

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY, WELLBEING & PLACE COMMITTEE
MEETING

13 October 2026

TOWN CLERK'S OPEN REPORT

1.0 COMMUNITY

- **To consider Initiatives Applications**

To consider Initiative applications received from *Slate Events* (Confidential Appendix A), *Stratford upon Avon Christmas Lights Company* (Confidential Appendix B) and *Stratford in Bloom* (Confidential Appendices C-F).

Recommendations to be made to the Governance, Finance and Resources Committee.

Appendices are for members of the Committee only.

- 1.1 **Slate Events** have completed a form, requesting the sum of £5,000 (Confidential Appendix A).

Description of project:	The Stratford Pursuits Festival will enter its fourth year in 2027, continuing to build on the success, positive feedback and growing community support of previous festivals. Since its launch, Pursuits has developed into an inclusive celebration of Stratford's community, bringing together local organisations, charities, independent businesses, performers and activity providers. In 2026 alone, the festival welcomed 28 community groups and charities alongside 36 commercial vendors, creating a valuable platform for local organisations and small businesses to engage with thousands of visitors. We
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	continue to grow and attract more local people and groups. For 2027, we want to continue developing the festival, welcoming a diverse mix of participants while ensuring the event remains accessible, engaging and firmly rooted in the local community. The festival offers a vibrant programme of free workshops, live performances, demonstrations, activities and family-friendly entertainment, encompassing sport, wellbeing, culture, art, creativity, food and more. By providing a varied programme with something for all ages and interests, Pursuits encourages people to discover new activities, connect with local organisations and businesses, and take part in their community. At the heart of the festival is a commitment to creating free, inspiring and accessible experiences in an enjoyable and welcoming environment. Our ambition is for Pursuits to continue growing as a highlight of Stratford-upon-Avon's community calendar and an event that local residents feel genuinely belongs to them. Feedback from visitors, participants and stallholders plays an important part in shaping the festival. Each year, we use this feedback to develop the event, improve the visitor and participant experience, and ensure Pursuits continues to reflect the interests and needs of the Stratford community.
Payment preferred:	After the event in June 2027

- 1.2 **Stratford upon Avon Christmas Lights Co Ltd** have completed a form, requesting the sum of £35,000 (Confidential Appendix B).

Description of project:	<i>Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights Company is operated by team of hardworking unpaid volunteers who work for the town and the local community. We are completely independent, and our sole aim is to produce (by seeking funding for and organising the practicalities of) the best Christmas lights display we can for the town so businesses, residents and visitors may enjoy all the benefits such a display brings.</i> <u>Christmas Lights</u> The Christmas Lights have been part of the town's heritage for over 40 years and an intrinsic part of the Christmas celebrations. The display is often thought to be one of the best in the UK and one of the largest, comparable to the 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 uses the latest in LED technology reducing our energy usage and constructed using a biodegradable plastic printing method alongside recycled aluminium. We aim to: • Enhance the atmosphere of town at night during the festive period, particularly during the late-night shopping events and the award-winning Christmas Markets. • Make a huge contribution to local economy, particularly as Stratford-upon-Avon still recovers from the COVID -19 pandemic by enticing tourists, visitors and residents into the town to enjoy the display and support local businesses around the town including shops, restaurants, hotels and B&Bs while they enjoy the lights. The switch-on alone has always been a huge crowd puller. • Create a sense of civic pride throughout the community with the town beautifully decorated for the festive season. • Use the lights to improve the mental wellbeing of the community and to reduce
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	social isolation by bringing everyone together to enjoy the spectacle. <i>We are committed to bringing all stake holders in the town together to achieve a joined up working partnership that delivers the best outcomes for the town and local community.</i>
Payment preferred:	£20,000 December 1 st and £15,000 January 1st

- 1.3 **Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom** have completed a form, requesting the sum of £25,000 (Confidential Appendices C-F).

