



# **MAYORAL REPORT 2025/26**

**STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL**

**Town Hall, Sheep Street,  
Stratford-upon-Avon  
CV37 6EF**

**T: 01789 269332 E: [info@stratford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@stratford-tc.gov.uk) W: stratford-tc.gov.uk**

# Message from Councillor, Dani Hunter

This *“Year in Review”* will take us from May 2025 until May 2026.

As my year as Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon draws to a close, I have been reflecting on what an extraordinary twelve months it has been. It has been a real privilege to serve this town, and to be welcomed into so many organisations, schools, community groups and celebrations. Everywhere I have gone, I have been met with warmth, generosity and a genuine pride in our community.

One of the standout moments of the year, as it always is, has been the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations. From the parade through the town to the service at Holy Trinity Church, it is a weekend that captures the very best of Stratford. Seeing our streets full, our heritage honoured and our young people so proudly taking part is something I will never forget. The involvement of our schools, the performances, and the simple joy of people coming together made it truly special.

But beyond that weekend, there have been countless moments that have stayed with me. From volunteer receptions where we celebrated those who quietly give so much of their time, to school visits where I saw first-hand the enthusiasm and potential of our young people. From community fundraising events to cultural celebrations, and from new facility openings to small local gatherings, each one has shown Stratford at its very best.

I have been especially proud to see how inclusive our town continues to become. Whether through community initiatives or simple thoughtful touches at public events, it has been wonderful to see efforts that ensure everyone feels welcome and able to take part. It was particularly special to see the introduction and use of Widgit symbols at events such as the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations, helping more people to navigate and enjoy everything on offer as we became the first town council to become a symbol-friendly organisation.

Being Mayor is a unique role. You step into it for a short time, knowing you are part of something much bigger than yourself. I have always seen myself as a custodian of the role, carrying it for a year on behalf of the town. That perspective has made the kindness shown to me and my family all the more meaningful. We have felt truly supported and included and I cannot thank people enough for that.

There are so many individuals and groups who make Stratford what it is. Volunteers, teachers, organisers, performers, fundraisers and quiet contributors behind the scenes. You are the reason this town thrives and it has been an honour to meet so many of you.

As I prepare to hand over the chains of office at Mayor Making, I do so with a full heart and a great deal of gratitude. I look forward to seeing many of you again in the months and years ahead, just without the bling!

Thank you for making this year so memorable.

Councillor Dani Hunter



*Councillor Dani Hunter  
Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon  
2025 - 2026*



*Mayor, Cllr Dani Hunter and  
Consort, Mr James Hunter*

## Mayor's Good Causes

The good causes for my Mayoral year were:

### **Ward 12 at Birmingham Children's Hospital**

Specialist Cardiac Unit caring for children with heart conditions.



### **Stratford Family Club**

Hosts inclusive baby and toddler groups across Stratford-upon-Avon every weekday, offering vital early years supporting and a welcoming space for parents and carers.



### **WHS Trust Fund**

A special educational needs and disabilities school.



I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported the Mayor's Good Causes over the past year. In particular, I am grateful to LSD Promotions, National Market Traders Federation, The Cortina Group and Avon Bowling Club for their continued encouragement and contributions. I would also like to acknowledge the many local businesses who generously donated raffle prizes to my charity events.

## YEAR IN REVIEW

### MAY 2025

- It was proposed, seconded, and resolved that I be elected as 480<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon. A Civic Sunday service was held on 18<sup>th</sup> May at Holy Trinity Church



*Town Council Official Photograph*



*Mayor 2025/26*



*Mayor & Honorarium Staff 2025*

- Council appointed Members to Standing Committees.

The following meetings were held during the month:

- Personnel Committee
- Annual Meeting & Mayor Making
- Planning Committee
- Extraordinary Finance & Audit Committee

Mayoral Engagements:

- Mayor Making
- Civic Dinner
- Civic Sunday Service
- Time Capsule, Broad Street Cygnets
- Sea Cadets Inspection
- SMTC Production of Annie
- Mayor Making, Warwick
- SMTC Choir – Music in Motion
- Platinum Wedding Anniversary visit

# JUNE 2025

It was a busy first month for Mayoral engagements:

