

JOINT SOUTH COMMITTEE

25 SEPTEMBER 2008

Subject: **Strategy to define the type, quality & subsequent management of concessions, events & attractions on public spaces in Stratford upon Avon**

Lead Officer: **Fiona Rae/Helen Smith**

**Lead Member/
Portfolio Holder:** **Contact on 01789 260670 / 01789 260672**
Cllr T Dixon/Cllr L Topham

Summary

To note and confirm the proposed actions in relation to:

1. Developing a clear policy for use of the Council's land for events in Stratford-upon-Avon in support of a wider events strategy which is being developed in line with World Class Stratford aspirations.
2. Developing proposals for the tender of various licence concessions relating to the Council's land in Stratford upon Avon.

Recommendation

- (1) That support is given to the actions proposed to determine the future range and type of events being suggested for the Recreation Ground and town centre land owned by the Council in Stratford-upon-Avon.**
 - (2) That licence concessions as detailed below and which emerge from the work being carried out by RGA Consulting be reported to the Cabinet on 27 October 2008 (seeking authority to tender and including tender evaluation criteria).**
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1 Background/Information

- 1.1 **Events:** The World Class Stratford Strategy Group at its last meeting supported a recommendation to establish a 'Cultural Consortium' for Stratford-upon-Avon, which will be led by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). A key task for the Consortium will be to develop a programme of events & festivals commencing in 2009. The first meeting of the Consortium Steering Committee, chaired by RSC Associate Director Deborah Shaw, took place in July. At the meeting members identified five major pilot projects for 2009. In support of this, it is important that the policy for future use of the Council's Recreation Ground for events is clarified, together with similar sites in the town owned by the Council e.g. Cornmarket Square.
- 1.2 RGA Consulting has been appointed jointly by SDC/WCS, in accordance with

- procedures for a Type D consultancy contract to consider and develop proposals for the Council's land. RGA Consulting has specialist experience and expertise in relation to events and concessions. A member and stakeholder workshop was held on 13 August to assist in this work.
- 1.3 The outcome will be an outline of events and activities which ensure that such areas fully complement the aspirations for World Class Stratford, including supporting the local economy, whilst generating income for the Council either directly from licence fees or indirectly e.g. parking charges.
 - 1.4 **Concessions:** For a number of years the type and number of licence concessions offered on the Recreation Ground, Bancroft Gardens, Waterside and Southern Lane have remained generally fixed as those adopted historically. The reasoning behind maintaining this status quo is that whilst the design and remodelling of the Bancroft has been underway there was a need to continue to generate a similar level of income during a period when a review and overhaul would not have been pertinent. Allowing this review to coincide with the opening of the remodelled Bancroft is believed to be more appropriate.
 - 1.5 It is intended that concessions will be for a five year period allowing the Council certainty in budgeting for income as well as minimising management costs associated with more frequent tender processes. In addition this longer period allows operators to have commercial certainty, therefore potentially enhancing the quality of bids received.
 - 1.6 As well as advising on an events strategy, as detailed above, RGA Consulting are also advising on a potential range of suitable, high quality and appropriate concessions for the land in question. Their report is attached at Appendix 1 and identifies types of catering and related events activity in relation to six identified sites: the Bandstand area; the Playing Field area; the Children's Playground; the Sports Field; the Bancroft Gardens; and the Corn Market.
 - 1.7 A consultation exercise was carried out at the World Class Stratford Community Forum on 10 September 2008. For information notes detailing the comments that emerged from the Forum consultation exercise are attached at Appendix 2.
 - 1.7 Officers are aware of the need to strike a balance between a strictly commercial approach and the aspirations of local people to see the essentially open nature of the land in question to be maintained.
 - 1.8 Historically each individual concession has been separately tendered, however RGA Consulting has been advised that the Council may wish to consider limiting the number of tenders to one or two allowing the Council to minimise its risk and management responsibilities. This would mean that tenders would be sought for a number of outlets to be included within one licence. The tender process will need to balance the likely income from separate tenders against factors of risk mitigation and clienting process accompanying the issue of one licence.
 - 1.9 RGA is of the view that concessions at a location with such a high profile as Stratford may be of interest to international operators and that through the work it is carrying out for the Council much can be learned particularly from comparable European towns.
 - 1.10 The tender process will almost certainly fall under EU procurement rules and

this is being reflected in the timescale adopted. RGA will manage the tender processes including advising on the tender evaluation criteria.

