



STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 7 October 2025

Meeting commenced: 6:30pm Meeting ended: 8:16pm

Minutes

Present

Councillors:

J Fradgley	MacDonald
McNaught Barrow (Chair)	Petrovic
Rashwan	Smith
Vos	

Clerk:	Victoria Flynn
RFO:	Odette Ghent
Town Clerk:	Caroline Nash
Press:	None present
Public:	Cohl Warren-Howles, Chair of Stratford in Bloom (SIB). Charles Bates, Treasurer of Stratford in Bloom (SIB). Councillor Jason Fojtik, Chair of Stratford upon Avon Christmas Lights Co Ltd (SCLC).

13. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Rolfe and was accepted for the reason given.

Councillor Coles was absent from the meeting.

14. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Fradgley declared an interest in Minute 31 as she was the Town Council's representative on the Stratford in Bloom committee.

Councillor MacDonald declared an interest in Minute 23 as a member of Holy Trinity Church Volunteers.

15. **To receive written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests**

None were received.

16. **To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate**

None were received.

17. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation at this point.

18. **To approve the draft Minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on 24 June 2025**

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee Meeting held on 24 June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

19. **To adopt the draft notes of the Climate Change Group Meetings held on 26 March and 29 September 2025**

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the draft notes of the Climate Change Group meetings held on 26 March and 29 September 2025 be adopted.

20. **To adopt the draft notes of the Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel held on 26 June, 22 July, 20 August and 16 September 2025**

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the draft notes of the Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel meetings held on 26 June, 22 July, 20 August and 16 September 2025 be adopted.

21. **Town Clerk's Open Report**

Community Services

The Chair welcomed representatives from the organisations applying for grants under the Council's Initiatives Scheme. The meeting was addressed by:

- Cohl Warren-Howles, Chair of Stratford in Bloom
- Charles Bates, Treasurer of Stratford in Bloom
- Councillor Fojtik, Chair of Stratford Christmas Lights Company (SCLC) – Councillor Fojtik disclosed a Personnel Interest as the

Town Council's representative on the SCLC.

- Kate Livingston, Slate Events Stratford Pursuits Festival .

Once the presentations had taken place, representatives left the meeting.

The Chair informed the Committee that the Initiatives Applications would form part of the Budget consideration later in the meeting– and would be considered later in the meeting – Minute 30 refers.

In order for efficient conduit of the meeting a number of the following items were considered as part of the budget process but are Minuted here for ease.

22. To review the Terms of Reference

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED To accept the Terms of Reference as they stand.

23. To review works to be carried out on the North Gates at Holy Trinity Church

By Minute 13 (2004/5), a request was made for the refurbishment of the gates at Holy Trinity Parish Church (HT). The gates, which occupy a prominent position in Stratford-upon-Avon, remain structurally sound but have been identified as in need of aesthetic improvement.

Quotations for the proposed works have now been received as follows:

1. £2,450.00 + VAT
2. £2,000.00 + VAT
3. £3,450.00 + VAT
4. One contractor declined to quote.

Under Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Town Council is responsible for maintaining the closed churchyard, including keeping its walls, fences, and gates in good repair. While this duty extends to ensuring the gates remain safe and serviceable, any additional expenditure beyond essential maintenance requires careful consideration.

The gates are Grade II listed in their own right (Historic England Listing 1298531) and date from the mid-19th century, being of cast and wrought iron construction. Councillor MacDonald, on behalf of HT, reported that previous cleaning attempts had limited success, with paint loss exposing rusting ironwork, indicating deterioration beyond the purely cosmetic stage.

Members are therefore asked to consider whether refurbishment is warranted within the current budget. Should funding be approved,

confirmation would be required regarding Listed Building Consent and whether a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Works could be issued.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the maintenance of the gates be approved in principle, subject to budget availability and the receipt of detailed written quotations from the companies that provided the initial estimates to Holy Trinity Church. These quotations to then be reviewed by the Town Clerk.

24. To consider Community Infrastructure Levy funds for the replacement of the path in the Garden of Remembrance

Following routine inspections, the Open Spaces Foreman had reported that the path surface in the Remembrance Garden had become uneven in several areas due to wear, weathering, and minor subsidence. The uneven surface now posed a potential trip hazard, particularly concerning given the vulnerability of many visitors.

In accordance with the Council's duty of care to maintain safe and accessible public open spaces, remedial works are considered necessary to mitigate health and safety risks and improve accessibility for all users, including wheelchair and pushchair access.

It was proposed that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds be used to replace the path, as this qualified as an improvement to public open space infrastructure.

It was proposed, seconded and

RECOMMENDED That Community Infrastructure Levy funds be used for the replacement of the path in the Garden of Remembrance.

The Town Clerk to confirm the procurement process and report to Council for ratification.

25. To review quotations for new electrical equipment for the Open Spaces Team

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

Following consideration by the Personnel Committee, it was **recommended** that appropriate budget provision be made for 2026/27 and beyond to enable the replacement of equipment for the Open Spaces Team.