- Warwickshire Spurs Family Fun Day
- ICT Suite Opening, Bridgetown Primary School
- Year 8 Communities Day, K.E.S.
- Stratford Beer & Cider Festival - Shakespeare CAMRA
- 'And then there were none"', Bear Pit Theatre
- Service of Welcome, Coventry Cathedral
- Open Farm Sunday, Ragley Hall Estate
- Hamlet Hail to the Thief, RSC
- Mayor of Evesham Event
- Hotter Shoe Shop opening
- Ambleside Care Home - 109th birthday visit
- Opening of Greggorys, Bishopton
- Junior Regatta, Stratford-upon-Avon Boat Club
- Summer Fete, Stratford Primary School
- Stratford Markets 30th birthday celebrations
- 1289 Stratford-upon-Avon Squadron ATC

- The Town Council approved the Annual Accounts for Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025
- The Town Council approved the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

The following meetings were held during the month:

- Finance & Audit Committee
- Town Council
- Planning Committee
- Community Services & Environment Committee



*Service of Welcome, Coventry Cathedral*

*Junior Regatta, Stratford-upon-Avon Boat Club*

*Summer Fete, Stratford Primary School*

## Armed Forces Day

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June, the Town Council gathered to show their support for our Armed Forces – those who are currently serving, their families, Cadets and veterans. The Mayor welcomed her Cadet for 2025/26 – Sgt Matthew Philcox, Air Cadet.



*Armed Forces Day*



*Mayor's Cadet*

## JULY 2025

### Mayor's Bowls Match

What a splendid evening at Avon Bowling Club for the annual Mayor's Bowls Match on 10<sup>th</sup> July. Funnily enough, it turned out to be a draw (again!) but my goodness, did we all have fun! I had the pleasure of having my parents accompany me on the mayor's team alongside fellow Councillor Leticija Harpham. Thank you to the club for supporting us in running this annual event, thank you to the councillors, officers and extended council family who came to play and support as well as to all of the very much appreciated donations to my good causes this year.



*Mayor's Bowls Match*

#### Mayoral Engagements:

- Press Night, RSC - The Constant Wife
- Friday Market, Rother Street
- Entrust Community Café (Deputy Mayor)
- Stratford Festival of Motoring (Deputy Mayor)
- Songs of Praise, Bandstand (Deputy Mayor)
- Mayor's Annual Bowls Match, Avon Bowling Club
- Alcester Civic Service
- Fun Regatta, Stratford-upon-Avon Boat Club
- Bear Pit Theatre - My Child, Oh My Child (Deputy Mayor)
- Butterfly Farm, 40th Anniversary
- Clopton Family Fun Day
- Waterside European Market
- 105th birthday visit for Gwen
- Opening of Tiny Rebels
- Waterside European Market
- Morrisons Balloon Fundraiser
- Mary Arden's Farm
- Warwick Civic Service
- Ukes of Ale Fundraiser (Deputy Mayor)
- Scholars Mews Care Home - Community Awards Celebration (Deputy Mayor)

#### The following meetings were held during the month:

- Civic, Heritage & Events Committee
- Planning Committee
- Town Council
- Personnel Committee



*Butterfly Farm Anniversary*



*Opening of Tiny Rebels*



*Morrisons Balloon Fundraiser*

## **AUGUST 2025**

### Mayoral Engagements:

- Wuthering Heights Day
- Stratford Rotary - duck window judging (Deputy Mayor)
- VJ Day 80th Anniversary
- Cortina and Anglia Owners Club Rally
- Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers
- Warwickshire Change Makers Event, Warwick Castle (Deputy Mayor)
- Municipal Charities Garden Party (Deputy Mayor)
- Morris Day of Dance (Deputy Mayor)
- Young Traders Market Final
- Rotary Duck Race
- RSC Press Night - The Winter's Tale
- Bishopton Community Centre - Family fun day

The following meeting was held during the month:

- Planning Committee



*Wuthering Heights Day*



*Young Traders Market Final*



*Rotary Duck Race*

### **VJ Day – 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorations**

We gathered in the Garden of Remembrance to mark VJ Day. It was a poignant and beautiful commemoration honouring those who served and sacrificed in the Far East during the Second World War. It was made extra special with the reading of a Japanese poem by Dr Jessica Chiba. My heartfelt thanks to all who came to pay their respects, ensuring that the courage and dedication of that generation are never forgotten. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council officers for their hard work and dedication in organising such a fitting tribute.



