



Stratford
Town Trust

at the heart of our community

Annual Report 2019



Pupils from Thomas Jolyffe School

Welcome from our Chair

As I write the world is in lockdown, paralysed by Coronavirus. Hopefully, by the time you read this, life will have started to move back towards a degree of normality. But while this has been one of the greatest crises of all our lifetimes it's also been a significant challenge for the Town Trust.

Despite having to temporarily close Foundation House during lockdown, the popularity of this welcoming community space continued to grow through 2019. We're delighted that this model for community engagement has worked so well and we're actively considering what other buildings in the Trust's portfolio could also be used to provide place-making facilities for the town. There's a powerful case for a creative hub where smaller artistic businesses could have a base to work, produce, educate others and market their products and services and we're exploring ways we could make this happen. And while you may be a member of the Trust, you may know residents who aren't. I'd like to make 2020 the year where we double our membership and have made sure that joining the Trust is now easier than ever with a new online membership link on our website www.stratfordtowntrust.co.uk/joinus. Please help us to grow our membership this year and every year.

We couldn't have got through this crisis without the passionate support of the Town Trust staff who have all worked tirelessly and I'd like to personally thank them all for their enormous dedication and hard work. Over these dark times we've seen our remarkable town come together with acts of kindness, sympathy and generosity of spirit. We will emerge from this as a stronger, more connected and closer community and the Trust will continue to be a central pillar of Stratford's future well-being. Having been through this unprecedented period of adversity, it's now time to appreciate how lucky we all are. We must make the most of this new dawn.

Quentin Willson
Chair of Trustees



Café WRAP



Thunderbirds netball team

All photos are © Lucy Barriball unless otherwise stated



Welcome from our CEO

Although this is an introduction to the annual review for 2019, it would be remiss of me to ignore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic across the world and within our own communities. Overnight, the Trust's operation underwent a profound change and the same was true for the groups and charities that we support. Many of them having to rapidly rethink how to deliver specialist services to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community. A large part of our income is derived from our commercial property portfolio and it is clear that, despite government aid, some businesses simply will not survive this crisis. We have no way of knowing what our town centre will be like in the future but as I write we find ourselves in a perfect storm of reduced income and increased need.

In 2019 the Trust's income was £3.6 million which enabled us to deliver £2.0m in discretionary and non-discretionary grants to the town. We were delighted to make first time awards to Acorns Children's Hospice who provide specialist support to children and young people with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions and in contrast, to Shottery FC, a newly formed football team, to help buy training kits for young players. Along with our support for local schools and grants for people in crisis, we continue to strive to make a positive impact on the town and bring communities together.

Beyond grant making we endeavour to be at the heart of our community with the Guild Chapel, our outdoor spaces at Rowley Fields and Warwick Road Lands, and the much loved Sunday bandstand concerts. I am particularly proud of the plans this year to increase the biodiversity at Rowley Fields with a change in the management regime and the introduction of a community orchard. Small steps but important nonetheless. Through the grants that we make and our unique role in the town we aim to be at the centre of the recovery. Creating a connected and vibrant community is our vision statement and it has never felt more relevant than now that we work tirelessly in support of this.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated Trustees for their support and direction over the last year. It is clear that in the months and maybe years ahead we will need to find new, collaborative and creative ways to support and unite our community. We look forward to the challenge.

Sara Aspley
Chief Executive



Street Arts Project

CONTENTS

- 5 Who we are
- 6 Highlights of the year
- 8 Listening to you
- 10 Our year in numbers
- 11 Financials
- 14 Improve health and wellbeing
- 16 Positive activities for young people
- 18 Reduce loneliness and social isolation
- 20 Protect and support vulnerable communities
- 22 The Guild Chapel
- 23 Foundation House
- 26 Looking to the future



ILEAP



Who we are

Stratford Town Trust was established, as it operates today, in 2001, when The Guild and College Estates separated from Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council. Prior to that, our long history dates back to the 13th Century. We are a registered charity and managed by a team of dedicated staff and Trustees

Our charity and our assets exist to make Stratford-upon-Avon a place that works for the benefit of our community. We are a Trust for everyone in the town and are committed to listening, connecting and supporting as many people as we can.

Our grants

We typically award over £2million each year to support charities, organisations, projects, events, groups, clubs, schools and individuals across Stratford-upon-Avon to do incredible things for our community.

From small Fast Track grants of up to £1500 to larger and multi-year grants, we fund, engage and empower people to realise their aspirations and make a difference. We prioritise our grants to maximise our impact in the town.

Through Citizens Advice South Warwickshire, we provide small, one-off grants for such things as bedding, furniture, clothing and white goods to those in need. We also distribute grants to all of Stratford-upon-Avon's schools to support them with pastoral care.

We support the upkeep of the Church Street Almshouses and pay an annual allowance to the vicar of Holy Trinity Church. We also support King Edward VI School.

Our funding priorities for 2019 were:

- Improve health and wellbeing
- Positive activities for young people
- Reduce loneliness and social isolation
- Protect and support vulnerable communities
- Provide support in a crisis

Our vision

Creating a connected and vibrant community.

Our community

We organise a wide-range of community development activities and events throughout the year which aim to connect people at the heart of our town.

We run a community hub at Foundation House (p23) to help to bring people together, are custodians of the Guild Chapel (p22), provide 107 allotments and deliver a programme of free summer concerts at the bandstand each year.

