

# STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

24 March 2026

## Town Clerk's Open Report

### Agenda item 9

#### 1. Appointment of Council's Chaplain 2026/27

- That Revd Dr Paul Edmondson be appointed as Council Chaplain for 2026/27.

As this matter was not included on the relevant Personnel Committee agenda, it is presented to Full Council for formal approval.

The Mayor Elect has confirmed this as her personal preference.

#### 2. Arts and Culture Strategy

- To consider endorsement of the Stratford-upon-Avon Town Arts and Culture Strategy 2026–2036, prepared through the Stratford-upon-Avon Strategic Partnership

##### Background

In 2024 the Partnership agreed to commission a long-term Arts and Culture Strategy for the town, aligned to its wider Prospectus, particularly the theme of Creativity and the Arts. The work has been supported by a cross-organisational working group including representatives from RSC, BID, local arts, tourism, youth and charitable organisations.

The [Strategy](#) has been informed by extensive engagement activity, bringing together the views of over 1,000 individuals. Consultation methods included a public survey, a World Café workshop, and targeted engagement with young people and individuals with learning difficulties. This has ensured that the document reflects a broad range of voices from across the community.

The Strategy sets out a ten-year vision for the role of arts and culture in shaping Stratford-upon-Avon socially, economically and culturally. It recognises the town's internationally significant heritage and seeks to use that foundation to encourage innovation, broaden participation, and support emerging creative voices.

The document is intended to provide a clear framework for collaboration, investment and delivery. It establishes shared priorities and outcomes against which progress can be measured.

A detailed Action Plan will follow, setting out delivery mechanisms, responsibilities and funding considerations. This is expected to be completed by Autumn/Winter 2026.

The options are to support or not support.

### 3. Local Government Re-organisation

- To consider the Council's response to the Consultation

#### Background

The Government is currently consulting on two proposals relating to local government reorganisation in Warwickshire. The consultation closes on 26 March 2026 and details can be accessed via the Department for Communities consultation portal. [LGRconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk](mailto:LGRconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk) or via the [official consultation portal here https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/warwickshire/](https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/warwickshire/)

The Council's Local Government Reorganisation Working Group have considered a response and this will be reported to the meeting.

Councillors are reminded of the proposals:

**Single Unitary:** One unitary council covering the whole of Warwickshire (submitted by Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council)

Full details are available here: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/lgrproposal>

**Two Unitary:** Two unitary councils - a North authority (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Rugby) and a South authority (Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick) (submitted by four district councils including Stratford-on-Avon District Council)

Under either proposal, Stratford-upon-Avon would be part of a new unitary authority that would take responsibility for all local government services currently split between the District and County Councils..

Full details are available here: <https://shapingourcouncils.co.uk/our-submission-document/>

The consultation poses an identical set of questions in respect of each proposal. The format of the questions is not especially suited to a single corporate response; however, individual Town Councillors may wish to respond in their own capacity.

### 4. Town of Culture

To receive a verbal update on the progress of the Bid.

## **5. BT Payphone Removal Consultation – Manor Road, Stratford-upon-Avon**

- To consider the Council's response

### **Background**

British Telecom is consulting on the removal of public payphones across the Stratford-on-Avon District.

One callbox within the Town has been identified for removal in Manor Road. This has low usage, in an area of good mobile coverage, and no evidence of emergency or special need.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is inviting this Council to respond by choosing one of three options:

Agree to removal, adopt for community use or object to removal

Both Ward Members have been consulted, and they will respond at the meeting.

The consultation closes on 10 April 2026, with a final decision expected in May.

Members are asked to determine the Council's response.

## **6. Stratford in Bloom – Appointment of Representative**

- To consider a replacement Town Council representative.

Following the resignation of Councillor Duck there is now a vacancy on Stratford in Bloom Outside Body.

## **7. Social Media Policy**

- To adopt a Social Media Policy for the Council

At the January meeting of the Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel a policy for use of Social Media for Town Council business was recommended for adoption.

## **8. Investment Strategy**

- To agree an Investment Strategy for the Council (document to follow)

Finance and Audit Committee will be considering an Investment Strategy policy for adopting at its meeting on 24 March 2026, prior to Council.

Council is therefore asked to consider the recommendation of this Committee, which will be reported at the meeting.

## **9. Purchase of Auction land, Darlow Drive and Midsummer Meadow**

- To inform Members of the proposed sale of Public Open Space (POS) and to consider whether any further action is appropriate

### **Background**

Councillor Petrovic, as Ward Member, has drawn attention to the POS within the Midsummer Meadows estate that have recently been advertised for sale via auction and has requested that the matter be reported to Council for consideration.

The POS is understood to be owned by Growing Estates and appears to function as amenity land within the residential development. The sites have been publicly marketed, which has prompted local concern regarding future use and ownership.

[https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/172876727#/?channel=COM\\_BUY](https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/172876727#/?channel=COM_BUY)

[https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/172876721#/?channel=COM\\_BUY](https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/172876721#/?channel=COM_BUY)

### **Implications**

The proposed sale of POS understandably gives rise to concerns regarding the potential impact on residents. However, at this stage, it is important that any consideration is informed by appropriate due diligence, including clarification of land ownership, any relevant planning obligations, and the existence of restrictive covenants.

Members may also wish to be mindful of the broader context, including the potential implications for similar areas of land elsewhere, and any future responsibilities that could arise should acquisition or other forms of intervention be considered.

### **Ward Member**

The Ward Member has indicated local residents have indicated an interest in engaging with the Council to explore any alternative approaches to the management of the amenity land, such as the potential for community ownership.

Such involvement could provide opportunities to maintain the land's amenity value, ensure ongoing public access, and foster local engagement in the care and use of open space within the estate. Any proposals of this nature would need to be considered carefully alongside legal, financial, and planning obligations.

### **Current status of POS in the town**

The Town Council owns only a very limited amount of public open space within the town. Recently, it declined the offer of two parcels of public open space with associated commuted sums, which subsequently reverted to the

District Council. The District Council owns and maintains a number of public open spaces within the town and benefits from having an existing contractor in place, providing economies of scale and delivering cost efficiencies for the local taxpayer.

Given the timing of the proposed auction, the Ward Member and Town Clerk will provide any further updates at the meeting that were not available at the time of agenda publication.

*In considering the matter it may be necessary to move into Confidential session.*    **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

To pass the following resolution: “The press and public are excluded due to the confidential nature of the business under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings Act) 1960 s1. sub section 2”