

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

MAYORAL, CIVIC CEREMONIAL AND EVENTS COMMITTEE

Town Clerk's Open Report

17 March, 2020

1) Flag Flying Policy

- **To receive and consider proposed Flag Flying Policies and determine the most appropriate option for accommodating community flag flying**

The Governance and Policy Committee has reviewed the policy for the flying of flags from the roof of the Town Hall, which is attached as **Appendix 'A'**.

It must be borne in mind that accessing the existing flag pole on the roof of the Town Hall is extremely weather dependent. It involves climbing two vertical ladders leading to a very exposed platform at the apex of the roof. Currently, the Town Council flag flies from the flag pole between April 1 and September 30. There are occasions during this period when the Union Flag or flags representing the Commonwealth, Armed Forces and the Merchant Navy replace it on pre-determined dates. If we receive prior warning, the Council flag is also removed prior to periods of very windy weather to avoid un-necessary damage,

Ultimately, whilst considering the Flag Flying Policy, it should be remembered that the Council has a duty of care to the person responsible for raising and lowering flags, a duty currently only performed by one member of staff. The safety of this individual is paramount, and in line with recommended Health and Safety guidelines, the occasions when access to the flag pole on the Town Hall roof is currently permitted are strictly regulated.

Taking these H&S issues into account, an alternative suggestion was considered by the Governance & Policies Panel. There are currently underutilised flag poles on Waterside which potentially could be used by the community. This would mean the Town Council could continue to adhere to the established flag flying protocol issued by the government, whilst accommodating the

aspirations of the community who wish to fly their own flag to mark occasions pertinent to their organisation.

The suggestion is to use the middle flag pole in the line of five that are located on Waterside by the Swan Fountain and use this as the dedicated community flag pole. Historically, the five flag poles, owned by the District Council, have been used to display flags during the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations, to portray the five RSC productions to be featured that season. This no longer occurs and generally it is rare to see flags flown from this location.

Following a detailed discussion, the Town Clerk was instructed to contact the District Council to determine whether this proposal might be acceptable.

Craig Bourne, the Contracts Manager at the District Council, has confirmed that the District Council is agreeable for the middle pole on Waterside to be used by Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council as the 'town's people flag pole', and that the Town Council should directly assume responsibility for allocating its use on a first come first served basis. Consequently, a Community Flagpole – Flag Flying Policy has been compiled to manage and administer the flying of flags by the community which is attached as **Appendix 'B'**.

Although the Governance & Policies Panel had the opportunity to review **Appendix 'A'** they have not had the opportunity to consider **Appendix 'B'**. Members are requested to consider both proposals concurrently.

2) Christmas Lights Switch-On

- **To note the date and time for the Christmas Lights Switch-On 2020:**

The Christmas Lights Company have confirmed that the Switch-On in 2020 will take place on Thursday 26 November, and that following the recommendation of the Mayoral, Civic Ceremonial and Events Committee, it will revert to the earlier time of 4:30pm.

At the recent Market Forum there has been much discussion regarding the Thursday Christmas Markets and the Victorian Christmas Market Festival. There was overwhelming support to reduce the number of Thursday late night shopping markets, which were not working for retailers or market traders as it was very obvious from footfall that their popularity was waning.

As a consequence, the Forum, which includes Stratforward BID, decided to concentrate on just two Thursday market events, the Thursday Market staged on the Christmas Lights Switch-on evening, and to include the Thursday of the Festival event making it four days rather than three. The footfall recorded over the past two years identified that the Festival was strong enough to continue to attract significant visitors to the town over the four days. The other two/three Thursday night markets are cancelled.

At the Forum, the market operator suggested that LSD should be more assertive in promoting these two events, for at present, they purely concentrate on the Victorian Christmas Market Festival. LSD is extremely pro-active on social media, and their activity played a very significant part in making the Victorian Christmas Market Festival so successful.

In order to entice visitors to remain in town after the switch-on event at the Town Hall on Thursday, 26 November, LSD and Stratforward considered that more should be done in terms of providing more street entertainment and attractions, that retailers would be actively encouraged to stay open and that the event should be more widely publicised.

