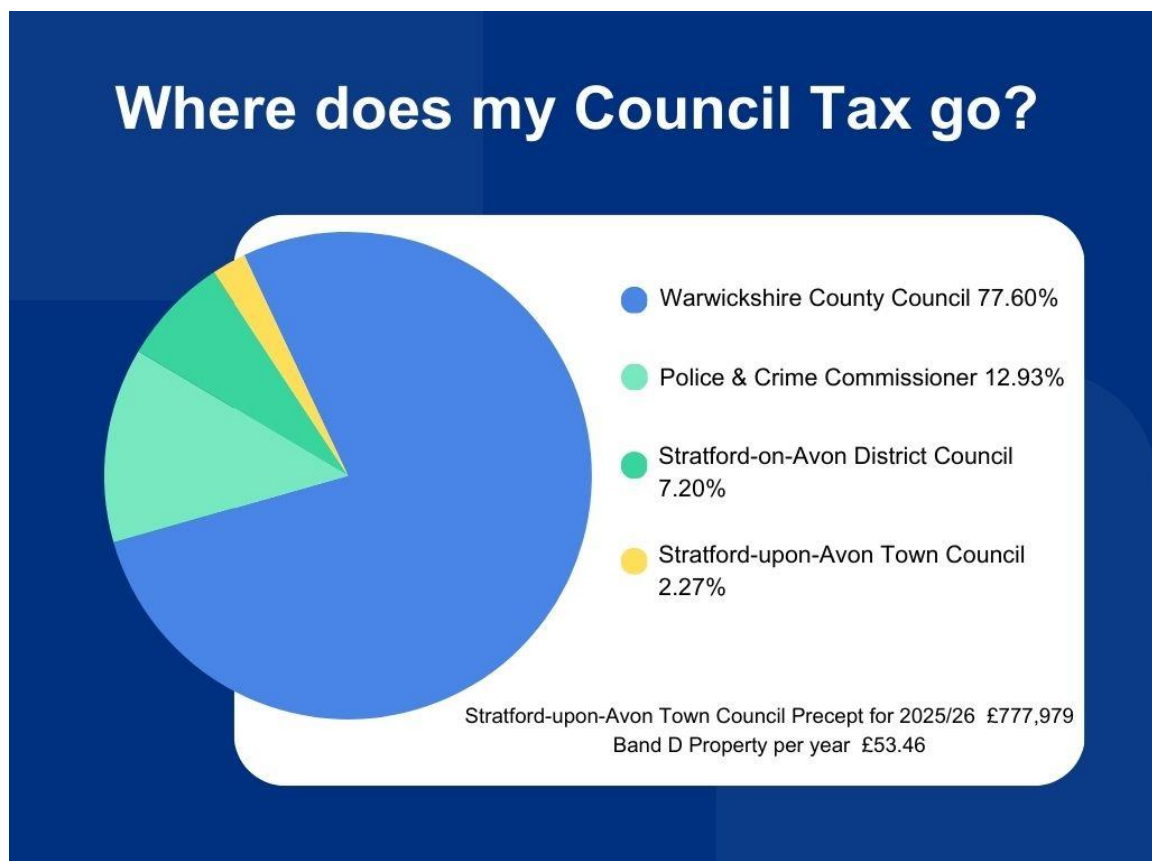
Annual Meeting and Mayor Making (unless General Election decrees otherwise)
Friday 21 May 2027 at noon at the Town Hall. Civic Sunday – Sunday 23 May 2027

Finance Information

The 2025/26 budget allocated funds for the ongoing operation of Town Council services, including the Town Hall, Cemetery and Garden of Remembrance. Additionally, it designated resources for various community initiatives, such as the renowned Stratford in Bloom and Christmas Lights. Funding is also allocated for the provision of CCTV within the town. The Town Council has agreed to continue supporting free entertainment and activities at the Stratford Pursuits Festival and the Shakespeare Birthday Parade. This is all funded by Council Tax income of £777,979, known as the precept, as well as commercial income and fees and charges for Council services.

The average Band D council tax charge was £53.46, representing an increase of £6.97 compared to the previous year.

This measured adjustment enables the Council to continue delivering essential services and supporting valued community projects, while placing its finances on a sound and responsible footing. While the Town Council endeavours to keep the precept as low as possible, proper regard was also given to the need to restore the Council's reserves to an appropriate and compliant level. Strengthening reserves is essential to safeguard the Council's financial stability and to ensure resilience against future uncertainties and financial pressures.



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 Tranquillity 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
- CCTV

Section 1 & 2 – Annual Governance and Accounting Statement 2025/26

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

Straatford 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 2025, that:

Agreed		Yes means that this authority:	
Yes	No	Yes	No
☒	☐	1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	Yes: prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
☒	☐	2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes: 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 Practice in force which could have a material adverse effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	Yes: 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 the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes: during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this 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 other measures to ensure compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practice.	Yes: 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.	Yes: arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial and other functions of the authority, to conduct an internal audit of the authority's accounts and other internal controls to meet the needs of this smaller authority.
☒	☐	7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes: 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.	Yes: 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 trustees' cash as well as the authority's managing responsibilities for the funds/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes: 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:

17 06 2025

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

Chair

Clerk

and recorded as minute reference:

21 2025.06.17

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Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3
Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

Straatford Upon Avon Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024	31 March 2025	
1. Balances brought forward	139,001	200,923	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	582,238	661,678	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 1 of previous year.
3. (+) Total other receipts	421,246	466,433	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	415,093	425,055	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, employers' pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
6. (-) All other payments	526,469	531,142	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
7. (-) Balances carried forward	200,923	372,837	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	221,049	351,348	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	11,163,783	11,166,758	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March - To agree with bank reconciliation.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	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.

For Local Councils Only		Yes	No	N/A
11a. Disclosure note to Trust funds (including charitable)		☒	☐	☐
11b. Disclosure note to Trust funds (including charitable)		☒	☐	☐

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Date
17 06 2025

as recorded in minute reference:

22 2025.06.17

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

22 2025.06.17

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3
Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*

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

With its central location, the venue is accessible and everyone is made welcome. Wheelchair access by ramp 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.

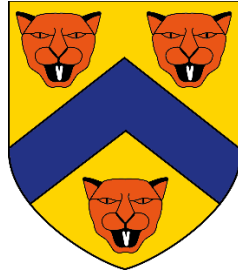


Wedding Ceremony in the Council Chamber

Community Sponsorship

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





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