

CANDIDATE	STATEMENT
Michelle Avon	<p>Being an incomer to Stratford, with an enquiring nature, I found a community of many layers, from the 'chocolate box' image to persons sleeping in doorways and am now proud to call myself a Stratford resident.</p> <p>Such diversity and inequality within the resident Stratford population, alongside the thousands of tourists who visit annually, almost as if there are two Stratford's, visitors, and residents. Stratford would be a totally different town without the tourist industry, a small failing market town or the boosting of the local economy, jobs, world class culture, vibrancy, and a desirable place to live, a worthwhile trade off against traffic congestion, crowds, and the Stratford cost of living.</p> <p>An interesting experience finding out about groups and activities within Stratford, sometimes being seen as of minority status, and a token Northerner, but overall, a friendly welcome to Stratford.</p> <p>Diversity and equality within Stratford is being reflected in the long-term strategy of the Town Trust and within the organisation itself, qualities to be admired and supported.</p> <p>By standing for election, I would endeavour to be more involved with the whole town through the Town Trust and support the ongoing initiatives for the good of the whole community.</p>
Tim Bailey	<p>It has been an honour to serve as a Trustee, attending Board meetings and two other Committees managing finance, property, community engagement and grants. I also get to meet members and beneficiaries, witnessing the fantastic work at Foundation House and observing our community enjoying our allotments, our green spaces at Rowley Fields & The Lench Meadow and the historic Guild Chapel.</p> <p>It is a privilege to serve our town as a Trustee, indeed helping others is in my DNA, 30 years of policing and 10 years working in education, together with former voluntary roles as school governor, chairing my local Scout Group and in 2015 establishing the Friends of Rowley Fields are all examples of my dedication to our town. I was delighted to see Rowley Fields permanently protected when designated as a New Town Green in 2021, one of only a handful in the county and one of the biggest in the country. The effects of the pandemic really demonstrated how important access to green space is for both our physical and mental well-being.</p> <p>If re-elected I pledge to continue working hard as a Trustee, scrutinising and directing the future work of our magnificent Trust.</p>

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Ralph Brown	<p>Stratford Town Trust is an important asset to Stratford and the many charities it supports. I'm keen to help it with the work it undertakes.</p> <p>I spent two years as chair of a small charity in Stratford and had a steep learning curve grasping the obligations. I've worked in broadcast television for many years, mainly as a cameraman. This involved travelling around much of the world from Beijing to Buenos Aires. I've worked on sport, drama, documentaries and news.</p> <p>I've met many amazing people from the very poor, rich and talented to politicians from every level and most of the royal family. Eventually I set up my own business running a small production company together with a commercial property venture in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.</p> <p>Before living in Stratford I often came to film events from horse racing to the theatre. The highlight was working on "The Comedy of Errors" starring Judi Dench, Michael Williams and Francesca Annis adapted by Trevor Nunn in 1978 (video still available in RST). An unforgettable week kindling a love of Shakespeare.</p> <p>I hope that these experiences and the skills I've learnt would allow me to contribute to the work of the trustees.</p>
Jonathan Devereux	<p>Described as a man of many parts in the recent King John Play reading, I am Treasurer of the Stratford upon Avon Society and have a long career as a Charity accountant. Working for both English Heritage and the Arts Council meaning I am well versed in both accounting within charities and the specifics of grant giving bodies. Having used Foundation House as a base I am well aware of the vibrant range of organizations associated with the Town Trust. Currently I am a volunteer at the Guild Chapel and assisted in the volunteer development of the Clopton Trail. Volunteering before we moved to Warwickshire in 2015 included Verulamium Museum and the Victorian Signal Box in St Albans. I retain a volunteer role at a local nature reserve in Harpenden and hope in the future to have the opportunity to apply that experience to Stratford Town Trust's open spaces. I look forward to being involved in the dendrochronology project funded by Historic England that has just been awarded to the Stratford Society. I am an enthusiastic audience member for all forms of the arts enjoying particularly the Orchestra of the Swan's performances at the Stratford Arts House.</p>

