

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

**TRUSTEES REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
for the YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2020**

**THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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**THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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CHARITY INFORMATION AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2020

President	Sir Brian Follett
General Committee (Trustees*)	Kevin Bond* (Chairman) Lindsay MacDonald (Vice Chairman and Events) Jonathan Craig* (Treasurer) John Deegan* Ian Prosser* John Scampion* Ian Andrew (Membership Secretary) Bob Bearman

Note: Julie Crawshaw stood down from the Committee at the 2018 AGM but remained as Trustee throughout 2020.

Charity Number	251182
Hon Secretary	Olga David
Bankers	Barclays Bank Market Cross Stratford-upon-Avon Warwickshire CV37 0EA
Independent Examiner	Wende A Hubbard FCCA 8 Elm Court Arden Street Stratford upon Avon CV37 6PA

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

Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2020

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2020.

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 is recognised to appoint new 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 to stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the town and its surrounds. To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest. To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, other forms of instruction and publicity and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.

Annual Review

Chairman's Report

This year's annual meeting will take place as our Town is recovering from a series of shocks occasioned by the Covid Pandemic. We were unable to hold a physical AGM last year and we have progressively changed our speakers programme into virtual zoom meetings which have been increasingly popular. A great thanks you to our Speakers Secretary Lindsay and Society Secretary Olga for managing this process.

Whilst zoom has enabled us to continue with a reduced level of activity during 2020 as we emerge into 2021 we see changes to the use of High Street and Bridge Street to make greater space for people and a reduction/control of traffic. Of course, The Society has been supporting greater pedestrian space for some years and already we can see a change of street environment in High Street emerging.

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Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2020

Chairman's Report (continued)

We are also seeing a loss of national names in the shops in the central streets. We have increasing numbers of restaurants, cafes and hotels planned. Not all will survive due to market competition and the continued development of online shopping. What is likely to continue is the increasing change of use of many properties to retail/accommodation. The Town Centre is slowly being repopulated by residents.

The District Council is looking at new leisure developments; the improvement of the children's play area on The Recreation Ground and the development of The Riverside Project between Fisherman's Carpark and Seven Meadows Road. The Society has contributed to the consultations and whilst supportive has expressed concerns about enlargement of car parking when a perfectly good facility exists at The Leisure Centre.

There must be concern about how new patterns of tourism will develop post pandemic and how long such changes take to work themselves through with the implications for employment and prosperity. It is unlikely the international tourism will recover until mid decade.

The Stratford Town Council has established a working group to look at how The Neighbourhood Plan is delivered and what changes might be necessary in the light of changing circumstances. We have a member of The Society involved in this work.

The General Committee believe that, in the light of the above, it is correct for us as a Society to look at how we relaunch this year in order to contribute to the debate on what our Town should become as we move forward. We have championed The Historic Spine and now through the work led by John Scampion have laid a number of plaques outside many of the most significant buildings with more to come. We are engaged on the consultative groups planning changes and we do, of course, contribute to consultations on most significant planned developments.

We would like to encourage members to participate in the leadership of The Society. We have a number of resignations from the General Committee this year. I would like to thank Ian Prosser, John Degan, Jonathan Craig and Ian Andrews who are standing down. We do need replacements for these committee members.

I would also like to thank our General Committee and membership for all they have done to keep our Society running throughout this awful pandemic. We have rapidly become proficient in the use of new technological communications.

Finally, I am standing down as Chairman following three times in the chair. I am happy to continue to support our Society but this year we need a new Chairman.

Kevin Bond
Chairman

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Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2020

Planning Report

This report covers the period of 2019 through to 2021 (April). The pandemic has seen a reduction in significant planning application but the past few months we are now seeing increased activity.

Members will be aware that house building is increasing again with a major development along the North Western boundary of the Town building out. This was approved a number of years ago and we are likely to also see the Shottery development commence in the coming months which also both carry implications for traffic.

Town Centre hotel developments are planned for both the old BHS and Debenhams sites with recent publicity indicating that the Debenhams development is likely to be significantly larger. The proposed hotel development on the site of the old cinema has been held back and the future of this site is currently uncertain.

Many Town Centre shops are going through, or are likely to go through change of tenant in the coming months. With online shopping still growing the amount of space sought by retailers is reducing and residential accommodation developments above is increasing.

