

**STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**CIVIC, HERITAGE AND EVENTS COMMITTEE**

**Town Clerk's Open Report**

**5 January 2021**

1) Civic Events – 2021

- **To note the report**

Currently, it is almost impossible to predict when life might start to return to normal, and it is clearly going to be well into next year before it becomes possible to consider organising our usual civic events.

2020 was a very depressing year, as from the end of March most of our annual civic events were cancelled. However, it was very encouraging that it was possible to plan virtual events to mark VE Day in early May and VJ Day in September, but this was only possible with the vital collaboration forged between the Town Council, Escape Arts and Welcombe Radio.

Remembrance Sunday was also marked in a similar way, with a pre-recorded ceremony. Following weeks of uncertainty, due to local and national Covid regulations, a live commemoration was in the end not possible which was very frustrating.

- **Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations and Volunteers Reception**

It is unlikely that the current situation will have improved sufficiently by April 2021 to allow the traditional Birthday Celebrations, including the civic reception for the Voluntary Sector, to take place. Several weeks ago, notification was received that the Shakespeare Marathon, scheduled for the same weekend, has been postponed until later in the year.

Due to positive feedback received regarding other virtual events recently arranged, officers are already making provisional plans to mark the Bard's 457<sup>th</sup> birthday virtually.

It is proposed that a virtual celebration will take place on 23 April, Shakespeare's Birthday, with the involvement of key stakeholders such as the RSC, SBT and Holy Trinity Church.

Please find below some initial thoughts regarding a possible programme.

- A short and focused flag unfurling ceremony, with flag poles positioned along the length of the raised central reservation in Bridge Street, mitigating a much lesser chance of being struck by vehicles;
- 'Mr Shakespeare' leaving the Birthplace to witness a program of readings from the Garden of the Birthplace and other appropriate locations within the town (pre-recorded);
- Laying of floral tributes at the grave, by invited representatives but no formal procession;
- Music provided by RSC musicians and the choir of Holy Trinity Church;
- A concluding sonnet at the grave of William Shakespeare with the final focus on all the floral tributes.

It is RECOMMENDED that the large pole on the Barclays roundabout is not installed. Due to its size, the banner it displays is very vulnerable in adverse weather and must be removed for health and safety reasons in windy conditions. Having taken the banner down, it is unlikely that it would be re-installed for fear of the same situation re-occurring. It is also a costly pole to install due to the requirement of specialist equipment.

In light of plans for a virtual celebration, the celebrations budget and that for Civic Sunday can be substantially reduced, as there will be no requirement, or services of lesser extent for either weekend:

- Security, Traffic Management and First Aid
- Marching bands
- Financial contribution towards the Birthday Celebrations

*NB. It will be necessary to retain something in the 'celebrations pot' to pay for the recording and filming of the virtual event, erection and removal of the flag poles and other sundry expenses. However, it is currently not possible to determine the costs involved, as no discussions have yet taken place.*

- **Decorating the Town for 2021**

An enquiry has been received on behalf of Stratforward regarding leaving the flag poles in position throughout the summer, in order to display bunting for enhancing the appearance of the Town Centre for visitors. Initially it was suggested that all the flag poles could be erected as usual, but to leave all in place for several months could inevitably result in vehicle damage. A quotation for placing poles just along the length of the central reservation in Bridge Street has been obtained from Edward Brains, which can be revised should additional flag poles also be required.

- **Shakespeare Schools Week**

Organised annually by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, this very worthwhile event for primary school children from Stratford and across Warwickshire is also likely to be a casualty of the current situation. It is very unfortunate that it is likely to be cancelled for a second year.

The Council has participated in this initiative for the past three years and has found it to be a most rewarding experience.

- **The Mayor Making Ceremony, the Civic Dinner and Civic Sunday**

Important events in the civic calendar, which will need to be periodically reviewed as the Covid regulations impact to a lesser or greater degree.

However, unfortunate, if it is not possible to hold a physical Mayor Making Ceremony in 2021, the Council is able to hold the ceremony virtually, which proved very successful in 2020.