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Marina Dunn	<p>Stratford has been my home since 2014. I first visited in 1976 on a school trip. This encounter spawned a love of Shakespeare, theatre and a 20-year career in the Arts 10 of which working at the RSC. In the 90's I retrained as garden designer, and I now run a consultancy working in the Cotswolds and London. Having travelled extensively and growing up in a multi racial family I perhaps have had broader more diverse life experiences than others. I have served both as a parish councillor and have over 10 years' experience as a charity trustee. During my time at Stratford Foodbank as a trustee and as the volunteer warehouse manager, I have seen first-hand the vital and positive impact the Trust grants make to the many organisations it helps. I strongly support the charitable objectives of the Trust and would welcome the opportunity to be part of a team that has stewardship of its strategic vision in the challenging times ahead. I firmly believe that a person's scope of moral regard should extend into the community in which they live.</p> <p>FYI 1 Husband 1 dog 4 Cats COMMITMENT - COMPASSION - COMMUNITY</p>
Rodney Grinnell	<p>I am a tenant at the Trust's allotment site in Shottery. Concurrently I have been especially interested in the Riverside Green Corridor scheme with its integral Local Nature Reserve.</p> <p>I am a regular communicant at St Andrews CoE Church, Shottery, where the Stratford Sea Scouts minibus, supported by the Town Trust, is parked. In the past my family has been involved at instructor and member level with the scouts.</p> <p>For the last 12 years I have devoted my life to caring for my partner who very sadly succumbed to her 37 years Multiple Sclerosis during the pandemic.</p> <p>Previously I was a manager at the Helen Ley Care Centre in Leamington responsible for providing leisure facilities for the residents. That followed 10 years managing an 18-bed hotel and hospitality centre near Princethorpe during which I became Chairman of the Rugby and District Tourism Association.</p> <p>On the leisure side I had spells as coach, secretary and catering manager at Leamington RUFC. Rugby Union remains a passion. I am particularly interested in creating opportunities for young people, having allowed by own grandchildren to influence my decision to support Brexit since they are going to have to contend with a fast changing environment.</p>

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Barbara Helps	<p>After living and working internationally (Health Care industry), I settled some years ago in Stratford upon Avon. I love living here and I want to support our community as much as I can. Working part time in a town retail outlet, am an active member of Stratford Sports club and I am the coordinator and communications lead for <i>Stratford upon Avon in Bloom</i>.</p> <p>Stratford enjoys the position of being a beautiful, historic, cultural and recreational town that attracts visitors from this country and the world. This benefits the town. However for residents, it can be challenging accessing amenities. Also the young, isolated and vulnerable members of our community face similar challenges to any other town or city.</p> <p>By understanding individual and community needs we can look at ways to support the provision of appropriate recreational spaces and activities that promote and contribute to individual and community health and wellbeing. Connecting with and assisting organisations that are currently working on related projects, finding ways to increase funding and spreading awareness of all initiatives are equally important.</p> <p>I would love to have the opportunity to act as a Trustee, contributing to the development of a healthy, vibrant, connected Stratford upon Avon community.</p>
Marion Homer	<p>Stratford has been my home for over thirty years, and I have intimate knowledge of the town based on living and working here. I met my husband treading the boards at a local drama club, got married at Holy Trinity, and my two daughters attended primary and secondary schools here. I have worked for both Holy Trinity Parish and Stratford Methodist Church and was a school governor at Broad Street Primary School.</p> <p>For over six years I was Stratford's Foodbank Manager and played a key role in Stratford Town Support (covid response team) working with local organisations helping those in crisis during the pandemic and beyond. As Foodbank Manager I have seen the two sides of our town; pockets of deprivation often obscured by adjacent areas of high affluence. I had the honour of working with many kind hearted volunteers and know well what our town's community spirit can achieve. I am now thoroughly enjoying a new role at the Trussell Trust working with trustee boards across the Midlands making advice services available at foodbanks to address underlying reasons for crisis.</p> <p>It would be a privilege to continue serving this town on the board of Stratford Town Trust.</p>

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Henry Lu	<p>Coming from a family in Stockbroking, Gold and Silver Exchanges, I was exposed to stock market investment as a teen. Using such acquired knowledge, I have been fortunately successful in my investment portfolio accumulating sufficient fund to retire early. After retirement, I have been involved in the following roles/activities: - Registered Company Director since 2010 - Adviser at Citizens Advice, providing impartial advice on financial and legal matters since 2012 - Mentor of my engineering and accountancy Chartered Institutions' mentoring services providing guidance to young accountants and engineers since 2015 - Completed my law degree in 2015 with final-year modules on trusteeship, land and property laws - Panel Member of a £3.5bn pension scheme trustee board since 2016, tasked with key priorities on investment risks and improving the effectiveness/governance of the board - Prospective Parliamentary Candidate in the December 2019 General Election - Police Crime Commissioner Candidate in the May 2021 elections My multi-disciplinary roles require me to act with utmost professionalism, independency and impartiality. I believe that these roles coupled with my decades of investment experience, most relevant financial and legal qualifications, I would be able to greatly enhance the functions of the Stratford Town Trust if elected.</p>
Michael Rolfe	<p>I have lived in Stratford-upon-Avon for 24 years, married here and brought up three children here. My wife, Councillor Kate Rolfe, was Mayor in 2019/20. As her Consort, I met with many voluntary organisations and charities who contribute hugely to supporting and improving the quality of life for all Stratfordians. I have also helped Kate fundraise for Macmillan and Street Arts charities too. Through these activities, I have gained a real understanding of their importance and of how the Town Trust, in turn, supports them.</p> <p>Professionally, I joined the BBC in 1971 after two years in theatre, working in London, then Pebble Mill, as a Producer, Writer, and Director in TV & Film Drama. I became freelance in 1982. Now retired, I continue to maintain a strong interest in the local Arts scene both as an audience member and as a director with local theatre companies.</p> <p>My work required project management skills, handling large budgets and the ability to manage people from all walks of life, some famous, some closer to infamous! This, together with my love of the town and its unique history, suggests to me that I can make a useful, positive contribution to the Town Trust.</p>

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Martyn Sergent	<p>Originally from Newport in South Wales, I fell in love with Stratford whilst on a school trip to the RSC.</p> <p>I arrived at the RSC in Stratford as an ASM in 1987 and then became a Stage Manager, Tour Manager and finally a Senior Manager arranging international and domestic tours.</p> <p>I left the RSC in 2002 to set up a business and to spend more time in Stratford with my (then) young family, and became local Franchisee for Estate Agency, Belvoir.</p> <p>Belvoir has been based in Ely Street for 18 years and, due to my wonderful staff, I have spare time to do other things.</p> <p>Running is one of my hobbies and I am a qualified England Athletics Coach.</p> <p>I volunteer for Stratford Athletic Club and for several years have coached the club 'Couch to 5k' programme. This takes non-runners on a bi-annual nine week programme culminating in running the SUA park run. Most 'graduates' continue to run and this swells club membership.</p> <p>I possess a range of practical, cultural and business skills that I could bring to the Trust, as well as available time, and so am standing as a Trustee this year.</p>
Tim Sinclair	<p>An energetic, hard-working and collaborative individual, with a huge love of the town and a desire to serve the Trust.</p> <p>With an affinity for Stratford since my Warwick University days, my wife and I moved to the town after our second child was born 16 years ago.</p> <p>Professionally my career has seen me heading up marketing departments for a number of well-known businesses. I'm an experienced strategist, an innovative marketer and a motivating leader.</p> <p>I'm also very much a team player, getting things done with others and bringing about change.</p> <p>I was elected as the Warwickshire County Councillor for Stratford North in May 2021 and my mantra has been 'standing up for Stratford, working hard for you'.</p> <p>I've wanted to put as much as possible into this role and consequently I recently chose to resign from my job and focus on serving Stratford's residents as the priority.</p> <p>I'm well aware of the work of the Trust and keen to actively play my part by becoming a Trustee.</p> <p>I believe I offer energy, experience and know-how, at a time of challenge for our wonderful town, when we need people with sound judgement and the ability to make a difference.</p>

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David Stanford	<p>First moved to Stratford in 1981 and have run several businesses inc Billesley Manor.</p> <p>I am a patron of the Parenting Project and helped set it up and was Chair for 12 year running Surestart children’s facilities across Warwickshire.</p> <p>I was Chair of Reading Court housing scheme, a charity on Tiddington Road, for 5 years.</p> <p>Experience in running charities and turning around businesses for banks such as Coutts.</p> <p>Passionate about Stratford-upon-Avon but not blinkered. I have a wide range of business and people skills whilst having also been involved at Board level running charities as well as large companies and advising Sunday Times “rich list” entrepreneurs.</p> <p>I am concerned about our legacy as my children and grandchildren live in Stratford-upon-Avon.</p> <p>Part of working group looking at KES annual ‘award’ and a more “universally acceptable” award.</p>
Josie Stevens	<p>I have been a Trustee for 18 months and it has been a privilege working alongside the talented team at STT as we navigated the challenges of the pandemic whilst keeping our focus firmly on the future. The Trust, under its current progressive leadership, is changing and I’m passionate about remaining actively involved in this exciting evolution.</p> <p>I am a marketing communications consultant with 25+ years’ experience with major global brands and events. I moved to Stratford 10 years ago having lived and worked in the UK, South Africa, Qatar and the US. It’s a town I love, with an international reputation yet a tangible sense of local community. For all its prosperity, our town has its share of those in need and people here are always quick to step up and offer help. Stratford Town Trust is at the heart of that community, using its considerable assets to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives here, through its partnerships and its grant-making. My ambition is to use my skills and experience to help build STT’s profile and engage more members in the Trust’s work, ensuring we truly are working together to build a vibrant and thriving community.</p>