Our Trustees

We are governed by a dedicated Board of 11 Trustees drawn from our community. In 2019, we were delighted they were able to take up opportunities to see first-hand the impact made by some of our grant beneficiaries. They visited:

- Change Grow Live
- Stratford Food Bank
- Escape Arts – The Old Slaughter House
- RSC – Clore Learning Centre
- Mencap – Elta House

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Trust is a registered charity (no. 1088521) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (no. 4222949). It is also a Trustee of the Guild Estate Charity (no. 217484) and College Estate Charity (no. 217485).

Highlights of the year

KEY EVENTS IN OUR CALENDAR

JANUARY

First grant round of 2019 sees 13 grants awarded totalling

£220,409

awarded in May

FEBRUARY

Foundation House, our community hub, celebrated its first birthday at a special Community Café



We signed a memorandum of understanding with the Departments of Archaeology and History at the University of York to continue research into The Guild Chapel's remarkable surviving scheme of medieval wall paintings



Guild Chapel volunteers win Team of the Year at Pride of Stratford Awards

© Cliff Armstrong & Michael Robertson-Smith



APRIL

The Guild Chapel wins the judges' Discretionary Award at the UK Heritage Awards

First Community Scarecrow festival held in partnership with Escape Arts as part of the Shakespeare's Birthday celebrations

Abigail Johnson, Communications Officer and James McHugh, Grants Manager join the team

MAY

Launch of our summer programme of free concerts at the bandstand

Official opening of Bishopton Community Centre after £15,000 grant from Stratford Town Trust towards refurbishment



JULY

We supported Stratford Youth Forum to run a stand at River Festival to encourage young people to join the forum and enter a film competition

Our AGM took place on 10 July giving us the opportunity to share our achievements with our members

Second grant round of 2019 sees 21 grants awarded totalling

£290,626

awarded in November

AUGUST

Launch of our biggest ever public consultation to find out what matters to the people of Stratford-upon-Avon

© Dan Walker



We funded Kate's Storytree to provide a summer full of stories at the Bandstand for families to enjoy for free.

SEPTEMBER

Members' consultation evening held at Hotel du Vin

The Guild Chapel celebrates the 750th anniversary of The Holy Cross with a special service



OCTOBER

Foundation House held its first ever Fun Palace celebrating arts, science, crafts and technology with workshops and activities for the whole community



NOVEMBER

First eco market held at Foundation House

The Great Bell at The Guild Chapel rings again after refurbishment commissioned by Stratford Town Trust



DECEMBER

The Telling performed The Secret Life of Carols at the Guild Chapel as part of their UK Christmas tour

Listening to you

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

2019 saw us hold our biggest ever public consultation which took place between August and November. Through an online questionnaire, postcards, focus groups and meetings, we were able to gather the opinions of nearly 1,500 local people. The purpose of the consultation was to capture views on living, working and studying in Stratford-upon-Avon from as many different groups in our town as possible, including young people, whose voices may not be heard.

As part of the process, we were thrilled to offer a memorable community consultation session at Foundation House, where live illustrator Jim Rogers created a visual interpretation of the discussion that took place. Participants had the opportunity to share their views with others in a relaxed and friendly environment and watch their ideas come to life before their eyes. The finished piece of artwork has provided us with a great reminder of what community means.



We also held an event exclusively for our members, enabling them to come together to tell us what matters to them and share their experiences of membership. With over 2000 members lending their support already, we were keen to hear what is currently working well and what we could improve on.

As a result of our findings, we will begin a programme of activities to bring members closer to our work and give them the chance to make decisions on grant awards that will directly benefit the community. We hope this, along with other changes we have planned, will help members to feel their voice is heard and that their membership really does make a difference.

There's never been a better time to join us and you can find out more about becoming a member at: stratfordtowntrust.co.uk/joinus

We were delighted to form a partnership with MBA students from Warwick Business School to support our research and analysis. The collated results from the consultation have directly fed into our Strategic Plan which will be launched in autumn 2020 and will set our direction to 2025. It is clear where you would like us to focus our grant making: meeting the needs of young people and those who are vulnerable or isolated.

New vision statement

You also gave overwhelmingly positive support to the vision statement which we've now adopted: **Creating a Connected and Vibrant Community.** This goal reflects one of the key issues to emerge from the consultation – that many feel there's a fragmented sense of community in our town. Although we've made some steps towards addressing this with our ongoing programme of events and activities at Foundation House, we now have a renewed focus on finding ways to strengthen our community, make new connections and bring people together. We look forward to putting these plans into action over the coming months and years.

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU



Places for young people to go

There are not enough things to do for young people or safe and affordable places for them to meet.



More support and services

Carers, those with disabilities, mental health issues and older people often mentioned lack of practical support, respite and services as an issue.



Green spaces

Young people were appreciative of existing green spaces but would like more. They also expressed concerns about climate change and pollution.



Homelessness

The issue of homelessness in our town was raised and many wanted more to be done to house those in need.

WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS IN 2019

- 1st Bishopton Brownies
 - 1st Bishopton Guides
 - 1st Shotton Scout Beavers
 - 1st Shotton Scout Group
 - Accessible Stratford
 - Acorns Children's Hospice
 - Bridgetown Primary School
 - Central England Lip Reading Support Trust (CELST)
 - Change Grow Live
 - Citizens Advice South Warwickshire
 - Contact the Elderly
 - Cruse Bereavement Care Coventry And Warwickshire
 - Cyclists Fighting Cancer
 - Domestic Abuse Counselling Service
 - Entrust Care Partnership
 - Equality and Inclusion Partnership (Equip)
 - Heart of England Housing Association (Orbit Heart Of England)
 - Heart of England Mencap
 - ILEAP
 - Keep Playing
 - Lifespace
 - Neighbours and Needles
 - Neuromuscular Centre Midlands
 - Own Books
 - Refuge
 - RSC
 - Safeline
 - Shotton United FC
 - SMC (2016) Ltd
 - Songs of Praise
 - Soroptimist International of Stratford
 - St Gregory's Catholic Primary School
 - Stratford District Scout Council
 - Stratford Chess Club
 - Stratford In Bloom
 - Stratford Hockey Club
 - Stratford Musical Theatre Company
 - Stratford on Avon Music Festival
 - Stratford Schools Shakespeare Lecture
 - Stratford Sharks Swimming Club
 - Stratford Thunderbirds Netball Club
 - Stratford Town Colts FC
 - Stratford-upon-Avon Table Tennis Club
 - Stratford-upon-Avon Foodbank
 - Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council
 - Street Arts Project
 - SUA Uniform Bank
 - The 1st Tiddington Scout Group
 - The 6th Stratford-upon-Avon (Clopton) Scout Group
 - The Myton Hospices
 - The Parenting Project
 - The Shakespeare Hospice
 - Thomas Jolyffe Primary School
 - Time4hope
 - VASA
 - Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance
 - Warwickshire County Council
 - Targeted youth support
 - Warwickshire Police Safer Neighbourhoods
 - Warwickshire Pride
 - Warwickshire Reminiscence Action Project
 - Warwickshire Vision Support
 - Welcombe Hills School
 - Young People First
- Schools**
- Alcester Grammar School
 - Alveston C of E Primary School
 - Bishopton Primary School
 - Bridgetown Primary School
 - Shotton St. Andre's C of E Primary School
 - St. Benedict's Catholic High School
 - St. Gregory's Catholic Primary School
 - Stratford-upon-Avon College
 - Stratford-upon-Avon Grammar School for Girls
 - Stratford-upon-Avon Primary School
 - Stratford-upon-Avon School
 - The Willow C of E Primary School
 - Thomas Jolyffe Primary School
 - Welcombe Hills School
 - Wilmcote Primary School

Our year in numbers

WE HAVE AWARDED 122 DISCRETIONARY GRANTS IN 2019 TOTTALLING £1,055,170

Included in this, we have awarded the following in support of our 2019 priorities:



Cyclist Fighting Cancer

IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We awarded
£365,790
to support
30
charities and groups



ILEAP

POSITIVE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We awarded
£94,063
to support
22
charities and groups



Café WRAP

REDUCE LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

We awarded
£10,084
to support
5
charities and groups



Stratford Food Bank

PROTECT AND SUPPORT VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

We awarded
£126,448
to support
7
charities and groups



Citizens Advice South Warwickshire team and clients

PROVIDE SUPPORT IN A CRISIS

We awarded
£175,475
to support
5
charities and groups

Financials

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN TRUST

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED GROUP STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES incorporating an income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Unrestricted funds	Permanent endowment funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Permanent endowment funds	Total funds
	2019	2019	2019	2018	2018	2018
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income from:						
Donations and legacies*	7,714	–	7,714	19,184	–	19,184
Investment income	3,578,983	–	3,578,983	3,365,975	–	3,365,975
Charitable Activities	7,322	–	7,322	4,884	–	4,884
Other income	9,149	–	9,149	8,493	–	8,493
Total Income	<u>3,603,168</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>3,603,168</u>	<u>3,398,536</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>3,398,536</u>
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	1,104,276	–	1,104,276	819,254	–	819,254
Charitable activities**	2,386,950	–	2,386,950	2,588,271	–	2,588,271
Total expenditure	<u>3,491,226</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>3,491,226</u>	<u>3,407,525</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>3,407,525</u>
Net gains / (losses) on investments	<u>222,638</u>	<u>1,211,659</u>	<u>1,434,297</u>	<u>(106,794)</u>	<u>(666,182)</u>	<u>(772,976)</u>
Net income and expenditure	<u>334,580</u>	<u>1,211,659</u>	<u>1,546,239</u>	<u>(115,783)</u>	<u>(666,182)</u>	<u>(781,965)</u>
Other recognised gains and losses						
Actuarial (losses) / gains on defined benefit pension schemes	(193,000)	–	(193,000)	37,000	–	37,000
Net movement in funds	<u>141,580</u>	<u>1,211,659</u>	<u>1,353,239</u>	<u>(78,783)</u>	<u>(666,182)</u>	<u>(744,965)</u>
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	3,463,925	55,796,252	59,260,177	3,542,708	56,462,434	60,005,142
Total funds carried forward	<u>3,605,505</u>	<u>57,007,911</u>	<u>60,613,416</u>	<u>3,463,925</u>	<u>55,796,252</u>	<u>59,260,177</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

* Includes restricted funds income of £nil (2018: £10,000)

