

Abstract of membership survey results, October 2020

In total forms were sent to 95 email and 8 postal addresses. 27 members responded, of whom 14 were male and 13 female. 13 respondents were in the age range 65-74 and 11 were 75 or older.

Interests: The top three interests (similar for both male and female): Local affairs; History and heritage; Arts and Entertainment. The bottom three: Sports; Games; Online communities.

Aspects of the town: The top three of greatest interest/concern: Theatre; Pedestrianisation; Appearance of the streets. The bottom three: Schools; Recreational facilities; Supermarkets.

What the Society does well: Talks and social events; Providing a forum for discussion of civic affairs; Keeping members in touch with current local affairs; Role as advocate for the town's heritage.

Where Society is failing: Not pursuing its primary role as a civic society; Has lost its identity; Not enough use of social media; Not enough interaction with younger generations; Not recruiting enough new members; Not high enough profile in the local community; Talks should be more entertaining.

Consider for future programme: Pedestrianizing the town centre; Guided walking tour; Fear of crime and disorderly behaviour; Town centre revitalisation; Traffic congestion solutions; Historic houses.

Frequency of events: Monthly 18; Bi-monthly 7; Quarterly 2.

Suggested innovations: More use of digital media; More online events, Publish an online journal; Meetings via zoom; Develop a Young Persons' Stratford Society; Programme of local school visits.

Preferred time slots for online presentations: After 7pm, all weekdays equally preferred

Lockdown arrangements in Stratford: School children of all ages do not think of social distancing; Markets for traders from out of town should be discontinued; Very depressing effect in town centre; Generally well enforced inside shops by the owners; Crass arrangement of Bridge Street; Poorly implemented and patchily enforced; More focus needed on local controls; Very hard times for the hotels and leisure facilities; Good to have the High Street pedestrianised.

Most important issues for the town: Shop closures; Traffic congestion; Too many levels of Local Government; Residential planning; Pedestrian river crossing; More pedestrianisation of town centre; Finding safe ways to reopen RSC and SBT properties; Weight limit on Clopton Bridge; Finding alternative uses for empty shops; More use of Park and Ride facilities; Need more cycle lanes; Protect historic/architectural heritage; Stop housing sprawl encroaching onto farm land.

Further suggestions: Discourage further mass housing development; Complete outer ring road around town; Improve cycle network; Recruit younger members; Keep going!

Summary: The respondents were almost entirely retired people, who are interested mainly in civic matters and the history of the town. Although there is a strong desire to resume physical meetings and events once the covid pandemic is over, members are interested in having online events in the meanwhile. Many useful suggestions were made for topics and issues affecting the town. Key concerns were the needs to recruit younger members and to work more closely with the Town and District Councils. Overall the results of the Survey indicated an encouraging general endorsement of the aims of the Society, and also provided food for thought as to new directions and ways of operating.

The full survey responses can be downloaded from the Society website at:

[https://www.stratfordsociety.co.uk/files/The Stratford Society Survey 2020 Results.pdf](https://www.stratfordsociety.co.uk/files/The%20Stratford%20Society%20Survey%202020%20Results.pdf)