Description of project:	Stratford in Bloom will 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. Our project will enhance the appearance and environmental quality of Stratford upon Avon, creating attractive and welcoming spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy. By encouraging planting for pollinators and involving the local community, the project will support biodiversity, promote pride in our town and create a greener, more pleasant place for everyone. The project will be monitored through the number of planting areas enhanced, the quality and variety of pollinator-friendly plants introduced and the level of feedback from residents and visitors. Planting will be monitored throughout the year to assess its success and sustainability. Community feedback will also be welcomed to help assess the project's impact, while the displays will encourage residents and visitors to take greater interest in nature, biodiversity and environmentally friendly planting.
Payment preferred:	If our application is successful, we would prefer to receive payment ideally before the end of the current financial year.

2.0 Stratford Literary Festival 20th year exhibition

- **To consider the request from Stratford Literary Festival for support for an outdoor exhibition next Spring.**

Introduction

The Council is asked to consider the request from Stratford Literary Festival seeking support for an exciting outdoor exhibition, Festival Faces, showing some of the images of speakers who have been to the Festival such as Dame Judi Dench and Prue Leith as well as images from the Festival itself over the past 20 years. The photographs having been taken by a local photographer, Lorentz Gullachsen. The application can be found at Confidential Appendices G-H.

There are various levels of sponsorship available starting from £1,000 to be a Trail Sponsor up to £7,000 for a Headline Sponsor, they have indicated that any support that the Town Council could give would be welcomed.

Background

Stratford Literary Festival has been running since 2008 and hosts an exciting mixture of debate, ideas, celebrity author events, workshops, performances and comedy in spring and autumn. It is one of the most significant literary festivals in the UK.

Options for consideration

The Committee is asked to consider whether the Town Council should contribute to the exhibition and whether they would like to sponsor the event.

A representative of Stratford Literary Festival, has been invited to address the Committee.

Financial Implications

Councillors are invited to consider whether this is something they wish to support and the necessary budget implications.

Members should consider which budget line this application would be funded by, should it be approved.

3.0 Review of Civic Events

- **To note the update**

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an overview of the civic events delivered by the Town Council since June 2026 and arrangements for forthcoming events.

Mayor's Bowls Match – 9 July 2026

Heritage Open Day – 12 September 2026

Forthcoming events

Event	Update
Mop Day – 12 October 2026	Arrangements for coffee in progress
Remembrance Sunday – 8 November 2026	Event Management Plan Submitted to District Council for Road Closures
Christmas lights switch-on – 14 November 2026	Arrangements are in hand. Safety Advisory Group meeting taking place. Verbal update to be given.
Christmas Markets – 28/29 November and 5/6 December 2026	Arrangements are in hand with District Council

4.0 Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations

- **To note the update**
- **To consider the funding and appointment of Slate Events to lead on developing sponsorship opportunities and to facilitate a more coordinated approach to the**

wider Shakespeare Birthday weekend, subject to a scope of work.

- **To consider a two-year arrangement with Slate Events to deliver the community and entertainment programme, providing continuity and allowing for longer-term planning.**

Background

Arrangements are already underway for the Shakespeare Birthday Parade in April 2027. An initial meeting with the key non-financial stakeholders involved in the event indicated broad support for building on the success of previous years and developing the Parade and wider weekend further.

Future

Councillor Vos, as representative at the project meetings, has also expressed a longer-term ambition for the event, with a five-year vision for it to become a festival of national and international renown.

To achieve this, it was recognised that additional funding and sponsorship will be required. While there was considerable enthusiasm at the initial meeting for developing a more structured approach to sponsorship and financial support, progress from some partners has subsequently been less forthcoming than anticipated.

The Town Council has therefore approached Slate Events (SE) to consider taking on a wider role in developing sponsorship opportunities, broadening stakeholder involvement and helping to maximise the reach and profile of the Parade and the wider Shakespeare Birthday weekend. SE is a contractor already involved in the event and has indicated that she would be willing to undertake this. Given the potential for the event to grow and become a significant annual festival for Stratford-upon-Avon, there is value in taking a more coordinated approach rather than focusing solely on the Parade itself.

