



BRIDGING the GAP

Stratford-upon-Avon

ISSUE 1

Quarterly Newsletter from Stratford-upon-Avon TOWN COUNCIL

Welcome...



... to the first edition of 'Bridging The Gap', a quarterly newsletter keeping you up to date with news from the Town Council.

I was elected to the position of Mayor in May, taking over from Cllr Dr Rev Roy Lodge MBE, a position I am extremely proud of. It has been a busy three months, but I have had the pleasure of meeting some of the wonderful people of Stratford.

I hold a weekly surgery every Monday between 10.00am and 12.00 noon in my Parlour. This provides an opportunity for the people of the town to voice their ideas or worries directly to me as Chairman of the Town Council.

The Town Council has an open door policy and now holds regular Ward meetings at the Town Hall throughout the Civic year. A member from each Ward will be available on: 6th November 2007 from 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm, 19th February 2008 from 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm

My charities this year are the MacMillan Nurses and the Diana Coupland Memorial Fund. I hope that you will all support me in raising money by attending my forthcoming fund-raisers at the Town Hall. Please contact the Mayor's Secretary for further details:

- Friday 5th Oct - Fish and Chip Race Night
- Friday 16th Nov - Cheese & Wine Quiz Night
- Friday 14th March - Mayor's Spring Ball at the Holiday Inn

Councillor Donna C Barker
Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon

CURRENT TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE BURSTING AT THE SEAMS

When the Town Council's lease on rented offices at Winton House expired, the Council's staff were temporarily located within the Town Hall at makeshift workstations in rooms meant for other purposes. This cannot be a long term solution and Council was faced with the decision of either providing a permanent purpose built space for them within the Town Hall, or to rent office accommodation elsewhere in the town.

To assist in making this decision the Council commissioned feasibility studies to determine whether office space of sufficient size could be located in the Town Hall and whether it would be cost effective. The study identified a rooftop site on the flat roof over the Ante Room as the only feasible option.

In order to make certain this site was viable the Council commissioned its Architect, Roger Abbott RIBA, to prepare designs. These have been carefully developed in consultation with the Planning Authority and English Heritage. A scale model and computer generated perspective drawings of the design were prepared so that the proposals could be fully visualised and understood. This design now has support in principal from English Heritage.

If the design is realised, it is estimated that the total project cost will be in the order of £440,000. Alternatively, if the Council seek rented accommodation it has been calculated that the borrowing required to finance the project would be equivalent to renting premises over a 25 year period.

Continued inside...



MAIN: Artist impression of proposed extension.
INSET: Original building.





TOWN HALL

TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE EXTENSION continued

Furthermore, the cost of providing the purposes built office space would have to increase by more than £380,000 before it would equal the cost of rented accommodation in the long term. Based on this analysis, the Council's view is that accommodating its staff within the Town Hall makes sense in investment terms as well as making perfect sense operationally. Having staff permanently in the building also

complements Council policy to encourage more use of the Town Hall by the public.

The Town Council sought the views of the public on the proposed project late last year by staging a public meeting to present the project, an exhibition comprising of a scale model, perspective drawings and brief explanatory text. Photographs of the model and drawings, a description of the proposals and a questionnaire was posted on the Town Council's website together with a brief history of the Town Hall, by kind permission of Mairi Macdonald, demonstrating how the building has been extended, altered and changed over

time in order to meet the demands of those who have used it throughout its long history.

Despite all the best intentions, Council was disappointed with the number of responses, although the majority of those who commented were in favour of the project. It is not too late to register your views. The model and drawings are still available in the Town Hall and as Council has now resolved to proceed to the next stage and submit a planning application and obtain listed building consent, these visual aids will be of benefit should you wish to comment on the planning application.



LISTEN AND BE HEARD AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The general public are always welcome to attend the open session of all Town Council and Standing Committee Meetings.

As well as witnessing the workings of Council, there is an opportunity to voice views or concerns during Public Participation, a fifteen minute slot set aside at the beginning of all meetings.

Council also welcomes the continuing participation of two students from Stratford-upon-Avon Grammar School for Girls, Stratford-upon-Avon High School and King Edward VI School at its General Purposes Committee Meetings. The students are not eligible to vote but are encouraged to express their opinions as Council is eager to listen and take account of the views of the next generation.

MAYOR 'AT HOME'

It is perhaps more traditional for the Mayoress to invite ladies to join her 'at home' for afternoon tea in the Town Hall but when the town's Mayor happens to be a lady, she keeps the tradition alive by holding 'Mayor at Home'.

Councillor Donna Barker cordially invites the ladies of the town to partake of afternoon tea at the Town Hall on Sunday 16 September, 2007 from 3.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. It is an opportunity to meet with friends in the beautiful surroundings of the Town Hall and enjoy what always turns out to be a hugely popular occasion.

MEMORIAL TESTING IN STRATFORD-UPON-AVON CEMETERY

It is sometimes difficult to comprehend that peaceful and tranquil cemeteries and churchyards are classed by insurance companies to be places of 'high risk'. Consequently, Health and Safety within both the cemetery and Holy Trinity churchyard is something the Council treats with the utmost importance. In 2005 a rolling programme of memorial testing was introduced to protect staff and visitors to the cemetery.

If you are concerned about the memorial testing programme or own a memorial that you consider may be unsafe, our Cemetery team will be pleased to arrange for you to be present when the 'topple test' is undertaken and can discuss the best course of action if the memorial fails.



ARE YOU HOLDING A FESTIVAL OR EVENT THAT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO READERS?