The shape of the retail offering is likely to move increasingly towards the tourist and hospitality sectors. Streetscape developments, the current trial of High Street being closed from 10 am to 6 pm, in line with that in Henley Street, already shows coffee tables on the street and greater pedestrian space.

The Society has supported The Riverside Linear Environmental proposal which The Town Trust with Stratford District Council are proposing subject to reduction in the new car parking and greater use of facilities already available in The Leisure Centre Car Park. We await formal planning notice.

The Society has objected to the application for the renewal of The Stratford Wheel which is based on an application in perpetuity. We think that the development is against current District and Neighbourhood Plan policies. Similarly a planning application to permit the Stratford Waterside Market to take place on the land opposite The Encore pub is objected to by us. Amazingly, this market has been held on this site under a 2014 permission but the land used opposite the pub is NOT licensed so the market has been in breach of its permission for years without enforcement. The Society believe this is a dreadful example of The District Council failing to police their own undertakings whilst holding others to account.

During the past year we have had a number of changes to our Planning Officer personnel. Thank you to all who have helped out and welcome to Margaret Cund who has stepped forward to take this role on.

Kevin Bond
April 2021

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Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2020

Programme Report for 2020

The monthly meetings were planned to be held at the traditional venue at the Shakespeare Centre in Henley Street, on the third Monday of each month. The first two meetings were:

January *What's the use of the Town Council?* The Mayor, Kate Rolfe, reflected on how the Town Council has changed over the years and its relevance to the present-day affairs of the town.

February *Shakespeare: "the god of my idolatry"* Greg Doran, Artistic Director of the RSC, gave a talk to a packed audience in the Queen Elizabeth Hall at SBT. He mused about the remarkable stained glass window behind the Shakespeare memorial in Holy Trinity, commemorating the controversial James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps. This was a joint meeting with the Shakespeare Club

At this point, unfortunately, the corona virus overtook the country, and from the beginning of March all public gatherings were abandoned in the general lockdown. The final four events planned for the season were cancelled.

March *Making Stratford a better place for cyclists* The meeting was planned in the Traditional Cycle Shop, by the causeway of Clopton Bridge, with a three-way debate by Fran Martin, Jenny Fradgley and Dr Robert Bearman of the Stratford Cycle Forum.

April *Perspectives on the history of the Guild Chapel* Two talks were to be given in the Guild Chapel, one by Sandra MacDonald on insights from the medieval accounts, and the other by Dr Rodger Palmer on the major renovation in the 1960s.

May *Stratford Town Trust – at the heart of our community* Sara Aspley (Chief Executive) would have explained the dual role of the Trust as place maker and grant giver, and how it is responding to the changing needs of the community. The AGM of the Society was also to have been held on this date.

June The Summer Garden Party was to have been held in the Great Garden, New Place, in association with the Shakespeare Club. The plan was to form a living perimeter around the site of the 19th century Chapel Lane Theatre, in which to perform some scenes from Shakespeare.

Over the summer there was a lot of soul-searching over whether and when to resume normal meetings, but it became clear that it would be a long time. In October we conducted a survey of all members for guidance on how to proceed. The respondents were almost entirely retired people, who indicated an interest mainly in civic matters and the history of the town. Although there was a strong desire to resume physical meetings and events once the Covid pandemic is over, members were definitely interested in having online events in the meanwhile. This was confirmed in an online General Meeting of members.

We therefore purchased a license to host online meetings via the Zoom video conference utility. The first two of these were:

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Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2020

Programme Report for 2020 (continued)

November *Better Cycling in Stratford* Jenny Fradgley and Bob Bearman, two of the leading exponents of cycling in Stratford, talked about their personal commitment to cycling as a means of getting about town, and their experiences in trying to get things done in Stratford in the interests of the environment and improving the town centre for everyone's benefit.

December *The Riverside Green Corridor* Sara Aspley (Town Trust) and Tony Perks (SDC) presented the concept of the Stratford Riverside Corridor project, a joint partnership between Stratford District Council and Stratford Town Trust. The corridor is the land between the River Avon and the Warwick Road, from the Fisherman's car park at the north end, past the bridges, through to Seven Meadows Road at the south.

