STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY, WELLBEING AND PLACE COMMITTEE

13 October 2026

Meeting commenced: 6.30pm Meeting ended: 8.30pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Hunter (Chair)

Councillors:

Fojtik	Rolfe
McNaught Barrow	Vos

Clerk: Mel Harris
Officers: Georgina Kerrigan, Responsible Finance Officer
Victoria Flynn, Deputy Town Clerk (designate)
Press: None
Public: David Bishton and John Elliot – Stratford upon Avon Christmas Lights Co Ltd
Cohl Warren-Howles and Charles Bates, Stratford upon Avon in Bloom
Karen Haines-Lea and Lorentz Gullachsen – Stratford Literary Festival

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33	**Apologies** Apologies were received from Councillors Cleeve, Harding, Rashwan and Smith and accepted for the reasons given. Councillor I Fradgley was absent from the meeting.
34	**Declarations of Interest** Councillor Fojtik Minute 43 - Chair of the Christmas Lights Committee

35	**To receive written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests** There were no dispensations granted.	
36	**To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate** None received.	
37	**Public Participation** There was no public participation at this point.	
38	**To approve the Minutes of the Community, Wellbeing and Place Committee held on 4 August 2026** It was proposed, seconded and	
	RESOLVED	That the Minutes of the Community, Wellbeing and Place Committee held on 4 August 2026 be approved.
39	**To approve the draft notes of the Climate Change Working Group – 7 September 2026** It was proposed, seconded and	
	RESOLVED	That the Notes of the Climate Change Working Group held on 7 September 2026 be received.
40	**To approve the draft notes of the Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel held on 1 September 2026** It was proposed, seconded and	
	RESOLVED	That the Notes of the Website, Social Media and Newsletter Panel held on 1 September 2026 be received.
	Town Clerk and Chief Officers Open Report	
41	**Initiative Applications for 2027/28** The Chair welcomed representatives from the organisations applying for funding under the Council's Initiatives Scheme. The meeting was addressed by • David Bishton, Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights Company • Cohl Warren-Howles, Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom	

	The Committee also heard from the below organisation as another funding request, separate to initiatives funding • Karen Haines-Lea – Stratford Literary Festival Once the presentations had taken place, representatives left the meeting. The minutes below reflect the decisions taken by the Committee in closed session but recorded here as open minutes.	
42	**Exclusion of the public and press**	
	RESOLVED	The press and public be excluded due to the confidential nature of the business under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings Act) 1960 s1. sub section 2.
43	**Slate Events** The Stratford Pursuits Festival would enter its fourth year in 2027, continuing to build on the success, positive feedback and growing community support of previous festivals. Plans for 2027 included continuing the development of the festival, welcoming a diverse mix of participants while ensuring the event remained accessible, engaging and firmly rooted in the local community. Consideration was given to the request from Slate Events for the sum of £5,000 for the financial year 2027/28. It was proposed, seconded and	
	RECOMMENDED	**That £5,000 be allocated to the budget for 2027/28 for this initiative.**
44	**Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights Company** The Christmas Lights had been part of the town's heritage for over 40 years and an intrinsic part of the Christmas celebrations. The display was often thought to be one of the best in the UK and one of the largest, comparable in size of the town with lights stretching from Swans Nest Island south of the town to Greenhill Street in the north. The display of lights used the latest in LED technology reducing energy usage and constructed using a biodegradable plastic printing method alongside recycled aluminium. The presentation included an overview of rising costs and a reduction in, or in some cases, complete loss of sponsorship money. Consideration was given to the request for £35,000 for the financial year 2027/28.	

	The Committee discussed the matter in great detail as they felt that other organisations should also be approached to support the Christmas Lights. Members suggested that £30,000 be allocated for 2027/28, with a possible further £5,000 subject to budget review later in the year. Members then considered a further request for £10,000 to support a funding shortfall which had been identified for the 2026/27 scheme. It was recognised that this had not been budgeted for, but Members were, in this instance, willing to support at this late stage to enable the display to continue in its tested format. It was suggested that £5,000 could be allocated between the Town Projects budget and general reserves and that the Town Council would write to other organisations such as the District Council, Stratford BID and Stratford Town Trust to see if they would be willing to help contribute further to the 2026 Christmas lights shortfall. Members also agreed that the additional support should be for this year only and expressed the expectation that the Company would actively seek additional funding from elsewhere for future years. It was proposed, seconded and	
	RECOMMENDED	**1. That £30,000 be allocated in the budget for 2027/28 for this initiative, with a possible further £5,000 subject to budget review later in the year.** **2. In relation to the additional £10,000 to support the Christmas lights for 2026/27 the Committee supported an additional £5,000 with the Town Council approaching other organisations for matched support.**
45	**Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom** Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom would provide and maintain seasonal floral displays and sustainable planting in key areas of the town, incorporating pollinator-friendly plants and wildflowers to enhance the town's green spaces. Consideration was given to the request from Stratford in Bloom of the sum of £25,000 for the financial year 2027/28. Following consideration, it was proposed, seconded and	
	RECOMMENDED	**That £25,000 be allocated in the budget for 2027/28 for this initiative.**