*VJ Day – 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorations*

# SEPTEMBER 2025

## Mayoral Engagements:

- Bupa UK Fete
- K.E.S. Headmaster's Garden Party
- Alcester Town Council, coffee morning
- Bowls Club, presentation meeting
- Warwickshire Libraries Reading Challenge Awards
- Heritage Open Day - Town Hall
- Business Awards Dinner
- K.E.S. - Speech Day
- Evesham Town Council, Civic Dinner
- Stratford Food Festival opening
- Scouts AGM
- Red Lion opening
- NABMA Awards Dinner
- Holy Trinity Church Community Fete
- Stratford in Bloom Awards

The following meetings were held during the month:

- Planning Committee
- Finance & Audit Committee
- Civic, Heritage & Events Committee



*Heritage Open Day*



*Holy Trinity Church Community Fete*



*Stratford in Bloom Awards Evening*

# OCTOBER 2025

## Mayoral Engagements:

- Phoenix Players, Hey Day performance
- Stratford Sea Cadets, Inspection evening
- Shakespeare Distillery, 10th Birthday event
- Bert's 100th birthday celebrations
- High Sheriff's Legal Service
- Tales from Hollywood - an evening with Sarah Douglas (Deputy Mayor)
- Official Mop Opening
- Rotary Club v King Edward VI Debate
- Stratford Markets - SGGS fundraising stall
- Herald Business & Tourism Awards
- Freedom to Flourish - World Menopause Day
- Tiny Rebels
- Bearpit Theatre - The Importance of Being Earnest
- VASA Fundraiser
- RSC - Cyrano de Bergerac
- Welcome Here Coffee Morning
- Bishopton Community Centre Halloween Party

## The following meetings were held during the month:

- Community Services & Environment Committee
- Planning Committee
- Personnel Committee



*Stratford Sea Cadets Inspection Evening*



*Shakespeare Distillery Birthday*



*High Sheriff's Legal Service*

## Mop Fair

A cherished tradition for generations, the fair brings a vibrant mix of thrilling rides, delicious food, and lively entertainment to the town. After the official opening ceremony has taken place, it's onwards to auction off the first slice of the pig roast and finally a turn on your favourite rides!



*Mop Fair*

## NOVEMBER 2025

### Mayoral Engagements:

- Wildwood Connection Project - art installation opening
- Whitnash Town Council Civic Service
- Stratford Rugby Club Bonfire Night
- Iqbal Literary Geniuses Celebration (Deputy Mayor)
- Step into the Warmth Event
- Hoorays - gelato making
- The Coaching Club Networking Event
- Stratford Primary School - Remembrance visit
- Mayor of Shipston Civic Dinner and fundraiser
- An evening with YMM (formerly Young Minds Matter)
- Remembrance Commemorations and Armistice Day
- Stratford Town Football Club Remembrance Ceremony
- King Edward VI School Remembrance Service

### The following meetings were held during the month:

- Planning Committee
- Finance & Audit Committee
- Town Council

- Side by Side Theatre Event
- Contemporary Arts Fair - Discover, Gather, Give
- Alcester Town Council - Cocktail Masterclass
- Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights Switch-on
- Children of Courage Awards
- VASA AGM
- Launch of Scout Christmas Postal Service
- WCC Chairman's Civic Dinner
- Stratford Methodist Church - Christmas Bazaar (Deputy Mayor)
- RSC - Macbeth
- Mayor of Warwick Walking Tour
- Retirement Celebration for Mick Love MBE



*Stratford Town Football Club*



*Children of Courage Awards*



*Scout Christmas Postal Service*

## **Farewell to Mick Love MBE**

The November Town Council meeting was the final meeting for our incredible Mace Bearer, Mick Love MBE. Mick's dedication to our town spans decades. First appointed as a Relief Mace Bearer in 2000, then Ludford Mace Bearer in 2011 and Sadler Mace Bearer in 2019. His long and steadfast service has been a constant for this Council and we are immensely grateful for all he has done.



*Farewell to Mick Love MBE*

## Remembrance Commemorations

We gathered in the Garden of Remembrance with so many wonderful people including veterans, cadets, youth groups, schools, and many Stratfordians, all coming together to pay our respects.

It was a truly beautiful service, filled with dignity, reflection, and deep respect for those who served and sacrificed. We were even treated to our very own Stratford fly-past, courtesy of our river friends, as we laid our wreaths.



