



The Stratford-upon-Avon Society

Trustee Report and Accounts for the
Year ending 31st December 2022

**THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 251182**

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**THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 251182**

President	Dr Kevin Bond
Vice Presidents	Professor Ian Heggie Dr Roger Pringle
Chairman	Dr Lindsay MacDonald
Vice Chairman	John Scampion CBE
General Committee (Trustees)	Jonathan Devereux (Treasurer) Margaret Cund (Planning) Ian Fradgley (Membership) Jann Tracy (Transport) Steve Turner (Planning) Helen Elliott (Publicity) Dr Robert Bearman MBE (Civic) Dr Diana Owen OBE (Environment) Ian Prosser (Civic)
Note	
Charity Number	251182
Hon Secretary	Olga David
Bankers	Barclays Bank plc Market Cross Stratford-upon-Avon Warwickshire CV37 0EA
Independent Examiner	Wende A Hubbard FCCA Burgis and Bullock 8 Elm Court, Arden Street Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6PA

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2022

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2022.

Constitution, Objects and Policies

The Society is constituted by Trust Deed dated 19th January 1966 and is registered with the Charity Commission, Registration Number 251182.

Appointment of Trustees is governed by the constitution of the Charity. The Board of Trustees to fill vacancies arising through resignation or death of an existing Trustee.

The Trustees comprise the officers of the Stratford-upon-Avon Society and are responsible for managing the business of the society according to Charity Law.

The Charity is Established for the public benefit which through its objects and principal activity is within the area of Stratford-upon-Avon and its surroundings

- To promote high standards of planning and architecture
- To educate and stimulate public interest in the geography, history, natural history, and architecture of the area
- To encourage the preservation, protection, development, and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area The society will through its general committee
 - Consult and work with the local planning authority, planning committees and all other statutory authorities, educational institutions, voluntary organizations, charities and persons having similar aims to the society
 - Pursue these aims through meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, other forms of education, publicity, and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature
 - Raise funds for the furtherance of charitable objects through contributions from person or persons by way of subscription, donation, or other contribution.

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Annual Review

Chairman's Report for 2022

During 2022 the Committee decided that, because of the effectiveness of the covid vaccination measures, it was safe to resume normal meetings in person. From April onwards we met in the congenial surroundings of the function rooms at the White Swan, where we heard some excellent presentations.

In the first half of the year we participated in a number of memorable events. We were shown around the ancient Mason's Court in a private tour; we joined Nick Birch at the boat yard to celebrate the addition of the beautifully restored 100-year-old 'Merry Widow' to the river cruising fleet; we attended the official opening of the new marina by Seven Meadows; we gave a spirited reading of King John at the Town Hall, with Roger Pringle in the title role and Janet Anslow as Lady Falconbridge remembering her passionate affair with Richard Coeur de Lion; we carried flowers and banners with great style to represent the Society in the Shakespeare Birthday procession; and we enjoyed a comprehensive tour of the newly rebuilt RSC Costume Workshops.

The Committee met six times during the year, at two-monthly intervals. My sincere thanks to all the committee members for their hard work and many contributions throughout the year. Thanks in particular to our Treasurer, Jonathan Devereux, for his very effective management of the finances, and to our Secretary, Olga David, as she steps down from the Committee, for the excellent minutes she has produced.

Three significant achievements for the year were:

- We signed the Contract with Historic England for the StratFire project, to investigate the rebuilding of timber-framed houses in High Street and Chapel Street following three disastrous town fires in 1594, 1595 and 1614. This project was masterminded by Dr Robert Bearman, who continues to lead the documentary research group.
- Five new pavement plaques were designed and produced, for installation in 2023 in front of key buildings along the Historic Spine: Harvard House, the Old Vicarage, the Almshouses, the Dower House, and Holy Trinity Church.
- We have continued to add content to our website at <https://www.stratfordsociety.co.uk> including the Historic Spine, the StratFire project, and publications relating to Stratford.

