



STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

CIVIC, HERITAGE AND EVENTS

31 March 2026

Town Clerk's Open Report

Agenda Item 9

1) Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations

To receive a verbal update

2) Armed Forces Day

- **To consider the format for the 2026 event**

Background

The Town Council were asked in 2011 by the Royal British Legion to consider running the annual Armed Forces Day Ceremony.

Until that time, the ceremony had taken place in Church Street outside Elizabeth House and had attracted a low attendance.

Every effort has been made during the past 14 years to increase the attendance, but the space outside the Town Hall is too limited and there are many safety considerations due to the proximity of live roads. Although the public watch from Cornmarket Square, generally only the Mayor, Beadle, Macebearers and the standard bearers gather outside the Town Hall. Military music is provided from the Bose speaker on the balcony, to help create an appropriate atmosphere in the lead up to the commemoration and flag unfurling until people disburse.

I've attached the link to the SDC webpage regarding the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) which hopefully gives a bit of useful background : [Armed Forces Covenant | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#).

The Armed Forces Day (AFD) Group at the District Council have previously received a talk from a representative of the Veterans Contact Point (VCP) and the work that they do in supporting the Armed Forces Community. The VCP are planning to host a 5 a-side football tournament for the AF Community on 27 June 2026, Armed Forces Day, which was being supported by Everyone Active at Stratford Leisure Centre. This is an event that the Veterans Contact Point are coordinating (and not SDC) however they expressed an interest in using the Recreation Ground football pitch for the final. At a similar time, the Town Clerk raised the subject of STC's Armed Forces Day and the opportunity it presents for greater joint working.

The AFC group then suggested that SDC could introduce both event organisers to each other and provide support for both events by offering use of facilities on the day and exploring if there is anything else we could do to assist.

A meeting was convened in early February between representatives from SDC, STC, Everyone Active and Veterans Contact Point, ways for linking the flag unfurling ceremony and the proposed 5-a-side football tournament were discussed. It was suggested that the flag unfurling event could be relocated to near the Swan Fountain, a much larger area for a crowd to assemble safely away from the road. The current format for the event could remain, but following the ceremony, the Mayor, accompanied by the Beadle and Macebearers could process with the assembled participants across the river to the Recreation Ground.

Proposal

- Move the Armed Forces Day from outside the Town Hall to the area near to the Swan Fountain
- Unfurl the AFD flag from the central flagpole
- Utilise the BOSE system to provide appropriate music

- Following the flag ceremony, the Civic party and other attendees proceed to the Recreation Ground to watch the football game

3) Future provision of Markets in Stratford-upon-Avon

- **To note the plan of preparing for tender of a new contract and to agree membership of a Working Group to consider**

Background

The current markets contract, operated by LSD Promotions (Market Place) Limited under a joint arrangement between Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council (STC), will expire on 30 September 2027.

The original agreement was awarded in 2017 for a five-year term, with a permitted extension exercised in 2022. There is no provision for any further extension.

Markets in Stratford-upon-Avon have operated since 1553 under Charter Market status and remain an important part of the town's economic and cultural offer. The current programme includes the weekly Charter Market, Waterside Upmarket, Saturday Market, and seasonal events such as the Christmas Markets, which continue to attract high visitor numbers and support local trade.

Notwithstanding this, the current contract specification is no longer considered fit for purpose and requires review. In order to ensure continuity of provision and allow sufficient mobilisation time, it is proposed that procurement of a new markets contract is undertaken in advance of the 2026 Christmas Markets. SDC has confirmed that it is willing to be the lead authority in partnership with STC which is advantageous given its in-house legal and procurement expertise, as well as its existing employment of the Market Officer.

Proposal

At this stage, approval is being sought solely to proceed with the procurement and tendering of a new markets contract. Subject to that approval, and the agreement of the District Council, it is proposed that a joint working group be established to consider and develop the detailed arrangements.

This would include oversight of the contract specification, supporting documentation, and the terms of the agreement between SDC and STC, ensuring both authorities are appropriately represented in shaping the future operation and governance of the markets.

It should be noted that the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation may have a significant impact on future governance, responsibilities, and longer-term arrangements.

Councillors are reminded that the Town Council appoints 3 representatives to the Market Forum (Cllrs Coles, Hunter McNaught Barrow though these will be reviewed at the Annual meeting) and it would be advantageous for those on the Market Forum being part of the Working Group.

4) Civic Car

- **To consider the future of the Civic Car**

It is timely to review the continued use of a civic car to ensure it delivers value for money and reflects current working practices. Whilst it has traditionally supported mayoral and civic duties, consideration should be given to actual usage, running costs, and any alternative arrangements.

Councillors are asked to consider whether retaining a dedicated civic vehicle remains appropriate, or if a more flexible and cost-effective approach would better serve the Council moving forward.

Town Clerk