## Armistice Day

An Interfaith Remembrance Day Service with wreath laying was also held at the Commonwealth War Graves at the Town Council owned Cemetery on Evesham Road. This service honoured the 177 servicemen laid to rest here, many where from the Royal Canadian Air Force. This service took place at 4pm which is 11am EST.

We welcomed the **High Sheriff of Warwickshire** and a number of Canadian servicemen, including Major Sean Abraham. My heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended from all faiths and nationalities with a special nod to our Canadian friends and neighbours for joining us in remembrance.



## Christmas Lights Switch-on

I had the absolute joy of switching on Stratford's Christmas lights alongside Father Christmas and Mrs Claus and the town was buzzing! So many smiling faces, excited children, and that wonderful feeling of festive magic in the air. It really was one of those moments that reminds you why this season is so special.

A huge thank you to the incredible **Stratford Upon Avon Christmas Lights** for their hard work all year round, and to **Stratford upon Avon Town Council** and **Stratford-on-Avon District Council**, **Stratford Upon Avon BID**, **Stratford Town Trust**, and all the local businesses and residents whose support makes our beautiful lights possible. We couldn't do it without you.

And of course, thank you to the brilliant market traders who helped make the day even more magical. Stratford is well and truly shining tonight! Here's to a joyful start to the festive season.



*Christmas Lights Switch-on*

## **DECEMBER 2025**

### **Mayor's Christmas Message**

As the festive season wraps its gentle glow around our beautiful town, I would like to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful, joyful New Year. Whether you are celebrating with long-held traditions, reconnecting with loved ones, or enjoying a quiet moment of reflection, I hope this season brings warmth to your home and kindness to your heart.

This Christmas also marks a milestone for me: my first six months as Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon. It has been an extraordinary honour. One that I feel every single day as I meet residents, volunteers, businesses, and community groups whose work quietly strengthens the fabric of our town. Looking back, I am filled with gratitude and admiration.

In these six months, I have witnessed the very best of Stratford. I've seen neighbours supporting one another, charities offering lifelines with compassion, schools brimming with creativity and promise, and local organisations working tirelessly to ensure that Stratford remains a place where everyone can belong and thrive. I have had the privilege of attending community celebrations, fundraising events, civic ceremonies, and moments both joyful and solemn, all reminding me of the deep sense of connection that defines our town.

What has struck me most is the generosity of spirit that lives here. Whether its volunteers giving their time, families rallying for good causes, businesses stepping forward to help, or community groups welcoming people with open arms, Stratford shines brightest when we come together. This spirit is especially alive at Christmas time.

I remain committed to championing our wonderful town, its people, its history, its culture and its future. Thank you for the kindness you have shown me in my first months as Mayor, and thank you for everything you do, big or small, that helps our community flourish.

May your Christmas be filled with joy and friendship. May 2026 bring strength, hope, and happiness to you and those you love.

With warmest wishes

Mayor, Councillor Dani Hunter

#### Mayoral Engagements:

- Charity Walk - Alex Pearson (Deputy Mayor)
- Coventry Lord Mayor's Festive Civic Heads Dinner
- Maria's 100th Birthday
- RSC, Forsyte Saga parts 1 and 2
- Stratford-upon-Avon BID, Christmas Window Competition judging
- Brook Arts Hub Christmas Fair
- Alveston Leys Nursing Home Christmas Market
- Bear Pit, Lion Witch & Wardrobe performance
- RSC, BFG press night
- Shakespeare Birthplace Trust - festive event
- Briar Croft, annual Scouts carol-singing event
- Mary Poppins production, Stratford-upon-Avon School
- Spotlight Drama production, Heart of England Mencap (Deputy Mayor)
- Christmas Crackers, SMTC (Deputy Mayor)
- A Prelude to Christmas, Stratford Choral Society - Holy Trinity Church (Deputy Mayor)
- K.E.S. Carol Service, Guild Chapel
- Stratford Fire Station, Christmas visit
- Police Station, Christmas visit
- Scholars Mews Care Home, Christmas Fair
- Nicol Unit Stratford Hospital, Christmas visit
- Stratford Bentley Nursing Home, Christmas visit
- Tiddington Court Car Home, Christmas visit
- Lessons and Carols Service, Holy Trinity Church
- Hylands House, Christmas visit
- Walk-through Carol Service, Holy Trinity Church
- Family Mass, Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church, Shottonery

The following meetings were held during the month:

- Civic, Heritage & Events Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Planning Committee
- Finance & Audit Committee



*Festive Civic Heads Dinner*



*K.E.S. Carol Service*



*Carol Service, Holy Trinity Church*



*Christmas Visits*



*Christmas Visits*

## JANUARY 2026

Happy New Year to you all! May 2026 bring strength, hope and happiness to you and those you love.