Event Delivery

In addition, the Town Council has used the services of Slate Events to facilitate the increased community and entertainment programme across the Shakespeare Birthday weekend, allowing Town Council officers to concentrate on the logistics and planning of the Parade itself. Through this approach the Town Council was successful in securing a further £6,000 through the launch of the Arts and Culture Strategy to support additional entertainment across the event. It is intended that the Town Council will look to work with Slate Events again for 2027, subject to Budget Approval and for continuity and due to budget sign-off it has been suggested we look to offer on a two-year arrangement.

Financial Implications

There remains sufficient budget within the Town Council's current financial provision to deliver the 2027 Parade based on costs known at this stage.

However, District Council funding of £20,000 ceases after the 2027 event.

The Town Council has written to the District Council asking whether it would reconsider its future funding, recognising the significant economic, tourism and civic benefits that the event brings to both the town and the wider District. A response is awaited.

If the £20,000 District Council contribution is not continued, the Town Council will face a difficult decision about whether it is sustainable to continue financing the event from its own resources. In these circumstances, the opportunity to identify sponsorship and other external funding opportunities is particularly important, and the proposed wider role for Kate Livingstone will assist in exploring these opportunities.

5.0 Mayor's Car Update

- To consider the future of the Civic Car.

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with updated information regarding the suggestion to withdraw the Mayoral Car provision and replace with the option of a chauffeur-driven service for the Mayor when attending events and for when they are not using their own vehicle – for which mileage can be reclaimed.

Background

Following Council's direction earlier in the year regarding the future provision of a Mayoral car, and taking into account the age of the current vehicle, its now relatively limited use and the public perception associated with maintaining a dedicated Mayoral car, an exercise was undertaken over the summer to seek quotations from local chauffeur and taxi companies.

Safety of the Mayor and Consort

Given the personal safety of the Mayor and the security and value of the Civic Chain, it is considered preferable for the Town Council to establish an arrangement with a single trusted provider for this service.

Invitations to quote were submitted to three local chauffeur companies and one local taxi firm. At the present time, three companies have provided quotes for a Sunday Civic Event in Coventry which is a 6.5 hour event, as follows:

Company	Each way cost	Waiting cost per hr	Additional mileage per mile	Total Costs
A	£145 + VAT	£60 + VAT	£2.75	£590
B	£100 + VAT	£50 + VAT	-	£450
C	£550 + VAT all in including waiting time			£550

Financial Considerations

During 2025/26 costs for the Civic car, was only used on a few occasions, amounted to approximately £1553 which included servicing, MOT, new tyres, fuel, RAC cover and staffing costs, with a further £633 spent by the Mayor/Deputy Mayor on travel and taxi costs. It should, however, be recognised that use of the Civic Car varies considerably depending on the Mayor and the nature and number of civic engagements undertaken. In previous years, the overall cost of operating the vehicle has on occasion exceeded £5,000.

This year the civic car has only been used on two occasions.

Options for Consideration

Members are asked to consider, in light of the quotes provided, which option they would like the Town Council to pursue.

Option 1 – Retain or Dispose of the Asset

Members may wish to consider whether the Council wishes to continue owning the Civic car, together with the ongoing liabilities that ownership entails.

Option 2 – Use of a chauffeur / taxi service

Members may wish to explore the use of a chauffeur/taxi service on occasions when Civic engagements require the use of a vehicle.

6.0 Police and Crime Commissioner – Town and Parish Council Consultation

- **To consider the Council's response to the consultation**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Warwickshire is inviting town and parish councils to share their views on local policing priorities, future policing investment and the potential impact of police reform.

