

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

MAYORAL, CIVIC CEREMONIAL AND EVENTS COMMITTEE

Town Clerk's Open Report

15 September, 2020

1) Remembrance Sunday

- **To consider and approve the proposed arrangements for Remembrance Sunday, 8 November.**

The plan for the proposed layout for the Garden of Remembrance is attached as **Appendix 'A'**

In order to maintain the appropriate social distancing measures, the number of people allowed into the Remembrance Garden will need to be significantly reduced. The lawn area will be marked up into 28 identical pods, 2metre squared, every pod to accommodate a maximum of four people. Each pod will be clearly identified with the name/organisation. It is recommended that the Mayor and Mayoress and Town Clerk and Consort represent the Town Council on this occasion.

A provision for a maximum of 12 wheelchair users/carers will be available, just inside the garden entrance near to the shelter.

Entry to the Garden will be via the Old Town Gate, and due to the need to restrict numbers, by invitation only. Marshals will be on duty to check invitations and take guests to their designated position. All those within the garden will be requested to be in place by 10:45am at the latest, as the Act of Remembrance commences promptly at 10:53am.

Due to the necessary measures regarding access to the Garden for the general public, it will be necessary to issue a detailed press release to ensure that the changes are well documented.

The Council cannot prevent members of the public from attending, although they will not be permitted to enter the Garden. Ideally a live broadcast of the Act of Remembrance, similar to our zoom Committee Meetings might help alleviate the potential large

gathering of people, in a relatively confined area. A meeting with Dudley Simpson is currently being arranged.

Representatives from the organisations who have been invited will be requested to initially gather outside, and only enter the garden when their entire group is present. At the end of the event, all guests will exit via the College Street gate, under the direction of the Civic Officer. This will hopefully prevent any crowding issues in the main entrance and should allow any individuals wishing to lay personal tributes at the War Memorials to do so as soon as possible.

All wreath layers will be instructed to approach the WW2 memorial by way of the central aisle. Once a wreath has been laid, those in rows 1, 2 and 3 will return to position to the left, and rows 4, 5 and 6 to the right. The wreath layers will be called forward row by row by the Civic Officer.

The proposed programme was discussed at an informal meeting on Monday 24 August between Rev Patrick Taylor from Holy Trinity Church and Karl Whatmore, Chairman Designate of the Stratford Royal British Legion, the Town Clerk, Civic Officer and Richard Lees, the Town Council's Health and Safety Consultant.

Rev Taylor confirmed that a much-reduced choir from Holy Trinity Church would conduct the singing, as current guidance preclude public singing. The availability of the SAWBA band has still to be confirmed, but arrangements will be made to have pre-recorded music should they ultimately be unavailable.

It is suggested that there will be no orders of service, as generally the format is well known and appropriate instructions can be announced on the day as and when responses are required.

Road Closures will be in place from the junction of Church Street/Old Town to Southern Lane. Waterside/Southern Lane will remain open throughout the event, with any vehicles being turned left past Holy Trinity Church until such time as the crowds have dispersed. College Street will be closed to traffic near to the exit from the garden, but residents will be permitted to park as normal. HVM vehicles will be positioned appropriately for the duration of the event.

2) Christmas Lights Switch-On

- **To determine alternative arrangements for the Christmas Lights Switch-On 2020, and ways to enhance the event;**

The Christmas Lights Company has confirmed that the light's display will be installed in time for Thursday 26 November, the planned Switch-On night. Currently it would not be possible to stage the traditional event, including Santa's Grotto, due to existing restrictions, and members are requested to consider an alternative.

The easiest and simplest way to facilitate the event in 2020 in line with regulations, would be to invite the Mayor to press the switch at 4:30pm. This would avoid any opportunity for any kind of public gathering, something currently prohibited.

Members are requested to consider the proposal, and to put forward additional suggestions for further investigation.

It would be good to be able to broadcast a pre-recorded message from the Mayor before the lights are switched on. This would offer the opportunity for him to thank the businesses and individuals who financially support the Christmas Lights. It would also allow thanks to be expressed to those on the committee who have recently stepped down after many years of dedicated service. If this broadcast is thought to be possible, it could also incorporate a school choir performing a couple of pre-recorded seasonal carols.