The over-riding concern is that our membership continues to decline, and not enough new members are joining. It has been noticeable that the number of members in attendance at our meetings at the White Swan has not returned to the previous level, perhaps because of continuing fears about the prevalence of covid. In a town with a population approaching 30,000 we should be able to mobilise people to be involved with matters relating to town planning, protection of the environment and preservation of cultural heritage. Somehow we need to reach out through social media to two generations of younger residents to get them involved. The issues of planning, tourism, traffic, roads, house building, conservation, the river and the environment remain as important as ever to the quality of life in Stratford.

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Chairman's Report for 2022 - continued

I am stepping down this year from the position of Chairman, and encourage my successor to take up these challenges. The Stratford Society is important for Stratford and its future, with an eye to its wonderful heritage. We need to be stronger in collaborating with the Town and District Councils to ensure that all aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan are implemented and to resist opportunistic developments that are not in the town's best interests.

Lindsay MacDonald, Chairman

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Programme Report

2022 continued to be affected by the covid pandemic. At the start of the year we continued to hold meetings online, broadcast by zoom. But by April the Committee deemed it feasible to resume 'physical' meetings. The Shakespeare Centre in Henley Street remained closed, so we met instead at the White Swan in Rother Market. Events are listed at: [https://www.stratfordsociety.co.uk/events/meetings- 2022](https://www.stratfordsociety.co.uk/events/meetings-2022) Edited videos of most of the meetings may be viewed on our YouTube channel. Meetings were normally held 6–7 pm on the third Monday of each month:

17 January	Getting cars off the road – Stephen Norrie (Stratford Climate Action)
21 February	Accessible Stratford – Elizabeth Dixon (Disability Adviser)
21 March	Delivering our Climate Change Plan – David Barber (Warwick District Council)
18 April	Stratford Houses: Recording and Dating – Dr Nat Alcock (Warwick University)
16 May	Nature's Recovery – Ian Jelley (Warwickshire Wildlife Trust)
21 June	AGM and Stratford, Past, Present and Future – Tony Bird OBE
22 August	A man in all the world's new fashion planted – Alistair McArthur (RSC Costume Workshop)
17 October	"You may think that, but I couldn't possibly comment" – Sarah Summers (Former Town Clerk)
21 November	Stratford-upon-Avon in 50 Buildings – Bob Bearman and Lindsay MacDonald
12 December	Christmas gathering

Excursions and activities for members in 2022 included:

- (March) a guided tour of Mason's Court in Rother Street;
- (March) a group reading of Shakespeare's play King John;
- (March) a visit to the Marina construction site;
- (April) celebration of the restoration of the 'Merry Widow' river cruiser by Avon Boating; (April) Stratford Society participation in the Shakespeare birthday procession;
- (May) Joint meeting with the Shakespeare Club for dramatisation of the Jaggard story; (August) a tour of the rebuilt RSC costume workshop on Waterside;
- (September) an outing to the Brandon Marsh wildlife reserve near Coventry; (December) Quiz on Southern Warwickshire, devised by Margaret Cund.

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Planning Report

2022 saw the Stratford District Council (SDC) taking decisions on a number of planning applications made in 2021. Having submitted an objection, the Stratford Society welcomed the Council's refusal of permission, in February 2022, for a development at the rear of Meer Street.

During the year, the Society's principal concerns related to two major proposals within Stratford's Conservation Area. The first, the redevelopment of Debenhams, is particularly sensitive, being along the Historic Spine. While acknowledging that there is no demand to retain this as a department store, the Society urged that ways be sought of converting the existing building - which merits a reference in Pevsner's 'The Buildings of Warwickshire' - rather than demolishing it. The construction sector needs to reuse building materials to make its contribution to achieving national emission reduction targets. Despite this, in April, the Council approved the planning application, and demolition is expected to start in late-2023, to be followed by construction of a hotel on the site in High Street.

The other major planning proposal relates to the construction of an apartment building at the Arden Street/Greenhill Street corner. To date, this has gone out for consultation on four occasions, with various changes to the design, but none of these setting the proposed building back from the existing pavements. The Society has repeatedly pointed out that no account is taken of the Greenhill and Arden Streets Environment Improvement Plan, which is part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The aim of the Plan is to provide high-quality pedestrian and cycle links at this junction, which is an important gateway to the town. It seems probable that the Council will decide on this application in early 2023.

It is some time since consultation closed on the South-West Relief Road and, more recently, on the outline planning application for construction of 238 houses on land east of Shipston Road, south of the Rosebird Centre. In neither case has a date been set for these to come before the Council's Planning Committee for a decision.

Margaret Cund

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Publicity Report

During 2022 I have attended the Society's meetings and prepared 10 press notices and reviews for the Herald, and recently also for the Facebook page, via John Freeland, who is its administrator.

We do not have accurate statistics about the effect of this publicity, but we do have some evidence from people that they have been to meetings and joined the Society as a result of reading the articles.

It would be helpful to the Society if we could routinely ask visitors and new members about how they learned about the Society. The question could be asked on the membership application form.

The Facebook page is being used increasingly to advertise the Society and has over 500 followers. Social media are increasingly used by younger people in particular (although Facebook has a slightly older demographic profile than other channels) and the Society will have to consider how best to use these media to attract members in the future.

It might also be helpful to place the articles on the Stratford Society's website to inform current but fewer active members and potential members about the talks and show them what they are missing.

Helen Elliott

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Town Centre Report

The Society's interest in the town centre revolves around two themes – the plaques scheme, for which there is a full report elsewhere on this agenda, and the work of the Town Centre Strategic partnership on which I reported last year.

Since last year's AGM, the partnership has concentrated on three principal projects:

1. The Bridge Street/High Street scheme for greater pedestrian priority in the town centre was put forward in the second round of bidding for levelling-up funding. It was essentially the same scheme as that submitted in the previous year, enthusiastically supported by the partnership and substantially endorsed in extensive public consultation carried out last year.
2. They are considering a constitutional change by agreeing in principle to the setting up of a Transformation Board to concentrate on promoting the town, its key priorities and seeking funding from available sources. The essence of the proposal is that the new board would become the executive body with the existing partnership representing community interests and working in an advisory capacity. This is a significant proposal very much in its early stages and potentially far reaching. It needs research particularly to get a sense of the experience of other towns who have gone that way. There is a good deal of work still to do to achieve a structure which will meet the needs and circumstances of Stratford and I will keep the Society fully posted.
3. To date the vision and the key strategies set out in the Neighbourhood Development Plan have driven the work of the partnership. Whilst many provisions in that plan are still relevant and important for the town, inevitably as circumstances change we need to move forward. With that in mind, they have been working extensively on creating a new vision and a set of strategies to guide them for the next 5 to 10 years. Work has reached a stage where a full consultation can begin, and I will ensure that the Society is kept in the picture.

There are two further initiatives to report. The partnership has worked with a local artist on a scheme to decorate a series of bollards in the town centre. It is essentially experimental and may lead to more complete coverage in the future.

A website for the partnership is currently being created, which will at last give it some visibility, and an opportunity for dialogue with the community.

Finally, the chair of the partnership changed in August. It is now held by Sara Aspley, the chief executive of the Town Trust, who took over from Geraldine Collinge of the RSC. I continue to represent the Society as vice chairman.

John Scampion

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Town Centre Report – continued

Addendum: though not technically part of this report which covers the year ending December 2022, I can advise the AGM that in January this year the Bridge Street/High Street scheme bid was turned down by government for a second year. It is uncertain, perhaps unlikely, that any further bid will be made for levelling-up funds. I believe we need to press to achieve alternative ways of funding this important project.

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Report from Stratford Society representative (Jann Tracy) on the Town Transport Group (TTG)

During the last year TTG meetings took place every month, with two being via Zoom and one at the Town Hall. Events in South Warwickshire seem to move very slowly, with the same items on the Agenda month after month.

Objections have been submitted by TTG regarding the fourth Draft Local Transport Plan (LTP4) as follows. The document provides no leadership on how transport will be enhanced. There is no long-term plan for the town aimed at tackling its transport problems. It is the TTG's view and experience that if funding is to be forthcoming from any source it is necessary to demonstrate a clear and well thought-out plan, which will generate confidence, and it is the TTG's view that the current Draft LTP4 does not do that for Stratford-upon-Avon, and therefore it does not support the needs of the town. The Draft LTP4 is very disappointing.

TTG also objected to the proposed siting of All Things Wild (Campden Road) due to the increase of traffic, especially over Clopton Bridge: Developments such as this have continuously been brought forward, without any meaningful changes to the town's transport infrastructure. The result is that traffic congestion in the town and its hinterland has continued to deteriorate, with all the attendant problems of poor accessibility, queuing, poor air quality, noise, visual intrusion, and general nuisance affecting the well-being of residents and visitors alike. The economy of the town is threatened, and it is the TTG's view that the development of sites such as this, scattered around the town, has to stop without proper transport infrastructure.

Perennial issues are: buses and the lack of bus routes factored into proposed developments; changes to the Clopton Bridge/Tiddington Road interchange; the new Evesham Road roundabout; Long Marston and the South West Relief Road (SWRR), etc.

However, improvements to the structure of the Greenway have been ensured; the closing of Shop Mobility has been delayed; cycleways have been successfully incorporated into the Birmingham Road infrastructure changes.

According to one Councillor, there is a shortage of transport planners in both WCC and SDC, which might explain the lack of purpose in some proposals.

However frustrating it is month after month to hear "no change" or "no update", I believe that it is important for groups such as TTG continue to press for advantageous change to Council plans, and that the Stratford Society, as one of the keepers of the town's historical heritage, maintains an input.

Jann Tracy

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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StratFire Project Report

The Society was awarded a grant for a four-year project to date through dendrochronology selected buildings along the Historic Spine thought to have been affected by the fires of 1594/5 and 1614. Associated documentary research by volunteers, led by Bob Bearman, into buildings and families in occupation at that time will seek to explore the impact of these fires on individuals and the economy of Stratford upon Avon. The grant awarded, totalling £40,625, predominantly funds building archaeologists providing the detailed targeting for the Historic England appointed dendrochronologist to undertake sampling. In the year an initial draw down of restricted funds was paid of £10,000.

Project start-up

On 18th April Dr Nat Alcock launched the project with a talk to Society members. The public launch followed on 26th May with over 20 volunteers signing up for the research team, and the first steering group meeting. The HE dendrochronologist was announced on 10 May, with the appointee Martin Bridge available from June.

Dendrochronology Progress

21 Chapel Street – Chaucer’s Head Bookshop was surveyed, and sampling completed on 25 July. This revealed that much of the building was constructed of Elm – a common local timber resource in Stratford of the period, but much harder to date than Oak.

36 High Street (Ecco Shoes) was also sampled with completion on 26 July. Initial results suggested a date 1459–91. The research team proposed a likely rebuild date of 1473, which would fit within that range, and the HE team by the end of 2022 was seeking ways of narrowing the date range. The result is an exciting find for such a plain building.

22 Chapel Street – Nash’s House was surveyed on 24 August and sampled on 17 October. It is constructed almost entirely of Oak with limited amounts of Elm. The results were awaited at the year end.

25 High Street – Garrick Inn was also surveyed on 24 August and sampled on 18 October. Again mostly Oak with limited Elm and results awaited.

14-19 Chapel Street – Shakespeare Hotel was reviewed by building archaeologists on 15 December, with sampling taking place early in the new year (25 January 2023). Repeated the pattern of timbers found, this site is extensive, covering roughly the same area as the first four sites combined.

Tudor House, 23-24 High Street, and Harvard House, 26 High Street, were identified as targets for early 2023, largely because they complete the story for the Garrick Inn.

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StratFire Project Report - continued

Documentary Research

Bob Bearman's team met for two group meetings (Harvard House), and ten study sessions at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust with draft building histories completed for the first four properties surveyed. The process of reviewing prominent families means that work is progressing on the wider 50 buildings of interest (whether still standing or not) beyond the 20 identified specifically for dendrochronology.

Steering Group

Three steering group meetings have been held updating stakeholders. Challenges remain in negotiating access to sites and availability of team members matching with access slots. HE is aware of the impact of the late start and specific team member availability, challenges leading to a restricted fund carry forward at the close of the year.

Jonathan Devereux

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity's Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts did not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matter in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

Wende A Hubbard FCCA

8 Elm Court
Arden Street
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 6PA

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Financial Report 31 December 2022

Bank position at: 31 December 2022.

Deposit Account	£15,086.89	
Current Account	£ 2,509.04	£17,595.93

Receipts for the year of £16,425 included £11,900 for restricted funds and £4,525 from general activities.

Further contributions of £1,900 were received in the year for **Plaques**. In total £3,050 is held as contributions towards further plaques five having been manufactured but not yet installed during 2022, and reserves of £1,000 held for the Shakespeare Hotel's Plaque.

The first payment for the **dendrochronology** project, £10,000 was received, these funds can only be spent on the cost plan agreed with HISTORIC ENGLAND to deliver the project. Within the year £4,489 was spent on the project, leaving £5,511 restricted reserves and a further £5,000 installment due before 31 March 2023. The overall project over four years has a revised grant approval totaling £41,105 for the period to September 2025.

In January 2023 a £50 donation to the Marie Corelli Fund was received. This fund was created in 2016 from a restricted grant and two further donations in 2017, with the appropriate balance of £546 shown separately with a restriction on its use for the preservation of Marie Corelli's grave and memorial.

Sales of the **Historic Spine** leaflet had by March covered the cost of printing in 2021 (£470) with sales in total of £920. A reprint costing £575 was paid in December 2022.

Gift aid has been paid for 2020 2021 and 2022. In total that contributed over £1,109 in 2022. An issue remains establishing new members intentions – *to gift aid or not to gift aid* – that is the question.....

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Financial Report 31 December 2022 continued

Membership receipts before gift aid exceeded 2021 totaling £2,418 a modest 3.9% increase in receipts on the previous year.

Reserves net	
Cash Position @ 31 December 2022	17,596
Held for Stratfire	5,511
Held for Corelli Fund	546
Held for Plaques	1,050
<hr/>	
Restricted reserves	7,107
Designated for Plaques	2,050
General reserves	8,439
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Total Reserves	17,596

A review of the level of designation to be applied to the £8,985 will be undertaken by Trustees in addition to the £2,050 designated for completion of Plaques.

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Receipts and Payments Account for year ending - 31 December 2022

	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i>	2022 <i>Total</i>	2021
			<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
RECEIPTS			<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Subscriptions		2,418	2,418	2,327
Stratfire	10,000		10,000	-
Plaques	1,900		1,900	1,450
Gift Aid		1,109	1,109	-
Sales - misc		645	645	275
Visits & attendance		335	335	-
Bank Interest		18	18	1
Total Receipts	11,900	4,525	16,425	4,053
PAYMENTS			<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Governance & admin				<i>£</i>
Insurance		395	395	385
AGM		75	75	
Inspection		288	288	276
Committee Meeting expenses		97	97	-
commission and charges		10	10	3
	-	865	865	664
Talks, Presentations and communications				
Zoom Fees		144	144	144
Promotion		159	159	
Website		300	300	300
Speakers and accomodation		150	150	50
	-	753	753	494
Events and Visits				
Masons Court		150	150	
Shakespeare Parade		50	50	
King John		500	500	
Christmas (Summer Garden) Party		417	417	200
	-	1,117	1,117	200
Projects				
Stratfire	4,489		4,489	
Pavement plaques	2,300	1,950	4,250	168
Town Centre Strategic Partnership		-	-	600
Historic Spine		575	575	470
	6,789	2,525	9,314	1,238
Total Payments	6,789	5,260	12,049	2,596
Net of (Payments)/ Receipts	5,111	(735)	4,376	1,457
Funds at 31.12.21	1,450	11,770	13,220	11,763
Re-statement of Funds	546	(546)	0	0
Funds at 31 December 2022	7,107	10,489	17,596	13,220

THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 DECEMBER 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
ASSETS - Cash funds		
Barclays Bank - Current Account	2,509	3,901
Barclays Bank - Deposit Account	15,087	9,319
 Total Cash	17,596	13,220

	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i>	2022	2021
			£	£
RESERVES				
Stratfire	5,511		5,511	
Plaques Donations	1,050		1,050	1,450
Plaques Designated		2,050	2,050	4,000
Marie Corelli Fund	546		546	-
General Reserve		8,439	8,439	7,770
Reserves at 31 October	7,107	10,489	17,596	13,220

Marie Corelli Fund has been re-stated during year from the General Reserve.

Approved by the Board on 20 March 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Lindsay MacDonald
Chairman

Jonathan Devereux
Honorary Treasurer and Trustee