Lindsay MacDonald, Programme Secretary

Financial Report for 2020

Bank position as at 1st April 2021.

Deposit a/c	£ 9,317
Current a/c	£ 4,143
	£13,460

This includes £1,670 in subscriptions received to date.

Regular annual outgoings for audit, insurance and web maintenance £1,000.

During the last 5 years irregular costs for meetings, presentations and AGM's have ranged from £650 to £1,200, with little in the last 12 months due to the lockdown.

The few major past expenses have been for Christmas and Summer parties £2,000 (2016) and £4,400 for Marie Corelli grave restoration and exhibition (2017).

We discussed using some of our reserves to support a further 6 pavement plaques for Holy Trinity Church, Headmaster's House at KES, Shakespeare Hotel, Town House, Alms Houses, and Harvard House, and dendrochronology for the Shakespeare Hotel and the Town House. At an estimated cost of £1,000 per house for plaques and £1,000 per building for the dendrochronology that would come to £8,000. It was agreed that first we would seek to ask the owners to pay for all or part of the cost for their premises, and that we would reserve up to £4,000 as a contribution from the Society where some may not be able to pay all or only a part of the cost.

Jonathan Craig, Treasurer

**THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2020

Stratford Town Transport Group Report

The Society co-sponsors this group, along with Stratford and the Town Council, and it addresses any transport matters of potential significance for the town. It meets approximately ten times per year and its meetings are generally well attended. The Society is currently represented by John Deegan and Jann Tracy. Because of COVID, meetings in 2020 were held virtually, using the ZOOM software.

As a result of COVID restrictions on vehicular traffic in the town, much of the TTG's attention has been focused on advising the highway authority about road closures and parking changes, which are visible on the ground. As far as possible, the TTG sought to protect the interests of pedestrians, cyclists, blue badge and public transport users. In particular, the closure of High Street provided an early opportunity to implement a key element of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The challenge now ahead is that with the easing of COVID restrictions, and the expected associated growth in town centre traffic demand, it is likely that there will be pressure to remove the closures and thereby reduce the opportunities for permanent improvement in the town centre environment. It will be down to the Town Centre group (which has representatives of the TTG, and separately the Society is represented by John Scampion) to try to resist this pressure.

COVID aside, there has been little significant change on the ground; even the planned Birmingham Road improvements has been delayed because of COVID precautions. Instead, there has been a resurgent interest in transport policies and strategies, most of which have been seen on multiple occasions in the past.

I am retiring as a Society representative on the TTG, and I hope new blood will offer an opportunity to reinvigorate our thinking about Stratford's transport needs.

20 April 2021.

John Deegan
Chair, Stratford Town Transport Group
20 April 2021

Historic Spine Working Group Report

Stratford's 'Historic Spine' is an initiative of the Stratford-upon-Avon Society.

The project was launched in 2007 to highlight the historic route from today's town centre to the parish church along High Street, Chapel Street, Church Street and Old Town.

Over the centuries, Stratford's finest buildings were built along this main artery, comprising the best of the town's architectural heritage, from the mid thirteenth to the early twentieth century and making it one of the most important historic walks in the country.

The project aimed:

- To encourage further research into the history of the buildings along the route
- To make public in various ways the results of this research
- To advocate ways that this rich and varied heritage can be visually improved and appreciated both by local people and visitors to the town.

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Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2020

Historic Spine Working Group Report (continued)

Since 2007 the Society has:

- Produced a walking guide to the route, regularly updated to incorporate new discoveries.
- Posted a fuller version, again regularly updated, on its website of the best buildings along the route
- Supported the publication, twice reprinted, of 'The Frieze', a series of elevational drawings of every building along the Spine, with notes on its history.
- Published a series of articles in the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald's Focus Magazine, on the history of particular buildings along the Spine.
- Worked with the Stratford District Council in a scheme to make grants towards the improvement of several shop fronts.
- Ensured that the Historic Spine was included in the town's Neighbourhood Plan as one of Stratford's assets
- Launched a scheme, largely supported by owners or tenants of some of the most important buildings along the Spine, to install specially commissioned 'pavement plaques'. So far ten are in place.
- Supported dendrochronological work (tree-ring dating) of several timber-framed buildings along the street to establish an accurate date for their original construction. Five buildings along the route have been dated in this way.
- Prepared a video - in 2008 - explaining the historic spine and the initiatives that might be undertaken
- Has been represented on the management committee for the preparation of the Neighbourhood plan which included features of the historic spine, eg pedestrian priority in High Street and the continued enhancement of shop fronts
- The Stratford Society is keen to continue with this work. In particular
- At least ten further buildings could be highlighted through the installation of 'pavement plaques'.
- The majority of these buildings are timber-framed and could possibly be dated more precisely by dendrochronology.