** Includes restricted funds cost of £nil (2018: £10,000)

Financials

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN TRUST

UNAUDITED BALANCE SHEET As at 31 December 2019

	Group	
	2019	2018
	£	£
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	1,756,802	1,862,586
Investments	<u>59,896,415</u>	<u>58,464,741</u>
	<u>61,653,217</u>	<u>60,327,327</u>
Current assets		
Debtors	368,645	344,376
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>1,595,849</u>	<u>1,548,354</u>
	<u>1,964,494</u>	<u>1,892,730</u>
Current liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(2,671,295)</u>	<u>(2,787,880)</u>
Net current liabilities	<u>(706,801)</u>	<u>(895,150)</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	60,946,416	59,432,177
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	<u>(333,000)</u>	<u>(172,000)</u>
Net assets including pension liability	<u>60,613,416</u>	<u>59,260,177</u>
Funds		
Capital funds		
Endowment Funds	<u>57,007,911</u>	<u>55,796,252</u>
Income funds		
Unrestricted funds		
General fund	2,385,763	1,886,907
Designated fund	1,407,918	1,588,103
Other charitable funds (College & Guild)	144,824	160,915
Pension reserve	<u>(333,000)</u>	<u>(172,000)</u>
Total funds	<u>60,613,416</u>	<u>59,260,177</u>

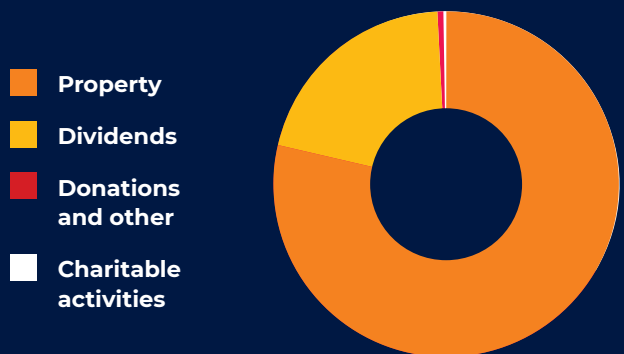
The consolidated group statement of financial activities and balance sheet have been extracted from the audited Stratford-upon-Avon Town Trust annual report and accounts for year ending 31 December 2019. A copy of these accounts can be downloaded from www.stratfordtowntrust.co.uk/about/annual-report or a hard copy can be requested from 14 Rother Street, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6LU Tel: 01789 207111 Email admin@stratfordtowntrust.co.uk

Financials

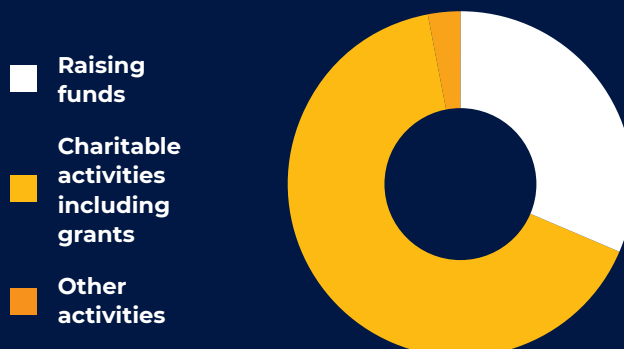
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN TRUST

	£
Income from:	
Donations (Guild Chapel)	7,714
Investment income	3,578,983
Charitable Activities	7,322
Other income	9,149
Total Income	<u>3,603,168</u>

	£
Investment income (as above)	
Property income	2,839,059
Dividends receivable	739,924
	<u>3,578,983</u>



	£
Expenditure on raising funds	
Investment Fund Managers' Fees	77,229
Property expenses	869,913
Support costs	157,134
	<u>1,104,276</u>



	£
Expenditure on charitable activities	
Grant Making	
Discretionary Grants	1,055,170
Foundation House	222,005
Non-Discretionary Grants	
King Edward VI School	632,228
Almshouses Maintenance	43,617
Holy Trinity Church	7,000
Grant Making Support Costs	274,534
	<u>2,234,554</u>
Play House	
Direct venue costs	47,288
Support costs	3,009
	<u>50,297</u>
Other activities	
Bandstand	2,999
800th Anniversary Fountain	14,628
Guild Chapel	39,945
Support Costs	44,527
	<u>102,099</u>
Total	<u>2,386,950</u>

Our stories

IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING



£350

Fast Track
award

THUNDERBIRDS

Making sport safe

Founded in 2015, Thunderbirds are a netball club for both juniors and seniors based in Stratford-upon-Avon. Run by parent volunteers, they aim to develop girls' netball skills both competitively and for fun.

Funding from Stratford Town Trust enabled the volunteers to receive specialist first aid training so they can confidently provide first aid when incidents occur during training and at matches.



£1000
Fast Track
award



CYCLISTS FIGHTING CANCER

An exercise class for those living with or recovering from cancer

Every Tuesday morning at Stratford Hospital, a group of people living with and beyond cancer get together to take part in a tailored exercise class. The energy and enthusiasm of the group is infectious as they take part in circuit exercises under the guidance of their instructor Craig.

One of the newest members said the class was already making a huge difference. **'I couldn't do half of this a few weeks ago! It's even got rid of the pain from my scarring. We've all had different surgeries so Craig tailors the exercises to suit each one of us.'**

The class has been funded by Stratford Town Trust and not only improves stamina and physical health but also provides a real support unit where the group can share experiences and form friendships.

After the class, the group always go for a coffee together and this has helped strengthen the bond between everyone.