- **Christmas Lights Switch-On, Remembrance Sunday and the Victorian Christmas Market**

Hopefully, by the end of 2021 it will be safe for these three major Stratford-upon-Avon events to be staged once again.

2) Draft Civic Budget

- **To consider the civic budget requirements for 2021/2022 and advise the Finance & Scrutiny Committee – Deputy Town Clerk**

- **Members are requested to determine which of the events scheduled to take place during the first half of the year, will remain viable if the pandemic continues.**

As Covid infection levels have continued to rise across Stratford District during recent weeks, only time will tell what effect the relaxation of the Tier 3 restrictions on Christmas Day will have during the early part of 2021, and another major lockdown or more stringent tiers appears likely.

Please find attached the following appendices:

**Appendix 'A'** Spreadsheet of Civic Events and Expenditure

**Appendix 'B'** Summary sheet.

**Appendix 'C'** Budget Review

**Appendix 'D'** Draft Budget Proposal 2021-22

### 3) Town Hall Tariffs

#### **To Review the Town Hall Tariffs for 2021/22 - Deputy Town Clerk, Phil Mills**

An annual review of the tariffs is undertaken as part of the budget process because these could impact the expected level of income derived from Town Hall hire.

With the continued uncertainty over Coronavirus lockdown restrictions and whether or when Town Hall bookings may return to previous levels, it is recommended that tariffs are increased in line with inflation, as per the process for the last few years.

It has been suggested that a review should take place over whether hire rates should be adjusted once the pandemic restrictions are lifted and events can resume. There was also a suggestion whether rates could be tiered for local town residents, district residents and non-residents.

### 4) Nominated Designated Reserve Requirement

- **To agree the nominated Designated Reserve – Deputy Town Clerk, Phil Mills**

Following Council's decision in September, 2020 to approve the new Committee Structure and new Terms of Reference, the Civic, Heritage and Events Committee is responsible for agreeing its

recommended designated reserve requirement for the next financial year and to advise the Finance and Audit Committee accordingly, in addition to agreeing its recommended budget.

This “pot” of additional funds will enable the Committee to make decisions on additional expenditure during the next financial year, on matters within its budget responsibility, without having to request approval of budget virement from the Finance and Audit Committee.

Note that any funds allocated to new designated reserves for each Committee will need to be taken initially from Council’s General Reserve, so these decisions will potentially have an impact on the Reserves Policy. Also note that the Reserves Policy will continue to be reviewed as part of the overall budget process.

If no specific requirement for further funds is identified, it is suggested that Members should consider whether any budget surpluses from 2020/21 may be carried forward and included as part of the designated reserve.

At the Meeting of the Civic Heritage and Events Committee on 3 November, the proposal to install a permanent memorial plaque in the Tranquility Garden and to provide a memorial book in the Town Hall to commemorate those who had died during the Covid-19 pandemic was unanimously approved. Although the end of the pandemic is not yet in sight, delegated funds need to be identified so that the project can be initiated at the appropriate time.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the sum of £5,000 is confirmed as the designated reserve requirement and that the Finance and Audit Committee are advised accordingly.

#### 5) CIL Projects

- **To determine and recommend any potential CIL Projects – Town Clerk**

The latest payment from SDC has been received and the balance of CIL funds now stands at £13,350.92.

Under the new Committee Structure, the Terms of Reference for the various standing committees say they have advisory powers to recommend to Council any CIL spending projects.

However, members will recall that at the Town Council Meeting on 24 November, 2020 following the presentation by Councillor Lee outlining the mandate from the Neighbourhood Development Plan consultation to develop a 10 year plan, it was AGREED that the accrued CIL monies would be allocated to pay for furthering the instigation of NDP TC Project 5.

Tender documentation for three designs covering Bridge Street, the traffic-island and High Street are currently being prepared. It is hoped that the tenders will be returned in the region of £10,000 for three potential designs, but this is by no means certain, and we are unlikely to know the true cost of the exercise until the tenders are submitted in February, 2021.

Town Clerk  
30.12.20