A review of the Team's machinery had therefore been initiated. While interim measures such as anti-vibration gloves would provide short-term mitigation, the longer-term solution recommended was the purchase of electrical equipment with lower vibration levels and suitable battery backup. A quote had been sought from Hunts Engineering, the Council's current equipment provider, who had reviewed the available options on the market.

It was proposed, seconded and

RECOMMENDED

That funding for the replacement equipment be included in the 2026/27 budget. and that in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules - two further quotes be sought.

26. **To review a quotation for a Maintenance Plan and a Fire Heritage Report for the Town Hall**

Under delegation 4.9, the Committee was responsible for undertaking a maintenance review and compiling an ongoing Maintenance Schedule for the Town Hall, ensuring it remains sustainable and aligned with the Town Council's fair-trade ethics and objectives. To date, this structured approach had not been implemented, and a proactive maintenance plan was required to manage works effectively and avoid reactive spending.

The Town Council's Building Consultant had provided a quotation to prepare a five-year Maintenance Plan to support future budget planning. A further quotation had been received for a Fire Heritage Report, which would assess existing fire safety measures and recommend improvements that were sensitive to the building's historic character.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED

That the costs of a Town Hall Maintenance Plan and a Fire Heritage Report be met from current budgets.

27. **To consider the Cemetery Fees for 2026/27**

The Committee was asked to consider a 10% increase to current fees for the financial year 2026/27. Following a discussion regarding the suggested increase

It was proposed, seconded and

RECOMMENDED

That the RFO would investigate similar sized cemetery fees and consider these in line with any future increase to the fees.

28. To receive a verbal update on the provision of a bus shelter at Brookside Road

A verbal update was received from the Clerk, this shelter would hopefully be installed at the end of November.

Environment

29. To recommend for adoption the Bio-Diversity Policy for the Council.

It was proposed, seconded and

RECOMMENDED

That the Bio-Diversity Policy be adopted.

30. Budget Review

The RFO presented the updated Management Accounts to September 2025.

In addition as part of the Budget process for 2026/27, the RFO had provided the Committee with the budget relevant to its area of responsibility.

31. Stratford in Bloom

Stratford in Bloom aim to ensure that the Town Centre features wildlife-friendly floral displays from June to September, supporting the Town Council's environmental initiatives and enhancing the town's vibrancy for residents and visitors.

Subject to the Council's decision on new balcony planters, the group will provide and maintain suitable planting. Efforts continue to encourage community involvement, particularly through collaboration with schools and nurseries on environmental projects.

In support of climate change initiatives, peat-free compost and water-efficient planter reservoirs are used, and public awareness is promoted regarding plants that attract pollinators and bees.

Consideration was given to the request from Stratford in Bloom of the sum of £25,000 for the financial year 2026/27.

Following consideration, it was proposed, seconded and

RECOMMENDED

That £25,000 be allocated in the budget for 2026/27 for this initiative.

32. Stratford Christmas Lights Co Ltd.

The Christmas Lights, a cherished part of the town's heritage for over 40 years, form an integral part of the festive celebrations and are recognised as one of the UK's most impressive displays. Extending from Swans Nest Island to Greenhill Street, the lights enhance the town's atmosphere, support the local economy, foster community pride, and contribute to wellbeing during the festive season. The display uses energy-efficient LED technology, biodegradable materials, and recycled aluminium, significantly reducing electricity costs from £7,000 in 2012 to under £2,000 in 2024. Sustainability remains central, with lights refurbished wherever possible and no real trees used to ensure environmental responsibility.

Consideration was given to the request from the SCLC of the sum of £35,000 for the financial year 2026/27.

Following consideration, and on the condition that a meeting be arranged between the Council and the SCLC to enable a better understanding of the issues and potential funding options available to them, it was proposed, seconded and

RECOMMENDED

That £30,000 be allocated in the budget for 2026/27 for this initiative.

Action: The Chair of Community Services & Environment Committee will write to SCLC requesting a breakdown of their expenditure.

33. Slate Events

The Stratford Pursuits Festival will enter its third year in 2026, following strong feedback and growing community support. The 2025 event successfully hosted 28 community groups and charities alongside 36 commercial vendors, providing an inclusive platform that supported both local organisations and small businesses.

Plans for 2026 include expanding participation to further extend the festival's reach. The event offers a varied programme of free workshops, performances, and family entertainment celebrating sport, culture, art, and food, promoting community pride and inclusivity. Feedback from visitors and stallholders continues to inform improvements, ensuring the festival remains a valued highlight of Stratford's community calendar.

Consideration was given to the request from Slate Events for the sum of £5,000 for the financial year 2026/27. In considering the request

the Committee indicated that they would like to see higher profile of the Town Council's sponsorship.

It was proposed, seconded and

RECOMMENDED That £5,000 be allocated to the budget for 2026/27 for this initiative.

34. **Town Clerk's Verbal Report**

No verbal report was given.

35. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 17 February 2026 at 6:30pm.

Chairman: