

## **Shakespeare's Birthday Parade and Celebration: Progress Update**

In December, I attended a collaborative meeting with Stratford Town Council, Stratford BID, RSC, Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust, and Escape Arts. Prior to this meeting, I conducted background research to better understand each stakeholder's plans for the celebrations. The RSC and Birthplace Trust are already organising a variety of wrap-around activities, making it clear that rather than duplicating efforts, the focus should be on enhancing communication and integration of all activities into a unified celebration.

### **Key Updates and Actions:**

#### **1. Communication & Coordination:**

- The main priority is to streamline communication to the public about the range of activities and events, ensuring clarity and accessibility. This will involve consolidating information to present the celebrations as a cohesive and vibrant experience.

#### **2. Exploration of Event Spaces:**

- At the end of January, we will be conducting a walkaround in Stratford to identify potential spaces for additional activities, workshops, performances, and events. Ideas such as a town-wide picnic and a street party (proposed by Stratford BID) were discussed and remain under consideration. Stakeholders are united in their aim to maximise visitor engagement and duration of stay in Stratford.

#### **3. Enhancing the Parade Experience:**

- After discussions with Charles, I gained insight into the parade's operations and identified opportunities to increase engagement in quieter moments of the event (before, during, and after the parade). Plans are in place to involve local dance and theatre groups and to collaborate with scouts and girl guides etc. These groups may contribute elements like large puppets or sculptures that add creativity and excitement to the parade, benefiting participants and the audience alike.

#### **4. Community Outreach and Engagement:**

- I've started outreach to local community groups and organisations to involve them in the parade and related activities around the town. This still needs to be developed and will need to slot into the already full parade line up.

#### **5. Digital and Social Media Strategy:**

- Collaboration with Lisa is underway to improve the event's website, communication strategies, and social media reach. This effort will target both new audiences and regular attendees, ensuring they have the latest and most accurate information about the celebrations.
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