Jane who has been coming to the class for over a year said: **'I really feel the difference if I don't come. Everyone's so positive and smiling. We've built real friendships and even have a Whatsapp group so we can send messages when someone's going for treatment. We're all supporting each other on this journey.'**

Participant Rosie said: **'I feel better and healthier coming here and it's such a nice group of people who know what you're going through. There's such a feel-good factor and it feels like you've known everyone for years. Some people can't come to the class any more because of treatment but they're still part of the group and come and meet us for coffee afterwards.'**

Our stories

POSITIVE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

BRINGING STORIES TO LIFE

Pupils at Thomas Jolyffe School have been exploring stories

Pupils at Thomas Jolyffe School enjoyed taking part in an Exploring Stories project with Stratford Literary Festival. Funding from Stratford Town Trust provided a series of events to encourage children to read and explore themes through creative writing, drama and art.

Award-winning author Steve Cole visited the school to talk about his Astrosaur books, and each year group took part in workshops, delivered by Escape Arts, Play Box Theatre and Kate's Storytree. There was also a bedtime story party and an initiative to encourage pupils to pass on books they've enjoyed and outgrown to younger children in the school.

By giving the children the opportunity to see stories come to life, they were able to experience the pleasure that comes from stories, both reading them and listening to them, which in turn can have a direct impact on their academic success.

A memory to treasure for ever

Matt Penn, Deputy Head at Thomas Jolyffe said: **'As a school we know that a love of reading – with all of the observational skill, creativity and imagination that this brings – will set children up to fully benefit from and give back to the world we live in. We strive to create the experiences that will shape this and are extremely grateful to the festival and Town Trust for their support. This programme of events had a vital impact on our children and is a memory for them to treasure forever.'**



£1500

Fast Track
award





£18,037

Year 2 funding
of a multiyear
grant

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

Making a difference with inclusive leisure activities

ILEAP works with people aged from 4 years and over and delivers a children's programme, a youth programme and an adult programme of inclusive leisure activities. ILEAP members generally have a mild/moderate learning disability although anyone with additional needs is welcome to join.

Building confidence

The inclusive leisure activities are chosen by the ILEAP members and include day trips, cookery clubs, music, drama and sports. Taking part helps to build confidence, raise self-esteem and promotes independence. Activities are user led and personalised for the individual. The difference it makes to young people with additional needs is expressed regularly by the participants and their families with comments including:

'My son really enjoys the adult sessions at the pub and the meals. He is doing what other young people would do at his age but with a little support and they always have a brilliant time with brilliant staff. Thank you.'

'Many thanks for the continuing service, which is fun and safe. The choices are vast, something for everyone!'

'Thank you as always. Our daughter is benefiting enormously from the social interaction and enjoyment that ILEAP provides.'

'Again, an amazing year and selection of activities for young people to choose and enjoy in a safe, friendly environment, with excellent staff. We are so lucky to have ILEAP in our area, catering for disabled people. Their social life is so very important to them.'

Peter Bazelely, CEO of ILEAP said: **'Funding from the Town Trust has enabled ILEAP to lay the foundation so that we can empower the local community to volunteer in a safe and innovative way. It is amazing that we can now safely include volunteers into our programme. It adds to the inclusivity and vibrancy of our sessions and has made a massive difference to our members and the sustainability of our work.'**



Our stories

REDUCE LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

THE CAFE THAT CARES

Supporting those with dementia and those who care for them

Every Friday afternoon, thanks to a team of dedicated volunteers and funding from Stratford Town Trust, Café WRAP becomes a hub of activity, conversation and care. The idea for the café came from Mike Strophair who began a project around reminiscence training to support people with dementia. He quickly realised that lots of people didn't know what to do with their loved ones after receiving a diagnosis.

He said: **'When diagnosed with dementia, family and friends often stop visiting so it can be very lonely. We wanted to give them a time away from the house that's calm and unpressured, to learn from each other and share advice.'**

Jeffrey attends each week with his wife Barbara and welcomes the opportunity to not be stuck in the house and see other people: **'It's good to meet up with others and hear their experiences and problems.'**

Marcella finds that coming to the group is therapeutic for her husband Alan. **'Carers don't bring him to groups so although this doesn't give me a break, it's important to keep him interested and for him to socialise.'**

Space to relax

The café run a range of activities each week and provide a space to relax, chat and enjoy refreshments. Artist Carey Moon is currently helping the group to do a range of arts activities themed around the poem The Owl and the Pussycat. She said: **'I often notice that towards the end of the session, everyone seems less stressed. It gives them the chance to get totally lost in art and music and form friendships. The process is enjoyable and it's nice for those caring for their loved ones to join in too.'**

£27,000

1 year project





PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

£30,000

Heart of England Mencap now at the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon

Stratford Town Trust supported the refurbishment of Elta House with a grant so that a former office building could be transformed into a comfortable and functional day centre for Heart of England Mencap's Pathway Day Service. The work took two months to complete and resulted in a large newly-fitted wheelchair-accessible kitchen, an open plan and versatile activity area, an accessible bathroom and a relaxation area.

Pathway provides a day service offering activities for individuals with a learning disability. The service not only provides in-house recreation, but also serves as a base for excursions and trips that customers regularly enjoy. With a permanent home designed to suit their needs, the customers can now be independent and make their own cups of tea and relax in a comfortable space with their friends. They can also display their artwork on the walls and feel some ownership of the building.