However, the activities which take place within the Town Hall once the lights have been switched on are primarily for the townspeople and their children. If LSD's promotion attracts thousands of additional visitors from afar, the Town Hall location could be compromised, and the event potentially ruined by the sheer number of people.

This point was raised at the Forum, and LSD was quick to reassure members that their campaign would be locally focused. They just want to put more of an emphasis on what will be available to the community on this special night, which will be far

more than a cold, bleak market and closed shops. Stratford agreed with this approach.

LSD has issued the first draft of the publicity material they hope to produce. The Mayoral, Civic Ceremonial & Events Committee are requested to have a look at the flyer, attached as **Appendix 'C'** and approve or amend accordingly.

3) Broadcasting Mayor Making – Friday 15 May, 2020

- **To note the report regarding broadcasting of Mayor Making**

Mark Iggleden from Stratford School has now responded regarding the filming of Mayor Making. He says “Sorry I haven't got back to you sooner, re: videographer. Having tried within the photography cohort - and come up with zero, I approached the Media Studies Department and the Marketing Team. I am very sorry to say we don't have anyone currently with the right skill set to undertake this”.

A response from the College is still awaited.

If this also draws a blank, the Mayor Elect has advised that there maybe someone within the NFU who could assist in filming his Mayor Making ceremony.

4) 75th Anniversary of VE Day - 8 May, 2020

- **To update members regarding progress**

Following the previous Mayoral, Civic Ceremonial & Events Committee, a V E Day 75 Task & Finish Group was instigated to plan and oversee the Anniversary on 8 May, 2020.

A budget of £3,000 was proposed by MCC&E and approved by Council. The District Council has also agreed to match fund the event, something they have done on previous occasions which has assisted in financing the cost of additional but essential services, such as security, first-aid and portable toilets. The District Council has also waived any charges for the use of the Recreation Ground, as has the Town Trust in connection with the use of the Bandstand and the necessary electricity supply.

The Task & Finish Group confirm that local singers, Victoria Wilson and Betsy Harmony, are both booked to perform, and that other

local performers are currently being approached. It is hoped that the music departments at the secondary schools will also be able to contribute, but this is currently unconfirmed. The Cadet Forces have been invited to participate, and the Sea Cadets are keen to be involved. A meeting with the Royal British Legion has also been scheduled, in order to determine the involvement of the local branch. As a community celebration, it is important to involve as many local groups as possible.

Being mindful of the invaluable support received 75 years ago from our allies, the Bandstand will be decorated with the flags of all the nations, who provided such unstinting support during the conflict.

Members are requested to approve the current identified expenditure of £3,414.00 as outlined below:

- Purchase of Bunting £ 345.00
- Installation/removal of street bunting £ 1,580.00
- Compère, including Sound Equipment £ 450.00
- Piper FOC
- Bugler FOC
- First Aid £ 396.00
- Toilets (Prestige Ltd) £ 443.00
- Security / additional staff (price still to be confirmed)

Entertainment

- Betsy Harmony £ 150.00
- Victoria Wilson £ 50.00
- Use of the Bandstand/Electric FOC

5) The 600th Anniversary of the Stratford-upon-Avon Guildhall

- **To receive an update on the Olive Tree**

Following the January meeting, the Clerk contacted two local suppliers to determine the suitability of planting the suggested olive tree outside the Guild Chapel to commemorate the anniversary.

Unfortunately, both companies expressed doubt that an olive tree would thrive in such a shady north facing location. It has been suggested that a photinia might be a more suitable, although should not be obtained or planted until early April.

It is anticipated that the provision of a tree of circa 3ft would be in the region of £300.00 and the container approximately £200.00.

6) Replacing the Civic Car with a Hybrid/Electric Vehicle

- **To note the update regarding replacing the Civic car**

A black box was fitted to the current civic car on Saturday 8 February, in order that its emission levels could be accurately determined.

Electric Zoo supplied a black Kia Nero on Thursday 5 March, for a period of two weeks, so that during a busy period for mayoral engagements it can be trialled to establish its suitability as the next civic car.

The data from the Black Box will be downloaded and circulated to members for information by Monday 16 March.