- The broadcast could either be made via speakers, but this might be considered as rather impersonal. It would therefore be better to film the Mayor delivering his message, although this option may prove to be too expensive as it would require a large screen from transmission. The Clerk will contact LSD to ask whether any screens are likely to be being used for the Christmas Market on the night.
- As the switching on of the lights is radio controlled, a small dais could be placed at the head of Bridge Street for the Mayor to speak from, and he could then be handed the remote switch to activate the lights at the appropriate time.

This was done in the past when the Mayor traditionally switched on the charity tree on the Barclays roundabout.

Although slightly unrelated, it might be a nice touch if the Mayor could broadcast a more general Christmas message to the residents of Stratford-upon-Avon using the zoom platform. We know that this works well.

3) 75th Anniversary of VJ Day – Saturday 15 August,2020

- **To receive a report regarding VJ Day - 15 August**

Following the virtual celebrations on the 8 May for VE Day, Escape Arts, Welcombe Radio and the Town Council again collaborated in connection with VJ Day programme via local radio and the dedicated Facebook page on the 15 August. It was a very rewarding experience to work again in connection with such a significant commemoration, and early signs indicate that the virtual programme lasting 6 hours was well received. In other circumstances, the day would have been marked more fully, but this was not possible because of Covid19.

However, in the current difficult climate, the organisers were determined from the outset that all those who served and the many who gave their lives for King and Country 75 years ago in the Far East were not forgotten.

The Town Council wishes to place on record sincere thanks to Karen Williams and Niamh Oldham from Escape Arts, Penny Keynton-Hook from Welcombe Radio and to all those from the community who worked behind the scenes to formulate such an interesting and thought provoking programme.

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

- **To receive an update on the commemorative tree and container and approve the wording for a plaque.**

Following the meeting in July, the CEO of the Town Trust was notified that a decision on the tree and container had been reached. Once in position, the maintenance of the tree and pot will need to be overseen by the Open Spaces Team. This will involve periodic watering and pruning, in order that the tree and container are kept in good order.

It will also be necessary to purchase a suitable plaque recalling the gift:

Provided by Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council, to commemorate the 600th anniversary of foundation of the Stratford Guild Hall in 1420. This holly tree and container were placed here in as part of a tree planting initiative inaugurated by Councillor Kate Rolfe, Mayor in 2019 –2020.

Members are requested to note, that due to the current building works at the Guild Chapel, the proposed location is at present full of scaffolding. The CEO of the Town Trust has indicated that the current repairs are not expected to be completed before the spring of 2021.

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

- **To note the additional information from Electric Zoo**

Please can questions be submitted prior to the meeting, in order to allow time for a response to be prepared. A copy of the financial breakdown from Electric Zoo is attached as **Appendix 'B'**.

Councillor Taylor has agreed to take questions arising from the report.

6) Stratford-upon-Avon Mop Fair

- **To note the information**

Although the responsibility for the annual Mop Fair lies with Stratford District Council, it is customary for the Town Mayor to host a small reception prior to the opening, for invited guests only.

Following a meeting on the 12 August between the District Council and Bob Wilson Funfair Limited, it has been agreed that the 2020 Mop Fair will go ahead, but with at least 30% less attractions.

Members should also note that the traditional pre-opening Civic Reception will have to be cancelled. Guests who usually attend will be invited to gather outside the Town Hall from 10:50am to accompany the Civic party to the official opening in Bridge Street at 11:00am. The luncheon, hosted by Mr and Mrs Wilson for

invited guests, which includes the Mayor and Town Clerk, will not be held this year either.

No other arrangements regarding the day are currently known, but members will be updated as and when further information is received.

7) Past Mayor - Dr Geoffrey Lees

The Mayor was joined by a significant number of former Mayor's, Mayoresses and Consorts in a 'Guard of Honour' outside the Town Hall on Tuesday 18 August, as a mark of respect for past Mayor, Dr Geoffrey Lees, on the day of his funeral. The family were most touched by the gesture.

Dr Lees, who died on 31 July at the age of 93, was a member of the Town Council between 1966 and 1999. He served twice as Mayor in 1978-79 and 1988-89, ably supported by his wife, Doreen. Long after retirement, Geoffrey Lees continued to actively support the Town Council.

Civic Officer
15.9.20