The Society has sponsored the pavement plaques through the Historic Spine Joint Working Group and in the most recent batch has funded one plaque outright – for 5 Old Town- where the owners were not able. Since then the initiative has stalled because of increasing funding difficulties; applications have been made for grants from the Town Trust and public funds and a crowd funding effort was launched which failed to meet its target and which as a result produced nothing. The current position is that there are, in section 2 below 5, owners who have expressed keen interest but unable to raise the funds for the full cost, some £900, and one where funding is likely to be provided by them.

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Trustees report for the year ended 31st December 2020

Historic Spine Working Group Report (continued)

The proposal of the General Committee is that the Society commit from reserves the sum of £4000 to be used to make a significant contribution to the plaques in section 2 and towards dendrochronology in the two buildings from this list where it is appropriate. This may be sufficient to stimulate the owners themselves to find sufficient money to enable an order to be placed for the six plaques; probably for the time being the final batch ; and it may enable the Society to persuade architectural and historic buildings bodies to provide funding or carry out the work on dendrochronology.

Reserves stand at £11000. The Society Treasurer advises that spending this sum would leave a balance sufficient to provide an adequate reserve for the Society's operational purposes and give some scope for some further project expenditure.

John Scampion, Chairman of Spine Joint Working Group
Bob Bearman
Jonathan Craig, Treasurer
April 2021

**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 2020 which are set out on pages 11 and 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity's Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of accounts in accordance with the requirements of 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 the 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 do not accord with those records; or

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters 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

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Receipts and Payments Account
For the year ended 31st December 2020

		2020		2019
RECEIPTS	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions inc Gift Aid				
Subscriptions	2,036		2,535	
Gift Aid	<u>407</u>	2,443	<u>-</u>	2,535
Grants and Donations				
Probus	-		-	
Town Trust	-		500	
Other Donations	<u>-</u>	-	<u>17</u>	517
Talks and Presentations				
Falcon Restoration event	-		657	
Sales-pavement plaques/misc	<u>-</u>	-	<u>-</u>	657
Events and Visits				
Summer Party	-		-	
Visits	<u>-</u>	-	<u>-</u>	-
Bank Interest		<u>7</u>		<u>19</u>
Total Receipts		<u>2,450</u>		<u>3,728</u>
 PAYMENTS				
Governance				
AGM	-		327	
Website, leaflets, promotions	154		1,294	
Postage and Stationery	-		50	
Insurance	334		334	
Audit	264		264	
Commission and charges	<u>2</u>	754	<u>2</u>	2,271
Talks and Presentations				
Accommodation and Refreshments	672		866	
Speakers	-	672	-	866
Events and Visits				
Exhibitions	-		-	
Visits Falcon Restoration	<u>-</u>	-	<u>680</u>	680
Projects				
Pavement Plaques	-		3,896	
Marie Corelli	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,896</u>
Total Payments		<u>1,426</u>		<u>7,713</u>
NET OF (PAYMENTS)/RECEIPTS		1,024		(3,985)
 CASH FUNDS at 31st December 2019				
		<u>10,739</u>		<u>14,724</u>
CASH FUNDS at 31st December 2020		<u>11,763</u>		<u>10,739</u>

**THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SOCIETY
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**Statement of Assets and Liabilities
As at 31st December 2020**

	2020	2019
	£	£
CASH FUNDS		
Barclays Bank – current account	2,445	1,429
Barclays Bank – deposit account	<u>9,318</u>	<u>9,310</u>
TOTAL CASH FUNDS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2020	<u>11,763</u>	<u>10,739</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on

and signed on their behalf by:

Kevin Bond
Chairman

Jonathan Craig
Honorary Treasurer and Trustee