2 Options

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to confirm give its comments and to give agreement to the proposals in relation to future concessions as outlined above and as detailed in the report at Appendix 1 and to note the intention to seek a steer and appropriate authority to progress tendering of concessions at the Cabinet on 27 October 2008.

3 Members' Comments

- 3.1 Comments received from Cllr Honeychurch:
'I remain unconvinced that we should proceed with external consultants RGA. In order to maximize "buy in " from the residents and to focus available funds, I would be much happier for our local expertise to be harnessed via the Festivals Committee/TMP/Cultural Consortium and to seek external assistance once a need has been identified. I understand that a lengthy report was previously commissioned but put on the shelf? It would be absolutely essential for the selection/approval of events to remain in the hands of elected Members who are responsible to the residents. As regards concessions, I am uncomfortable with the thought of five year contracts without break clauses and (as we highlight in our school meals policy) we should be insisting upon healthy eating offers not doughnuts, fizzy drinks, burgers, chips etc Again why think about big business solutions in place of local people who may well be excluded from the process by the multi product approach'.
- 3.2 Comments received from Cllr Fradgley:
ACTIVITIES - Any activity on any of the six sites should be an integral part of the Festival agreed for that part of the year.
There should be no continuous use of any site for on going activities.
Activities should be family orientated and of a high quality.
FACILITIES - There should be no permanent fixtures on the Rec.
There should be no commercialisation of the Recreation Ground, it should remain an important part of the green lung, open space and calm riverside experience.
Access and egress will remain a problem until a Southern Park and Ride is established south of the river. I have concerns over any fast food outlet on the Recreation Ground apart from the occasional ice cream cart, perhaps snacks and drink could be sold from a barge franchise here?
The toilet facilities here leave a lot to be desired.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal

- 4.1.1 All contracts and agreements will be drafted by the Council's Legal Services allowing risks associated with such agreements to be mitigated.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 Financial benefits resulting from the proposals above in relation to future

concessions is not yet known but a thorough and rigorous tendering process will seek to maximise income within the framework of type and style of concessions to be agreed by the Executive.

4.2.2 It is anticipated that income from concessions can be increased as a result of this work.

4.3 ***Environmental***

4.3.1 Environmental impact will be a consideration in developing the strategy. The proposals will enable better management and control resulting in a significant benefit in controlling any potential adverse impacts.

4.4 ***Corporate Strategy***

4.4.1 Development and implementation of an events strategy together with appropriate concessions on the Council's land in Stratford-upon-Avon will directly contribute towards the Corporate Strategy Aim 3.

4.5 ***Equality Impact Assessment***

4.5.1 Equality and accessibility is being considered as part of the RGA work.

5 Risk assessment

5.1 An aim of the work will be to reduce the inherent risks to the Council and support a more professional approach to enabling use of its land for events and concessions.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The Council has the opportunity to ensure its land fully supports the World Class Stratford aspirations for Stratford-upon-Avon, as agreed in the Corporate Strategy. The new Cultural Consortium will need a clear strategy as to how the Council's land can be used for events and it is appropriate that this is clarified now, together with the related matter of future concessions.

Andrew Lovegrove
HEAD OF RESOURCES

Background papers:

Appendix 1 RGA Interim Progress Report dated 5th September 2008

Appendix 2 Notes from the World Class Stratford Community Forum consultation exercise

**The Planning, Management and Support of Activities and Concessions on Public Space
operated by Stratford upon Avon District Council, including the Recreation Ground and
Bancroft Gardens**

Interim Progress Summary

Prepared by RGA Consulting, Edinburgh, 5th September 2008

1. Introduction

Stratford upon Avon District Council is working in partnership with World Class Stratford and a Cultural Consortium led by the Royal Shakespeare Company to develop the impact of the use of public space in Stratford upon Avon. The resulting plans and arrangements will develop the opportunities presented by the Recreation Ground and Bancroft Gardens for concessions*, culture and leisure events and activities, and provide appropriate operational arrangements and a business model.