46	**Stratford Literary Festival 20th Year Exhibition** The Committee was asked to consider a request from Stratford Literary Festival seeking support for an outdoor exhibition, Festival Faces, celebrating 20 years of the Literary Festival. The exhibition would display images of speakers from the Festival over the past 20 years with the photographs having been taken by a local photographer. It was noted that there were three levels of sponsorship available and they were seeking funding of £1,000. However, they had indicated that any support would be welcomed. Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded and	
	RECOMMENDED	**That £1,000 be allocated from the Town Projects budget for this event.**
47	**Readmittance of the public and press** Following the confidential discussions, the public and press were readmitted to the meeting.	
48	**Review of Civic Events** Feedback was given on the following events that had taken place since the last meeting:- • Mayor's Bowls Match • Heritage Open Day • Mop Day The Committee was advised that the Event Management Plan (EMP) had been submitted for Remembrance Day 2026 and a meeting had taken place with members of the Royal British Legion in relation to the event.	
49	**Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations** The Committee was advised that a meeting had recently taken place with relevant groups regarding the very successful 2026 Birthday celebrations. It was noted that there had been additional entertainment with funding for this received from Stratford Town Trust and Warwickshire County Council. It was hoped that this would be continued in future years. Kate Livingston from Slate Events had been asked to put together a proposal for the 2027 Birthday celebrations which had come back at £4,200. This included £3,500 for planning the Community entertainment at the event and £700 for on the day event management.	

	To support partners' aspirations to expand the event in future years, she had also provided a quotation for securing event sponsorship. This had come back at £1,500 plus 5% commission. Councillors requested that conditional criteria be established around this and for the Officer to investigate with a view to working towards a target of £20,000 in sponsorship to help offset the reduction in funding from the District Council in 2028. It was proposed that this arrangement with Slate Events be approved for a two year period. Members noted the current financial position, insofar as funding had been received from Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the event in 2027, although this was the final year of their support identified. The Town Clerk had been in contact with the District Council regarding support beyond 2027.	
	RESOLVED	1. That the update be noted. 2. That the appointment of Slate Events be agreed to lead on developing sponsorship opportunities for the event, including the facilitation of a more co-ordinated approach to the wider Shakespeare Birthday weekend, subject to a scope of work and that this be met from the reserves identified. 3. That a two-year arrangement with Slate Events to deliver the sponsorship and community entertainment programme providing continuity and allowing for longer-term planning be agreed and be budgeted for.
50	**Mayor's Car Update** The Committee considered the information contained in the report in relation to the future provision of a Mayoral car. In order to ensure the personal safety of the Mayor, it would be considered preferable for the Town Council to establish an arrangement with a single trusted provider for this service if Members were minded to withdraw the Mayoral car. Following discussion on the options, it was felt preferable to dispose of the Mayoral car at the earliest opportunity, ideally before the expiry of the current MOT to avoid incurring costs, and to explore options with a reputable taxi/chauffeur company. It was proposed, seconded and	

	RECOMMENDED	**That the Mayoral car be disposed of at the earliest opportunity and a reputable taxi/chauffeur company be appointed to transport the Mayor to Civic events, as required.**
51	**Police & Crime Commissioner – Town and Parish Councils Consultation** The Chair proposed to members that she would recreate the survey in Microsoft Forms and circulate to members of the Committee for their contributions. The results would then be collated and circulated to form the Town Council's response. It was proposed, seconded and	
	AGREED	That the consultation be circulated via Microsoft Forms and responses collated and circulated to form the Town Council's response.
52	**Banking Arrangements for Mayor's Good Causes** The Responsible Finance Officer explained that discussions had taken place with the internal auditor with regards to including the Mayor's Good Causes in the Town Council's financial arrangements. It was explained that there would be VAT savings for the Mayor's Good Causes, however it would create additional work for officers and any events arranged would need to adhere to the Town Council's procurement guidelines. Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded and	
	RESOLVED	That the Mayor's Good Causes banking arrangements be merged with the Town Council's banking arrangements.
53	**Avon Mooring, Tiddington Road** Discussions took place regarding the Avon Mooring which was in a bad state of repair and considered unsafe. It was confirmed that appropriate measures had been undertaken to prevent access. The Committee noted the confidential Avon Navigation Trust's report regarding the current state of the mooring, together with quotes that had been received to complete the necessary works to replace the mooring. In view of the cost of replacement and the limited benefits to residents, it was	

	RESOLVED	That officers be instructed to obtain quotes for the removal of the structure and to bring back to the next meeting for further consideration.
54	**2027/28 Budget Process** The RFO talked to members on the budget setting process for 2027/28. The Committee noted that the Chair would be part of a working group set up to agree the budget process for 2027/28, along with other Committee Chairs. It was clarified that the budget setting would still be undertaken by the Governance, Finance and Resources Committee before being taken to full Council for approval. If members had any procedures or budget items that they wanted to bring forward, they should discuss them with the Chair for her to take forward to the working group/meeting with the RFO.	
	AGREED	That the Chair of the Committee join the working group for setting the 2027/28 budget process, and to meet with the RFO to discuss budget requirements.
55	**Town Clerk's Verbal Report** There were no further items for verbal update.	
56	**To note the Terms of Reference for the Committee** The Committee was asked to note the Terms of Reference for the Committee.	
	RESOLVED	That the Terms of Reference for the Community, Wellbeing and Place Committee be noted.
57	**Date of the Next Meeting** Tuesday 8 December 2026 at 6.30pm	

Chair: ……