

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council Meeting

29 September, 2020

Written Reports by Representatives to Outside Bodies

1) Councillor J Fradgley

Stratford-in-Bloom

SiB thanks the Town Council for their continued generous support for its work in the town.

SiB has received such support from residents this year that it was policy to keep the floral displays in full this year but next year will be more challenging.

We are still looking for new committee members as I understand the present excellent Chair will be stepping down.

2) Councillor Kevin Taylor

2.1 PING Stratford-upon-Avon

Great news "PING Stratford-upon-Avon" returned to town on the 25 July.

Sadly, due to COVID-19 and social distancing requirements Bell Court and Henley Street were no longer available for us to utilise.

However, we had a huge response from the community for the tables and many potential new sites. On the 25 July we relaunched at the following sites:

- Stratford-Upon-Avon Rugby Club;
- Waterside;
- The Recreation Ground;
- Knights Lane Tiddington;
- Shottery Fields;
- Hodgson's Green;
- Alveston Manor Hotel.

We are still awaiting SDC to install a suitable matting around the playing areas at Hodgson's, Knights Lane and Shottery Fields.

Shottery Fields has been a huge success to date and we had a great response to providing a free bat drop around the area. We are planning to replicate this at Knights Lane via a social media campaign as we did in Shottery. We will also do this at Hodgson's green we are just waiting for another delivery of bats from table tennis England.

Alveston Manor Hotel has also been a huge success and the table is used by the public and residents of the hotel daily. It was also the location for the recent 21-hour table tennis marathon which raised over £2,250 supported by PING and Table Tennis England and the event was publicised nationally on the Table Tennis England website.

https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/featured-news/kevins-21-hour-marathon-effort-for-hospice/?fbclid=IwAR0q9cMQrpFtIXeskxUcdsbHnjrbGRHQfxAyFZex2-0ync8v7_KwvQv5SF8

Sadly, The Rugby Club and Waterside are no longer operational for the following reasons:

- The Rugby Club due to limited access and low footfall and;
- Waterside due to the lack of overnight storage space in town even after several social media campaigns.

Table Tennis England have recently donated another table to PING Stratford-upon-Avon due to a PING location sadly closing in Coventry. This table is currently in storage awaiting a site allocation.

Table Tennis England PING lead partner agreement renewal:

Our initial lead partner agreement expired in March 2020 and we need to decide if we wish to continue, even though PING Stratford-upon-Avon has experienced many unforeseen hinderances our 2019 table activity figures were well above many of the more established operations. In opting to continue with a new lead partner agreement it will allow us to access further funding for new tables. From the experience gained from 2019 I would categorically state this project is easier to manage with tables which are permanently fixed into locations. The daily movement of tables around Town in 2019/2020 was incredibly labour intensive. However, the rollaway tables have supported numerous community groups during the winter months and will continue to do this for the foreseeable future.

Potential new table locations:

- Joseph Way – agreed with SDC and Councillor Warren-Howles;
- Trevelyan Crescent;
- Trinity Mead;
- Bishopton Park;
- Woodchester Drive;
- The Old Slaughterhouse – Escape Arts;
- Stratford Sports Club;
- Rowley Fields.

Due to current national demand for tables it would be late 2020/early 2021 before any of these could be installed if accepted as suitable locations by Table Tennis England.

We have now added the concrete table on the recreation ground to the PING project and with the help of SDC and Fitzgerald's we recycled redundant slabs from Henley Street to create a playing surface that can be utilised all year round.

Guidelines for playing outdoors which are clearly displayed on all our tables:

- Players should wipe down the table before and after use with their own antibacterial wipes;
- Players should bring and use their own bats and balls. The equipment should not be shared with others;
- If playing with a person not from their household, two different balls should be used (e.g. using two different colour balls) so players only need to handle their own ball;
- A distance of 2m between players and others should be kept at all times;
- Avoid handshakes and physical contact;
- If you are showing Coronavirus symptoms, or if you or any of your household are self-isolating you should stay home and not use such facilities;
- Players should use one side of the table and not swap ends.

So as long as the guidelines are followed the tables on The Recreation Ground and Knights Lane can be utilised.