If so, please contact Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council for it is hoped that a regular What's-On slot will feature in every newsletter

NEW CODE OF CONDUCT

As from 3 May 2007 the revised Code of Conduct for members came into effect which is being adopted by the Town Council in September. The purpose of the Code is:

- a) To ensure transparency and openness
- b) To ensure decisions are being made to

serve the public interest

- c) The key to confidence in members and the local democracy

A copy of the new legislation - Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 - (SI.2007/1159) ("The Revised Code") is held at the Town Hall for public examination.



THE TOWN COUNCIL - KEEN TO CONTAIN COSTS

The Town Council takes seriously its responsibilities to contain its costs. It appreciates that many residents in the town are on incomes that only increase in line with the rate of inflation.

The Council is therefore pleased that the impact on the community charge on the Council's precept is near to the RPI on which benefits are based. The 2007/2008

precept stands at £441,000 which represents a community charge of £37.44 (3.5%) for a Band 'D' property, an increase of £1.27 over 2006/2007.

The audited accounts and Annual Return is available for inspection at the Town Hall from 9.30 a.m. – 12.45 p.m. and 2.15p.m. – 4.00 p.m Monday to Friday.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON FESTIVAL OF FOOD

A PLETHORA OF GOURMET GOODIES are to be found at the STRATFORD-UPON-AVON FOOD FESTIVAL 28-30 SEPTEMBER, 2007 which is bigger and better than ever with attractions to suit everyone.

Farmers' markets, a French and Italian Food market, various environmental displays, specialist food outlets, cook-off's, taste trails and what we hope will be a 'village fete' atmosphere in the County Show marquee

providing a highly competitive arena for best cake, jams and vegetables. For more information please contact Julie Bennett at the TMP 01789 299011.

Stratford-upon-Avon
Festival of Food
2007



A LIFETIME IN THE CIVIC SPOT LIGHT

It's a hectic life being the 'First Citizen of the Town'. The Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon can expect to attend well over five hundred events in their Mayoral year and on Civic occasions must be accompanied by the Beadle and

Macebearers. The Mace is the emblem of the power, authority and dignity of the Mayor and Serjeant-at-Mace, Alan Wincote will shortly be celebrating twenty-five years as carrier of the Sadler Mace. Fortunately there appears to be no sign of him quitting. The Town Council very much appreciates his loyal service, and offers congratulations and sincere thanks.

A BEAUTIFUL VENUE IN THE HEART OF THE TOWN

The recently redecorated Town Hall is available for hire and as a licensed marriage premises, is a perfect setting for your wedding or reception.

It is more affordable than you may think and don't forget that the Town Council has set aside twelve occasions in the year for charitable events such as coffee mornings, completely FREE OF CHARGE. For more information please contact the Town Hall - 01789 269332.





TOWN HALL

THE NEW USER-FRIENDLY WEB-SITE

www.stratforduponavontowncouncil.com

The Town Council is proud of its new web-site, greatly enhanced since lottery funding enabled a complete revamp of its existing site to ensure that it is easy to negotiate and completely DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compatible.

It is packed with information, from contact details of members and council staff to its constantly updated notice board containing useful data including severe weather warnings. Council agendas, reports and minutes of meetings are published and there are links to other associated sites including the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust which developed the easy to use cemetery data base with records dating from 1881 to 1964. Council staff are inputting records from 1964 to the present day but it is a slow process!

The Town Council is also currently working on a Community Data Base and is contacting the many clubs and societies within the town in order to provide, eventually, a comprehensive data base giving contact details and meeting times and venues of each organisation. It is planned that in time, the club or society will be issued with a password to enable limited site access to keep its own records up to date.

The Council wishes to extend the facility by providing access to the Council's web site through a touch monitor situated in the lobby of the Town Hall. This won't be a free surfing facility but will enable those without a personal computer to access the web site and visit other sites linked to it.



COUNCIL CONTACTS

Alveston

Cllr Michael Crutchley	01789 267564
Cllr Dr Rev Roy Lodge MBE	01789 269332
Cllr Joan McFarlane	01789 209033
Cllr Joy Seaman	01789 204633
Cllr Vince Seaman	01789 204633

Avenue & Newtown

Cllr Donna Barker	01789 267216
Cllr Maureen Beckett	01789 299347
Cllr Keith Lloyd	01789 551856
Cllr Bill Lowe	01789 550767
Cllr Juliet Short	01789 294247

Guild & Hathaway

Cllr Kate Dill-Russell	01789 205819
Cllr Bill Dowling	01789 266192

Cllr Jenny Fradgley	01789 266369
Cllr Sheila Sandle	01789 268322
Cllr Clive Thomas	01789 551648

Mount Pleasant

Cllr John Bicknell	01789 550203
Cllr Joyce Taylor	01789 268491
Cllr Chris Wall	07969 239753

Town Council Office

01789 269332
info@stratforduponavontowncouncil.gov.uk
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And finally

... A word on Value for Money

A distraught lady brought her pet duck to the vet but it was quite obvious that the duck was dead. The owner was not content so the vet gave it a cursory examination but pronounced the same fate – 'Your duck is dead'. Still she was not satisfied. The vet called and a few moments later a large black Labrador came into the consulting room put his front paws up on the examination couch and carefully sniffed the duck from head to webbed foot. With his doleful brown eyes fixed on the vet, he shook his head. The duck's owner looked sceptical. The vet called again and a beautiful cat entered, jumped onto the table and licked the duck all over. She looked at the vet with her huge yellow eyes and shook her head. The vet turned to his computer, and a few moments later presented the bill amounting to £142.00. The owner was outraged - 'But you haven't done anything' she stormed. 'If you had accepted my initial diagnosis it would have cost you £25.00' he said. 'But once you start going in for Lab Reports and Cat Scans, well, the costs just escalate'!



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