Boosting acceptance and inclusion

With the opening of the new premises in a central location, Lorna Haynes, Head of Day Services for Heart of England Mencap said: **'Having this building is great. It means we can strengthen our ties to the community, which in turn boosts the acceptance and inclusion of those with learning disabilities in the town.'**

A range of activities are provided each day from upcycling, life skills, karaoke at the Yard of Ale pub, arts and crafts and healthy eating. Brian attends Elta House five days a week and said: **'I like it here. It's much better than the old place because it's closer to town.'** Emma, another regular said: **'I'm enjoying it. The staff, everybody's so friendly. I like all the activities. I love cooking and the karaoke's brilliant.'**

Our stories

PROTECT AND SUPPORT VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES



£14,180

1 year funding

MAKING MUSIC

Street Arts Project brings music to the homeless

Street Arts Project is a community group set up by Jackie Lines, Doug Armstrong and Chris Musson to support the homeless in Stratford-upon-Avon. The project began when the volunteers identified the growing needs of these vulnerable people and the need to raise awareness of their increasing difficulties. Funding from Stratford Town Trust has enabled weekly street music sessions to take place at Stratford Playhouse where those affected by homelessness can share their experiences through music. They are encouraged to write their own songs, perform them and with the help of professional musicians, make recordings of their work.

Like being in a family

The impact on the attendees has been significant, with one saying: **'It is like being in a family, all helping and understanding each other. It makes me feel safe and has helped with my sense of self-respect.'**

Doug Armstrong said: **'Without the significant amount of funding from Stratford Town Trust, Street Music would not have been able to progress. The generous fund has facilitated 46 weekly events, two concerts to showcase the work of the participants and the production of a CD with four days in a professional studio to provide evidence of work achieved.'**

A sense of pride

Participants have learned to work as a supportive team, take guidance and structure from the tutors and have developed an enhanced level of self-esteem and personal belief. Their confidence has been increased, along with their ability to commit and attend regularly. They have reported a sense of pride as they have developed new skills: **'I now have the opportunity to express myself, to share my emotions and opinions, plus learn how to play the guitar.'**



£30,000

1 year funding

SUPPORT IN A CRISIS

Stratford Foodbank there for those in need

'It could happen to any of us' said Laura, one of the customers of Stratford Foodbank. **'No one expects to find themselves in this situation. But life happens.'**

With demand for help from foodbanks ever increasing, Stratford Foodbank supports those who find themselves in a crisis situation and in need of food. Funding from Stratford Town Trust meant Marion Homer could be appointed to full time post of Foodbank Manager, and this has made a huge difference to the work they are able to do.

Marion told us: **'It has helped significantly with identifying a new home, working with stakeholders to achieve relocation, and being present at more interagency meetings. It has also meant that volunteers have a reliable and consistent source of support whilst they undertake their many and varied volunteering tasks. We have developed**

closer relationships with partners in the local area which has resulted in more referral agencies being signed up, specifically those that might see a family in the very early stages of crisis. I'm pleased to report that we have better and closer relationships with many local schools with more of them coming on board as a referral agency partner.'

Laura, like many people who find themselves in need of a Foodbank, found her circumstances changed very quickly and unexpectedly. Whilst on maternity leave with a new baby, her husband had a serious stroke out of the blue and their world fell apart. **'We were just a normal family, financially ok, and then one day, everything changed. Without the Stratford-upon-Avon foodbank, I really don't know how we would have coped.'**

Sick pay stopped, money dried up, and they were forced to move out of their family home

and into bed and breakfast accommodation.

'The Foodbank volunteers were absolutely wonderful, even putting in a few treats for the children if they had them, as well as the basics. I felt they understood my situation and supported me; it gave me somewhere where I felt people were on my side.'

It has been a long road back for Laura and her husband, but they are in a better place now. The last few years have been a real struggle but they always knew Stratford-upon-Avon Foodbank was there as backup whilst they rebuilt their lives. Laura hasn't forgotten how the Foodbank helped her and always makes sure she pops a contribution into the supermarket collection point when she is shopping. She knows how important doing this is, and she wants to help others who fall on hard times.

The Guild Chapel

Unlocking the secrets of the past



© Main image: Copyright Philip Welch

© Exterior image: Copyright Lindsay MacDonald

Stratford Town Trust is the proud custodian of the Guild Chapel. It is one of the most important surviving examples of a late medieval guild chapel in England, built by the guild of the Holy Cross and Hugh Clopton, Stratford-upon-Avon merchant and one-time Lord Mayor of London. It preserves one of the most intriguing schemes of late medieval wall paintings in England. Although the paintings were covered over in the 16th century, some may have still been visible to William Shakespeare, whose father John, was responsible for their partial destruction. They were seen again in 1804 and recorded by the Antiquarian Thomas Fisher. While some were then destroyed, the Dance of Death and others survive, hidden behind panelling installed by the 20th century architect, Stephen Dykes Bower.