The Mayor, Councillor Dani Hunter

### Mayoral Engagements:

- Stratford Foodbank donation
- High Bailiff's Civic Service, Alcester
- Footsteps Nursery
- Mayor of Warwick's Thanksgiving Mass
- Bear Pit Theatre - The Herbal Bed
- Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing Event
- Holocaust Memorial Service, Warwick

The following meetings were held during the month:

- Planning Committee
- Town Council
- Civic, Heritage & Events Committee



*Stratford Foodbank Donation*



*Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing Event*



*Holocaust Memorial Service*

## February 2026

At the end of February, I had the great privilege of representing Stratford-upon-Avon during a visit to Shannon in County Clare, Ireland. It was a wonderful opportunity not only to strengthen relationships between our communities but also to share the story of our remarkable town with new audiences.

Throughout the visit, I was very grateful to have been invited to spend time with a number of local organisations and institutions. I had the pleasure of visiting St Tola's Primary School, where I met pupils and staff and had the opportunity to talk about Stratford-upon-Avon, our history and what life is like in our town. The enthusiasm and curiosity of the young people was wonderful to see, and it was a joy to share a little of Stratford with them.

I was also kindly welcomed by St Patrick's Comprehensive School, where I again had the chance to speak about our town and its heritage. It was a pleasure to meet students and staff and to exchange stories about our communities. Moments like these are a reminder of how much young people enjoy learning about places beyond their own town and how valuable those connections can be.

During the visit I was also honoured to be welcomed by Clare County Council. Meeting with local representatives gave us the opportunity to talk about our respective communities, the role of local government and the importance of working closely with residents to support thriving towns and cities.

Wherever I went during the visit, I made a point of bringing a little bit of Stratford with me. Conversations often turned quickly to the place we all know and love at home. I spoke about Stratford's rich heritage, our vibrant cultural life and the strong sense of community that makes the town such a special place to live and visit.

Many people already know Stratford through Shakespeare, but it was a pleasure to share more about the wider story of our town. From our historic streets and beautiful riverside to the thriving independent businesses and organisations that bring Stratford to life today, there is so much that makes it unique.

The visit also highlighted the value of building friendships between places. I was struck by the warmth of the welcome everywhere I went and by the genuine interest people showed in learning more about Stratford. Many spoke warmly about visiting in the future.

As Mayor, it was a real honour to act as an ambassador for our town. Opportunities like this allow us to celebrate Stratford beyond our borders and to remind people just how much there is to discover here.

I very much hope that through conversations, connections and a little Stratford spirit shared along the way, more people will come to understand and appreciate our rich history and perhaps be inspired to visit Stratford-upon-Avon for themselves.



## Mayoral Engagements:

- Rother Street Arts House - official opening
- ILEAP - late Christmas party
- Silent Disco (Mayor's charity event)
- Holy Trinity Primary School / Willows Friends annual panto
- Tiddington Players Panto
- SEN Zone event



*Official opening – Rother Street Arts House*



*Silent Disco*



*Holy Trinity Primary School / Willows Friends Panto*

## The following meetings were held during the month:

- Planning Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Community Services & Environment Committee

## March 2026

### Mayoral engagements:

- Official visit to Ireland
- Re-opening of Waterside Upmarket (Deputy Mayor)
- Choose Your Way, ND BrainSpace Group
- Stratford-upon-Avon Annual Town Meeting
- Entrust Care Partnership Community Cafe (Deputy Mayor)
- World Day of Prayer Service, St Gregory's Church
- Launch of Stratford District Crime Prevention Trailer
- Mayor of Warwick Charity Fashion Show
- The Gathering - For Water & Nature Workshop (Deputy Mayor)
- Mayor of Kenilworth - Charity Quiz Night
- Murder Mystery Evening (Mayor's Charity Event)
- Bear Pit Theatre - White Liars/Black Comedy
- Mayor of Leamington Spa Civic Dinner
- Mayor of Alcester Civic Dinner
- Stratford-on-Avon Symphony Orchestra Spring Concert, Greig Hall
- Shakespeare Hospice Furniture Store, Local Artist Event (Deputy Mayor)