The consultation recognises the important role of town and parish councils in representing their communities and understanding the issues that matter most to local residents. Responses will help inform the PCC's consideration of policing priorities and future budget decisions, as well as the Commissioner's engagement on proposed changes to policing and local government structures.

The survey provides an opportunity for councils to consider these issues locally and submit a single, considered response on behalf of their community.

The survey covers:

- The policing issues that most affect the local area;
- Priorities for future policing investment;
- Services that should be protected if financial pressures increase;
- Local accountability and community engagement; and
- Opportunities and concerns arising from proposed police reform.

The PCC is also seeking views on the potential implications of wider policing reform for Warwickshire.

Councillors can find further information the PCC's website:

[Policing Reform Warwickshire PCC.](#)

The consultation survey is attached at Appendix A for Members' information and consideration and the consultation closes on 13 November 2026.

Councillors are asked to formulate a response.

7.0 Banking arrangements for Mayor's Good Causes

- **To consider alternative banking arrangements for Mayor's Good Causes**

At the Finance and Audit Committee meeting in March 2026 the following recommendation was made to this Committee

The RFO advised that the Council were continuing to experience problems with Barclays and they would further investigate the possibility of moving to Unity Bank.

The RFO also mentioned that banking arrangements for Mayor's Good Causes had been part of a discussion with the internal auditor (this did not form part of the audit), and that it should be discussed whether or not to include the Mayor's Good Causes in the Town Council's financial arrangements. It was explained to members that there would be VAT savings for the Mayor's Good Causes if this was adopted, however would be more work for officers and any events arranged for the Mayor's Good Causes would need to adhere to the Town Council's procurement guidelines.

It was AGREED that the Mayor's Good Causes banking arrangements be taken to the Civic, Heritage and Events Committee for consideration.

Members are asked to consider the options and implications, and agree whether or not to merge the Mayor's Good Causes banking arrangements with the Town Council's.

8.0 Avon Mooring, Tiddington Road

- **To consider the replacement option and the necessary funding.**

At the June meeting, the Town Council agreed to retain the Tiddington Road mooring land and instructed the Town Clerk to investigate whether the existing structure could be repaired or would require replacement.

Following the concerns previously identified regarding the condition of the pontoon, a full inspection has now been undertaken by Avon Navigation Trust. Their report, dated 9 September 2026, confirms that several support legs have sheared or corroded through, the stage has collapsed in several places, and there is extensive corrosion to the structure, decking and deck stringers. Please see Confidential Appendix I.

Avon Navigation Trust's professional opinion is that the structure is completely, no longer fit for purpose. They recommend that it remains closed and that a new stage is constructed over the existing structure, using a steel frame and GRP mesh non-slip decking.

The Town Clerk has now contacted three companies with a view to obtaining quotations for the replacement works. One quotation is expected to be available for consideration at the meeting, and a further follow-up has been issued to the other two companies.

The previous occupier of the mooring has also been formally written to and instructed to vacate the mooring by 16 October 2026.

Financial Implications

Members are asked to consider whether they wish to:

1. Use the Town Council's reserves to fund the replacement structure now, subject to a satisfactory quotation and the necessary procurement arrangements; or
2. Make provision within the 2027/28 budget to fund the replacement works.

Members are asked to consider the quotations received and provide direction on the preferred funding approach.

9.0 2027/28 Budget

- **To consider the 2027/28 budget requirements for the committee and agree any required process**

It was agreed at the Governance, Finance & Resources Committee meeting of 22 September 2026 that a working group be set up to agree the budget process for 2027/28: -

...it was suggested that the Chair of Planning, Environment and Transport Committee (Councillor Alcock) and the Chair of Community, Wellbeing and Place Committee (Councillor Hunter) should also be part of the working group.

Members are asked to start to consider the Committee's budget requirements for the 2027/28 financial year and any required / suggested processes to be taken to the working group. Committee Chairs are requested to meet with the RFO as usual to run through budget figures, after which draft budgets will be issued.

Town Clerk
07.10.2026