

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

CIVIC, HERITAGE AND EVENTS

21 January 2025

Town Clerk's Open Report

Agenda Item 9

1) Event Updates

- **To review recent events on the 8, 10 and 16 November**

a) Remembrance Concert – Friday 8 November 2024

Although tickets sales had been slow, on the night there were up to 80 people in attendance. A very successful evening full of nostalgic songs both familiar and less so, beautifully performed by Lili Redman, accompanied on the piano by Tom Millar.

After minimal expenses had been covered, a £700.00 profit was contributed to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Grateful thanks to Sam Jenkins for her practical arrangements and vital support.

b) Remembrance Sunday 10 November 2024

The annual commemoration took place on Sunday 10 November, and passed off without issue.

Unfortunately, the Civic Officer was absent following a recent full knee replacement, so colleagues from the Town Council were on hand to make sure all went to plan.

An interfaith service, consisting of readings and the laying of wreaths near to the Commonwealth War Graves at the Evesham Road Cemetery, was organised by Council Chaplain, Revd. Paul Edmondson on Armistice Day, Monday 11 November, at 4:00 pm (11:00 am EST).

c) Christmas Lights Switch On – Saturday 16 November 2024 at 5:30pm

On Saturday 16 November, the annual Christmas Lights were switched on in Bridge Street at 5:30pm by the Mayor. The day of the event had started off with blue skies, and although rain arrived later, this did nothing to dampen the spirits of those attending.

The day-long event featured a festive market, and a live stage, compered by Lili la Scala, which showcased performances from choirs and entertainers. The town buzzed with enchanting roaming acts, including gliding fairies, toy soldiers and the ever-entertaining Magic Ball Man, delighting audiences both young and old.

Another highlight was a carriage ride with Father Christmas and Mrs Christmas, a special treat for a local winner who won the opportunity to share the moment with Santa himself.

As the time approach, the Mayor led a countdown for the big switch-on at 5:30pm. The crowd cheered as the town was illuminated by the dazzling lights, transforming it into a winter wonderland and heralding the start of the festive season.

2) Birthday Celebrations 2025 – Saturday 26 April

- **To note the update provided by Kate Livingston**

Kate Livingston has produced the written report attached as **Appendix 'A'** to bring members up to-date. A final report regarding confirmed arrangements for this year's event will be tabled at the meeting on the 11 March.

3) Town Hall Room Hire Fees

- **To determine what uplift should be applied to Town Hall room hire charges for 2025/26**

An illustration showing increases in Town Hall room hire charges of either 5% or 10% is attached as **Appendix 'B' and 'C'**.

4) Commemorating VE Day and VJ Day

- **To discuss the most appropriate way in which to commemorate VE Day and VJ Day**
- **To determine whether to purchase an official VE Day flag, design attached as Appendix 'E'**

The Town Clerk has advised that Sara Aspley will be attending the meeting to give members a verbal update regarding Town Trust plans for marking the refurbishment of the Bandstand and VE Day on the 8 May.

In 2025, the United Kingdom marks the 80th anniversaries of VE Day on Thursday 8 May and VJ Day on Friday 15 August. Following the commemorations in 2024 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, when beacons and lights of peace were lit across the United Kingdom and the overseas territories. Similar arrangements are being put in place for 8 May and 15 November.

In 2024, the Council marked the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings with a special event in the Garden of Remembrance, including the lighting of a beacon. Beacons are being planned again for 6 May, and it would seem appropriate to plan something along the same format again.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that consideration is given to using the Garden of Remembrance, including the lighting a beacon, to mark the anniversary of both VE Day on 8 May and VJ Day on 15 November. The Council Chaplain and the Vicar of Holy Trinity Church can then be consulted regarding an appropriate form of service.

5) Heritage Open Days: 12-21 September 2025

The opening weekend 13/14 September is currently not available as a wedding ceremony has already been booked in on Saturday 13th. However, the weekend of the 20/21 September is available if members wish to consider this later date.

6) Volunteers Civic Reception: Friday 25 April 2025

The annual Volunteers Reception takes place on Friday 25 April. Members are requested to review the current list, Attached as **Appendix 'D'** before the meeting for accuracy. Please submit any deletions/additions to the Civic Officer to allow the contact list to be amended.

7) Shakespeare Schools Week: 28 March 2025

The Council have participated in Shakespeare Schools week during the past seven years and have found it very rewarding. The Shakespeare Trust coordinates the programme, have

advised that this year the programme is just focussing on Friday 28 March.

The Mayor chairs a mock Council Meeting, which includes subjects chosen by the schools for debate. Councillors attend to support, and the honorarium personnel are in attendance to supervise the children who are chosen by their schools to act as Mayor, Town Clerk, Beadle and Macebearers.

The involvement in the event only usually involves one day, sometimes just a morning/afternoon session depending on the take up from the schools.

The 2025 programme will be being circulated widely now that the schools have returned following the Christmas break, but it is unlikely that we will not know further information regarding the bookings for the Town Hall until early February. Therefore, an update will be tabled at the March meeting.