- Stratford Choral Society, Mendelssohn's Elijah (Deputy Mayor)
- Shottery St Andrews Primary School, road safety signs
- Visit from the High Sheriff
- Shakespeare Schools Week - primary school visits to the Town Hall
- Henry V performance, RSC
- Mayor of Coleshill - fundraising event

The following meetings were held during the month:

- Finance & Audit Committee
- Annual Town Meeting
- Planning Committee
- Town Council
- Civic, Heritage & Events Committee



*World Day of Prayer Service, St Gregory's Church*



*Road Safety Signs  
Shottery St Andrews Primary School*



*Shakespeare Schools Week*

## **Annual Town Meeting**

The Annual Town Meeting was held on Thursday, 5 March 2026.

Before the meeting began, it was great to welcome several of the organisations supported by the Town Council who joined us to share more about their work. Thank you to representatives from Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom, the Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights and our CCTV team as well as Stratford Pursuits Festival, Stratford-upon-Avon BID and the Community Builder Stratford - Bishopton and Clopton for taking the time to speak with residents about what they have been doing across the town.

During the meeting we also heard an interesting presentation from Claudine Pearson, representing River Hope and Rubbish Friends Stratford-upon-Avon, who spoke about a new initiative titled "The Gathering: for Water and Nature." It was encouraging to hear about efforts focused on protecting and caring for our natural environment.

The Annual Town Meeting is an opportunity each year for residents to come along, hear about local work and raise any matters relating to the town. Thank you to everyone who attended.



*Annual Town Meeting*

## **April 2026**

We're proud to be the FIRST Town Council in the UK to begin the journey towards being a symbol friendly organisation!

Our first steps have been to introduce signage at Stratford-upon-Avon Town Hall to help make the Town Hall more accessible and a welcome place for everyone in our community, especially people with learning disabilities, autistic people and those with speech, language and communication needs.

This step is part of our wider commitment to inclusion, ensuring that more residents can understand, engage with and feel confident accessing local services and information.

A big thank you to Wigit Software for their expertise and partnership in helping us lead the way.

### **Volunteers Reception**

A really special evening at Stratford Town Hall for our annual Volunteers' Reception.

It was a chance for us, as Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council, to say a heartfelt thank you to the many people who give their time so generously across our town. Volunteers are at the heart of Stratford. They support others, bring people together, and make such a difference to everyday life in ways that often go unseen.

One of the highlights of the evening was presenting the Mayor's Award. Choosing just one person is never easy, but this year it became clear after visiting one particular group just how deserving the recipient was.

For over 20 years, Doug Wallace has given up his Sunday evenings to run swimming sessions for people with special educational needs and disabilities. People of all ages attend, whether with family, carers or independently, and all are welcomed with warmth, respect and encouragement. Doug and his team have created something truly special. A space where people feel comfortable, included and able to enjoy the simple joy of being in the water.

On behalf of the people of Stratford, thank you Doug for everything you have given to our community. It was a privilege to present you with the Mayor's Award.



*Volunteers Reception, Town Hall*

## **Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations**

What a day! The Shakespeare Birthday Parade is always one of the highlights of the civic year and today did not disappoint. With the sunshine adding to the atmosphere, Stratford was at its very best. The whole day was filled with colour, music and celebration.



*Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations*

## **Shakespeare Service**

A truly fitting close to our Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations today, beginning with the traditional service at Holy Trinity Church, and followed by a reception at the Town Hall.

We were honoured to be joined by Alfie Enoch and Janie Dee, whose performances added real depth and energy to the service. We also heard from Rt. Rev. Rob Gillion, Bishop for the Arts and Honorary Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of St Albans, co-founder of Intermission Youth. It was a pleasure to see some of his young performers share their talent and perspective through Shakespeare's work.

A wonderful and memorable way to bring such a special weekend to a close.