Guidelines are available from www.tabletennisengland.co.uk and www.pingengland.co.uk/Stratford-upon-Avon. We will also get the guidelines displayed at each table.

2.2 Stratforward BID

BID have continued to liaise with a number of Strategic groups/partnerships concerning the future of Stratford-upon-Avon and what needs to be implemented to deliver a better more robust Town centre.

Currently, BID are working through the-company development issues identified and working on a plan for delivering this.

The Traffic System Scheme implemented now appears to be working satisfactorily and all bodies which lobbied their varied opinions appear now to be satisfied with the results. The High street timed closures have especially been incredibly successful for businesses, residents and visitors.

Separate workgroups have been set up to give mutual support within the Town and a detailed social media campaign and updated website has clearly defined “Stratford-upon-Avon is open again”. All of these actions are now reaping the benefits and Town Hosts are engaging daily with businesses and visitors alike and we are beginning to see increased visitor levels, especially on weekends.

BID marketing have prepared a revised marketing plan including the roll out of the brand and web development. A new website is in development and a review of purpose and content writing has started.

Christmas promotions are currently being investigated including options for the Christmas Guide. Obviously, this period will be of great importance to all of the businesses in the town centre - this year more than ever.

Events are a commitment within the BID 3 business plan; however, the BID will have to balance what it can deliver in the light of financial and health restrictions when considering planning for 2021.

BID are actively working with businesses to support them on various elements including café licences, grant applications and business rate enquiries

The re-launch of the hospitality sector has seen a continued healthy recovery to date restaurants have seen incredible levels of activity supported by the “Eat Out to Help Out” scheme. However, some restaurants did incur some issues relating to levels of complaints received during this scheme, to such levels they would be reluctant to participate in another such scheme. Additional outdoor seating at establishments in High street have seen and incredible increase in business for several establishments.

2.3 Market Forum

Following the lifting of restrictions to outdoor markets, the Stratford-upon-Avon markets have now re-opened on Fridays with our Rother Street Charter Market. Taking into account the government guidelines regarding social distancing, the number of stalls on the market has been reduced to allow for the public to move around safely. There are also hand sanitising stations for public use.

The Saturday Urban Mix Market on Rother Street and the Sunday Upmarket on Waterside have also been re-introduced again with a reduced number of stalls.

The Friday and Saturday markets have now seen an improvement and have also seen a larger number of traders returning.

The Sunday Upmarket has been very busy around the Food Court. The rest of the market has now increased also and this accords with the fact that car park users are returning to levels associated to pre COVID activity. The market traders are generally happy with the way the market is trading now.

More traders are wanting to come than we have spaces for at the moment as we still have to consider social distancing measures and the safety of the market visitors as a priority.

On Saturday 28 and 29 August we hosted the incredibly successful Young Traders Market National Final on Waterside.

Young entrepreneurs aged 16 - 30 competed to be crowned the Young Trader of the Year 2020 in an event that is always incredibly well supported by everyone in Stratford-upon-Avon. This year's winner was in very popular Emma Russ of the Topsy Bakery - a very well deserved winner especially considering the standard of the competition.

Sadly, due to the current Coronavirus pandemic the organisers for the Stratford-upon-Avon Victorian Christmas Market have made the decision to cancel this year's event. The event has become very popular and brings high levels of footfall into the town centre for the benefit of retailers and hospitality. Due to this popularity and in a response to the large numbers of similar events that have been cancelled it was felt that large numbers of the public may flock to Stratford-upon-Avon at a time when we are trying to promote social distancing to keep people safe.

Outdoor markets and social distancing – we have had numerous questions recently concerning the social distancing measures on Waterside. Outdoor markets were allowed to re-open well before non-essential retail or hospitality as the transmission rate outside was a lower risk. However, there were still guidelines to follow, which you can read about at the below sources:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services>

<https://www.nmtf.co.uk/coronavirus/>

<https://lsdpromotions.com/covid19>

Many of these guidelines are the same or similar to every retailer, café or restaurant in Stratford and the market provider has implemented all of the necessary precautions including signage, one-way systems and sanitisers are all provided throughout the market. The overall number of stalls has also been vastly reduced to ensure the public can move around safely.