Following the very successful *Death Reawakened* project in 2016 to conserve the chapel's Doom painting, supported by the National Lottery (Heritage Fund), the Chapel has gone on to win a number of awards. Notably the Judges Discretionary Award at the UK Heritage Awards 2019, for which the Chapel was praised for its ongoing conservation and education work. A team of volunteer guides led by Volunteer Coordinator, Pippa Brook, works hard to share the secrets of the chapel with the 65,000 people who visit each year. In 2019, they were recognised for their significant contribution winning Team of the Year at the Pride of Stratford Awards.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact Pippa Brook: pippa.brook@stratfordtowntrust.co.uk

Our team of volunteers have shared with us what they love about volunteering at the Guild Chapel:

'As a history/art lover, I am really enjoying learning about the Chapel's history. As well as reading the materials that were provided as part of my volunteer induction pack, I am also doing my own research, which is addictive!'

'I love meeting and talking to people from all over the world and have had many enjoyable conversations with visitors.'

'I love it when visitors say they are grateful for the time that I spend with them - it's great to get positive feedback and makes me feel that I have added something of value to their visit.'

'As a newcomer to Stratford-upon-Avon, I wanted to get involved with the town. Through the Stratford Town Trust and the Chapel, I am learning a lot about the town and its history. Best of all, I have made a wonderful new friendship.'

At the heart of our community

Foundation House provides a welcoming space for all

Stratford Town Trust is committed to supporting the community, which is why Foundation House was originally created – to provide a space to benefit people from all walks of life across Stratford-upon-Avon. In April 2020 we were very sad to have to close Foundation House as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Here is a look back at our year in 2019, when our doors were very much open.



Family enjoying the Fun Palace

2019 saw the first year anniversary of Foundation House and in that time it has grown from strength to strength as a hub for the community to come together, share skills, experiences and activities. The building is currently home to the following groups who each hold a licence for a variety of spaces across a range of activities, including:

- Army cadets
- Ambulance Association
- Change Grow Live
- Escape Arts
- Heart of England Woodturners
- Men's Shed Stratford-upon-Avon
- Safeline
- Second Thoughts
- Shakespeare Lions
- SuA & District Radio Society
- Warwickshire Reminiscence Action Project (WRAP)
- Welcombe Radio

Foundation House has also had over 90 groups, charities and organisations take advantage of a variety of meeting rooms and flexible spaces in the last year. In this time, there have been over 1,000 individual bookings from these 90 groups.

There have been a number of events throughout the year including Stratford Town Trust's first ever Fun Palace, part of an annual international weekend of activities that aims to bring the community together through arts, science, crafts and technology.

Community Café

Throughout 2019, Foundation House has held a monthly Community Café hosted by one of the groups who use the building. This is a chance for people to come together over a cup of tea and some cake and find out more about what's going on in their community. Foundation House also welcomed groups who wanted a friendly, welcoming space to use for regular meet ups.



Councillor Kate Rolfe, Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon joins in longest paper chain attempt



Eco-friendly alternatives to disposable nappies were available at our first eco-market

At the heart of our community

Foundation House provides a welcoming space for all

Kathy Stredder of Stratford Welcome Here, a community organisation that aims to support Syrian refugees living in Stratford-upon-Avon, tells us what happened when she asked if Foundation House could be home to a new initiative – a Syrian Conversation Café.

Welcome Here's activities include befriending, interpretation (Arabic/English), transport, advice on local facilities, social activities and home-based English language support. The idea for the café was to provide opportunities for English language practice and to reduce the social isolation experienced by the eleven Syrian families settled here. The families are keen to learn and improve their English but have limited opportunities to do this and as they live in different parts of the town, they have nowhere communal to meet. Although their neighbours are friendly, the language barriers often make contact difficult.

'We approached Foundation House as it is already used for some of the English as a Second Language classes for the Syrians, so was a venue they were familiar with.

'Fran Donnelly, Foundation House's Community Hub Manager, was very enthusiastic and encouraging about the possibility of holding a regular Café. She offered to help publicise the event by creating a beautiful poster, in Arabic and English, which could be widely distributed. Any concern we had about arrangements, Fran and her team immediately resolved. They have provided an incredibly supportive environment and gave us the final incentive to trial the Café.

'A pilot Café was held in November 2019. The event proved popular with about 25 Syrians attending, enjoying the activities and games on offer, and especially glad to see each other and the volunteers who supported it. Towards the end when asked if she wanted to come again, Khalisa said with a big smile on her face that she didn't want to go home – she wanted to be with her friends and in the communal atmosphere provided by Foundation House, and Welcome Here. The success of the event spurred us on to make the Café a monthly event.

'On January 29th, the first of the 2020 Cafés took place. The Green Room was buzzing, with both Arabic and English being spoken. A game of chess provided a chance for the men to interact, and a language activity based on photos of Stratford-upon-Avon engaged many of the women. There was lots of 1:1 interaction among the 15 Syrians and 12 Welcome Here volunteers who attended, and the atmosphere was joyful!

'Over the coming months Welcome Here hopes to attract some of the young mothers (who are home based) to the Café and we will look for ways of providing get togethers for those who are at work or have classes on Wednesdays. Future plans also include involving the Syrians in planning and running the Café and using their feedback as a basis for developing different kinds of activities.'



Shoppers enjoyed sampling the products at our eco-market

In December 2019 we also held our very first eco-market at Foundation House, with twenty stalls offering environmentally friendly products, enabling people to swap their usual shopping basket contents for more sustainable and ethical alternatives.

Stalls included environmentally friendly soap, make up, cleaning products, reusable nappies and delicious vegan cakes. Also present were local campaign groups including Friends of the Earth and Extinction Rebellion.