*Shakespeare Service*

#### Mayoral Engagements:

- Good Friday, Walk of Witness
- Easter Fair, Scholars Mews Care Home
- Mayor of Alcester, Charity Evening
- Civic Dinner, Mayor of Atherstone
- Anniversary of New Hope Counselling, Mayor of Warwick & Kenilworth
- Volunteers Reception, Town Hall
- Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations
- Shakespeare Sunday Service, Holy Trinity Church
- Silence! Or can you hear me at the back?, Holy Trinity Church
- The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, RSC
- Hamnet Bramley Apple Tree Planting, Anne Hathaway's Cottage
- St George's Day Celebrations, Mayor of Evesham
- Arts & Culture Strategy Launch, Rother Street Arts House
- Official opening of K.E.S. Manor Road Sports Ground

- National Market Traders Federation Annual Conference Dinner
- Show Time, Stratford Musical Theatre Company

#### The following meetings were held during the month:

- Planning Committee
- Community Services & Environment Committee
- Personnel Committee



*Silence! Or can you hear me at the back?*



*Good Friday  
Walk of Witness*



*Anniversary of New Hope Counselling*

## May 2026

### Mayoral Engagements:

- Morris Dancing at dawn
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council Civic Dinner
- Scouts Meeting, Ragley Hall
- Chain Gang Last Hurrah, walking tour and boat cruise
- Alcester Mayor Making
- Parenting Neurodiverse Teen Support Group Meeting
- David Attenborough's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday event, Butterfly Farm
- Stratford Pursuits Festival
- Evesham Mayor Making
- Stratford College Visit
- A Phoenix Night Rises, Bear Pit Theatre
- Leamington Mayor Making
- High School Students, Rother Street Market

### The following meetings will be held during the month:

- Mayor Making and Annual Meeting of the Town Council
- Planning Committee

## Farewell to Emma Sorrell, Beadle

As we say farewell to our Beadle, Emma Sorrell, I want to take a moment to express my sincere thanks and appreciation. It has been an honour to work alongside her and I am incredibly grateful for her support throughout the year.



# Message from the Deputy Mayor

One of the many great privileges of serving as Deputy Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon is to witness at first hand the amazing kindness and goodness that is going on in our town. Much of it never makes the news, because it isn't considered newsworthy. But twelve months as Deputy Mayor, where you are invited to see and endorse what different groups are doing, has shown me just how much of a difference love and kindness can make to changing people's lives.

It has been an honour to attend the events and activities of many different and diverse Stratford groups. Like the Mencap Christmas pantomime: a host of wonderful performances that inspired as well as entertained. I also enjoyed the amazing catering delivered by Entrust at their weekly community café. It's here that members of our community with disabilities are given meaningful opportunities of real work in a real work environment. Such initiatives deserve this town's wholehearted and continuing support.

It has shown me that it's possible for every one of us to get some benefit out of one or more of the different communal and group activities available in this town. The Morris Dancing Festival was a real eye-opener, edgier than I thought possible and delivered with an incredibly high level of energy and fitness.

Awarding the prizes at Stratford upon Avon Athletics Club was another demonstration of energy and fitness, this time delivered by dedicated and committed groups of young and older local athletes. The standards were incredible.

Our town is blessed with individuals busy changing lives. It was an honour to attend Warwickshire's first '100 Change Makers 2025' celebration, where individuals making meaningful contributions to their community were publicly recognised at an event hosted by the High Sheriff of Warwickshire. Let's hope it may be possible to introduce a similar tribute to those changing lives in Stratford.

As I step forward as the 481<sup>st</sup> Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon, I would like to say how honoured I have been to serve as Deputy Mayor to the current mayor, Councillor Dani Hunter. I am looking forward to the year ahead and to meeting many more of those people changing lives in Stratford.

Councillor, Sam McNaught Barrow



## **Civic Diary for 2026**

### **Friday 15 May**

Mayor Making, Town Hall

### **Sunday 17 May**

Civic Sunday Service, Holy Trinity Church

### **Saturday 27 June**

Armed Forces Day, Location to be confirmed

### **Monday 12 October**

Opening of the Mop Fair, Town Centre

### **Sunday 8 November**

Remembrance Sunday, Garden of Remembrance

### **Wednesday 11 November**

Armistice Day

### **Saturday 14 November**

Christmas Lights Switch-on, Town Centre

### **Saturday 28 & Sunday 29 November**

Stratford Christmas Markets (weekend 1)

### **Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 December**

Stratford Christmas Markets (weekend 2)



Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council