7) Funeral Fair

- **To approve the recommendation to hold a Funeral Fair at the Town Hall in 2021**

At a meeting in February of the Aims and Objectives group, the members present agreed unanimously to recommend that the Town Council should stage a 'Funeral Fair' at the Town Hall in late May, 2021.

By chance, Councillor Cleeve, the lead member for this initiative, mentioned that 'death should not be a taboo subject, but so often is'. Members caught onto the phrase, and the fair is likely to be branded 'Not a Taboo Subject' – Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council Funeral Fair.

Similarly to a Wedding Fair, commercial organisations who wish to exhibit will be charged a fee. There must be parity amongst those being invited to participate, so it is suggested that when potential exhibitors are contacted, it is made clear to them that they will be

accommodated on a first come, first served basis if there is insufficient room or it would not be appropriate to accommodate them all.

Members are requested to instigate a Task & Finish Group to plan and oversee the event and determine the budget.

8) Training – CPR/Defibrillators

- **To approve a public event to promote understanding of CPR and the use of defibrillators**

Councillor Cleeve confirmed that following the exercise of logging the location of all the defibrillators in the town, undertaken by Councillor I Fradgley, a clear map detailing the locations has been produced by Councillor Lee.

Councillor I Fradgley has circulated the map electronically and in due course it will be published on the Town Council website and appear in a forthcoming edition of Bridging the Gap.

Knowing where the defibrillators are located is just the start - knowing how to use them is of paramount importance. Councillor Cleeve advised that she would like to take forward her proposal to hold free public sessions to train the community in CPR/Defibrillator use.

It was AGREED that prior to conducting these public sessions, the Council and staff, particularly those involved in front of house and events, should receive training. A photographic record of the sessions will be captured and used as publicity for the public event/s.

As Councillor Cleeve is willing to provide the training free of charge, in-house training can commence immediately and it was agreed that this would be conducted prior to the next Town Council Meeting on 31 March. Members and staff would be required to arrive by 4:45pm for a prompt start at 5:00pm. This should provide just enough time before the Council Meeting commences, although it was noted that the public sessions would last for 2 hours.

Members are requested to approve Councillor Cleeve's request to stage the open sessions at the Town Hall. It is hoped that one

event will take place during the school summer holidays, enabling children to attend with their parents/guardians.

9) Civic diary 2020/2021

- **To approve and adopt the Civic Diary**

Members are requested to note and adopt the Civic Diary for 2020/2021, attached as **Appendix 'D'**.

10) Shakespeare Schools Week – Friday 20 March

- **To note the report**

It has been confirmed that Council can expect four groups of primary school children on Friday 20 March who will visit the Town Hall in connection with Shakespeare Schools Week. Two separate groups are from Shottery St Andrews C of E School, and one group from Binley Woods in Coventry and one from Brailes C of E School.

11) Mayoress/Mayor at Home

- **To review the 'Mayor at Home' event**

At the Town Meeting, a former Mayor requested that the Town Council should review its policy to hold a 'Mayor at Home' event if the incumbent Mayor is female as he considered it to be inherently unfair.

In the twentieth century, the vast majority of Mayors were male. During this period, the annual 'Mayoress at Home' event enabled the spotlight to shine upon the Mayoress, giving her the opportunity to host an event in her own right rather than just supporting her husband in a secondary capacity at civic events.

In 1998, the incumbent female Mayor 'bucked the trend' and held the first 'Mayor at Home'. Since 1998 to date, seven out of the eight female Mayors chose to stage their own 'At Home' tea party for the ladies of the parish. However, in 2013 the Mayor at the time afforded her Consort the opportunity to hold his own event in the Town Hall, which was only open to the gentlemen of the parish who enjoyed beer and a ploughman's supper. This early evening event proved very successful and was well attended.

Currently gender equality plays no part in either 'Mayoress/Mayor at Home', or indeed, 'Consort at Home'.

Members are requested to give consideration to this issue:

Options:

- A female Mayor may host her own Mayor at Home or allow her Consort to host an event instead – status-quo;
- The Mayor may choose not to hold the event at all;
- The event reverts to being hosted purely by a Mayoress or a Consort ;
- The event observes gender equality.

12) The Town Clerk/Honorary Freeman Board

- To approve the additional of an information plaque;

Town Clerk/Civic Officer
11.3.20