Fran Donnelly, Community Hub Manager said: **'We are so pleased with the success of the eco-market. It's a great way for people to try out products that have less impact on the environment and support local businesses too. The response has been really positive and as a result, we plan to hold more eco-markets regularly in 2020.'**

Looking to the future

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN TO 2025

It is clear that in its almost 500-year history, the historic Guild and College Estates will have evolved in response to societal changes. This need to change is never more relevant than now as we sign off on our strategic plan that will take us to 2025. The Trust is a grant making charity first and foremost. However, the impact that Covid-19 has had on society means that we will need to work harder to deliver our support, looking to find new and innovative ways to work in partnership and deliver our vision statement of creating a vibrant and connected community.

AT THE CENTRE OF RECOVERY

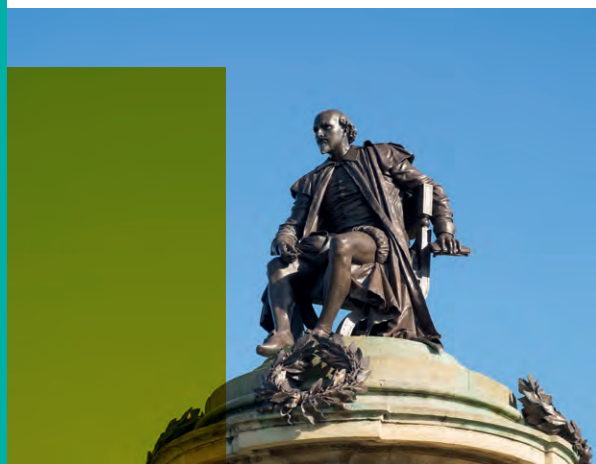
It shouldn't need a crisis to bring a community together but if that is what it takes then we should make the most of it and celebrate being together in this place in this moment. When this crisis has passed, we will need to rebuild and reconnect with each other.

When people lead the way, communities flourish. Through the grants that we make and our unique role in the town we aim to be at the centre of the recovery. Creating a connected and vibrant community is our vision statement and it has never felt more relevant than now that we work tirelessly in support of this.

GRANT MAKING

Recognising that the Trust funds a truly diverse range of charities, we continue to work towards a method of impact assessment that goes beyond simply measuring numbers. We will do this by understanding better the constraints and challenges that comes with assessing impact, along with rewards like an iterative improvement in service. We want to work in partnership with charities and organisational bodies to share best practice and add value rather than creating additional work.

As ever we remain keen to hear from groups and charities that haven't connected with us before and would like to support initiatives that promote, and champion partnership working or bring like-minded groups together to strengthen ambition.





GUILD CHAPEL UPDATE

The Guild Chapel is at the very centre of our history and home to some of the most important medieval wall paintings in Europe.

The conservation of the Chapel's *Doom* painting in 2016 as part of the *Death Reawakened* project revealed only a fraction of the beauty and importance of these extraordinary paintings. We know that the north and south walls of the chancel were covered with a series of images depicting the *Discovery of the relics of the True Cross by the Empress Helena*. Over the chancel arch was a typical *Doom* painting, showing souls of the dead rising from their graves to receive Christ's Judgement. On the south wall of the nave is what is believed to be scenes from the Life of Adam. On the north is the *Dance of Death* and on the west wall of the nave were popular saints, including St. Thomas Becket and St. George and the Dragon.

Starting in 2020 we will seek funding for a further phase of conservation with the project *Death Revealed* that will undertake a full assessment of the condition and costing of conservation works for the remaining paintings, and for designs to adapt Dykes Bower's 20th-century wooden panelling to facilitate public access to the paintings whilst preserving the significance of the scheme and its protection of the paintings.

OUR FIVE YEAR PLAN

Our Strategic Plan will be launched in autumn 2020 and will set our direction to 2025.

OUR MEMBERS

We are grateful for the valuable contribution our members make to Stratford Town Trust. However, we need to grow our membership to make that voice louder, stronger and more representative of our whole community.

Anyone over the age of 18 living in Stratford-upon-Avon can join for free at www.stratfordtowntrust.co.uk/joinus

CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

We're pleased to be developing a community orchard at Rowley Fields which will be for everyone to enjoy. Working with local specialist The Heritage Fruit Tree Company, the orchard will feature a variety of heritage fruit trees including quinces, medlars and gages along with the more traditional apples, pears, cherries and plums. Many of the varieties are native to Warwickshire, with names like Wyken Phippen, Merryweather and the

Warwickshire Drooper, and a mixture of early and late fruiting trees means the orchard should be appealing right through the summer months. At the centre of the orchard there will be a clearing for community events and for local schools to use as an outdoor classroom.

Protecting Rowley Fields as a vital recreational resource for the town is a continued priority to provide local people with an expanse of green space for exercise, solace and sunshine.

We have more plans to improve the field's biodiversity, ecology and planting. Now, more than ever we understand how important these fields are to all of us. Working with Stratford District Council we are also looking at developing other green spaces such as Warwick Road Lands which could provide a green corridor and promote cycling, walking, provide electric car charging and help reduce traffic entering the town.



Stratford
Town Trust

at the heart of our community

Better Together



18+ and live in Stratford town?

Now is the perfect time to join us!
Make a difference and help us create
a vibrant and connected community.

It's free and only takes a minute...find out more
about becoming a member on our website:

www.stratfordtowntrust.co.uk/joinus