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Jane Swaby	<p>A favourite childhood treat, was visiting Stratford for a walk by the river, followed by a drink and a packet of crisps at The Dirty Duck. Years later, 1993, I fulfilled a dream and moved here. I married Jon at Holy Trinity Church and we have Daisy studying for a Commercial Photography Degree and James completing A' levels.</p> <p>As a former Primary School Teacher, I currently help children at home, in curriculum support and building confidence. In 2008, we moved to France which had a way of teaching that did not support educational needs. As a result, I created a support group for parents who were able to gather knowledge from outside professionals, to support them in the challenging, educational process. Returning home, very happily, I became Chair of 'CAUSE,' 2012-2019, a residents' group of 200+ households trying to protect open space. I formed part of the subsequent working group which shaped the inevitable developments.</p> <p>I am a National Trust volunteer gardener and Governor of a local Primary School and I enjoy tennis at Stratford Sports Club and cycling.</p> <p>I am passionate about Stratford and would relish the opportunity to support the community through the work of the Town Trust.</p>
Alan Swallow	<p>Growing up in Warwickshire I quickly learned the special place that Stratford is, visiting the theatres, the riverside, and even captaining my school rugby team against King Edwards. Stratford is truly a town in the country with a rich heritage, which the Town Trust plays a vital role in maintaining.</p> <p>My wife and I moved to Stratford 15 years ago and, living close to the Rowley fields, regularly walk the glorious hills and watersides, a godsend these past 2 years.</p> <p>I am to shortly retire from being a risk manager with an international bank, where I review and challenge the financial activities of colleagues. As a qualified actuary, I work closely with and advise trustees of a variety of trusts, and have done so for more than two decades. I implicitly understand a trust's workings and how its beneficiaries can be supported. With this, and my knowledge of financial markets, I will be well placed to help the Trust chart a course on behalf of the community through the tide of our times.</p> <p>I would therefore be delighted if you would please elect me as a Trustee to maintain Stratford's heritage and help it connect with and support you all.</p>

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David Triggs	<p>As chair of local charity STRADFAS, Stratford's branch of The Arts Society, I listen to the needs of our membership of almost 450 local people, and strive to deliver a stimulating range of events while funding arts-related activities to recipients as varied as local school children and prison inmates. During lockdown I rapidly mastered Zoom to provide our members, many of whom live alone, with our planned lecture programme online. Even now, following the return of live lectures, I continue to use video conferencing so that those with health or mobility issues do not miss out or feel excluded.</p> <p>With degrees in Geography and Geology and a Masters in Business Administration I have a very broad and practical portfolio of management experience across a range of multi-national companies and small consultancies, focusing on logistics. My roles have included Operations, Commercial Management and Project Management. I have also run my own Limited Company and am a director of a small property management company.</p> <p>I believe strongly in encouraging and enabling people to support and influence their communities and was previously Chairman of Northampton Town Neighbourhood Watch.</p> <p>My down-time includes photography, art, music, walking, travel and wine tasting.</p>
Nina Ziel	<p>I'm a 46-year-old Warwickshire born and bred mother, Chartered Surveyor and wife to a local business owner. Professionally, I run my own property consultancy advising start-ups to multi-national companies. Both living and travelling abroad has given me a wholesome appreciation of everyone from every walk of life, that we are all dealt different cards and not to judge those handed different or difficult circumstances, and that there are reasons behind everything - as well as the possibility to change things given the right tools, help and support. My career, travels and life in general have led me to create strong relationships, be open minded and empathic, a skilled communicator and negotiator, good listener and advisor, someone who always works for continuous development/ improvement wherever I am and whatever I give my energy to. I strive to push through to find solutions to problems, have viewpoints on how operations are conducted/ how to improve them, and am committed to issues or tasks in hand. I'm not one to shy away from challenging old ways of thinking or working methods, and would be honoured to have the opportunity to support the local community and be even prouder to live in Stratford.</p>