The resulting strategy and plan will enhance both the appeal of Stratford upon Avon to staying visitors, and the culture and leisure offer for local residents. The programme and associated visitor attractions will reflect the importance and profile of the two sites, and contribute to the World Class Stratford aim to re-position Stratford-upon-Avon as one of the UK's pre-eminent cultural destinations.

* For the purpose of this document concession means any attraction or facility (including vending) allowed to operate through an agreement between the Council and operator

2. Approach

The approach to the project involves stakeholder consultation, use of comparators, options, and supporting the procurement process.

| Stage | Content | Inputs by |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| A. Building the Strategy | ▪ Inception meeting with client team | RGA and District Council |
| | ▪ Desk research, and consideration of the Draft Stratford upon Avon Festival and Event Business Plan 2008-2013 | RGA |
| | ▪ Consideration of appropriate national and regional policies relating to events, including the Cultural Olympiad | RGA by desktop and interview |
| | ▪ Objectives and policies of Stratford upon Avon District Council, and regeneration plans | RGA by desktop and interview |
| | ▪ Objectives and policies of potential partner organisations including: HLF, AWM, RSC, Culture West Midlands etc. | RGA by desktop and interview |
| | ▪ Advising on matters of public access, including managing established rights of way | RGA and District Council |
| | ▪ Advising on the optimum opportunities for | RGA and District Council |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | temporary food and beverage outlets and attractions for the area, and procurement arrangements | RGA and District Council |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advising on the choice, location and contracting of concessions ▪ Mitigation of risk, and the options of securing a temporary events field | RGA and District Council |
| B. Comparator and Competitor Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council role, licensing and operational arrangements ▪ Concessions ▪ Marketing and positioning ▪ Operations and structures ▪ Financial ▪ Performance against objectives | RGA and inputs/ contacts from Council. Three competitor programmes (Bath, Birmingham, Harrogate). Comparators and competitors to be agreed with client. |
| C. Consultations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stratford upon Avon District Council, World Class Stratford, and the Cultural Consortium ▪ The Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare Birthplace Trust ▪ Event organisers ▪ Regional agencies, including the 2012 Cultural Programmer, Advantage West Midlands, and Visit Britain ▪ Community event organisers, schools, and voluntary sector ▪ Potential event partners | RGA with contacts from the District Council. Combination of face to face and telephone consultations. |
| D. Consultative meetings and interim reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report of findings ▪ Concessions report ▪ Options for delivery and operation | Prepared by RGA with inputs by the District Council |
| F. Operating Plan and Business Model | <p>The Operating Business Plan is likely to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Background, history and development of the project. ▪ Aims and objectives for the programme ▪ Programme of the Cultural Consortium ▪ Proposed concessions, food and beverage outlets, and management of public space ▪ Operational plan – a presentation as to how public spaces will be managed, including organisational plans, human resources plans, governance model, and the introduction of licensees and concessions ▪ Financial plan – three year operating projections will be prepared by RGA. This will include projections of revenue and expenses, cash flow and profit and loss ▪ Statement of Assumptions – this will include details | Prepared by RGA and presented to the District Council |

relating the basis for estimating all figures within the financial projections

- Funding Options – RGA will explore funding options in liaison with the Cultural Consortium and World Class Stratford, and look at the objectives of the funding bodies and match them to those of the programme
- A statement of project benefits will support the decision making of key stakeholders
- Project and performance monitoring the plan to ensure attainment of the project
- Risk assessment including sensitivity analysis and mitigating strategies, including acquisition of a temporary events field.
- An executive summary

G. Presentation

A presentation to the Client group

RGA

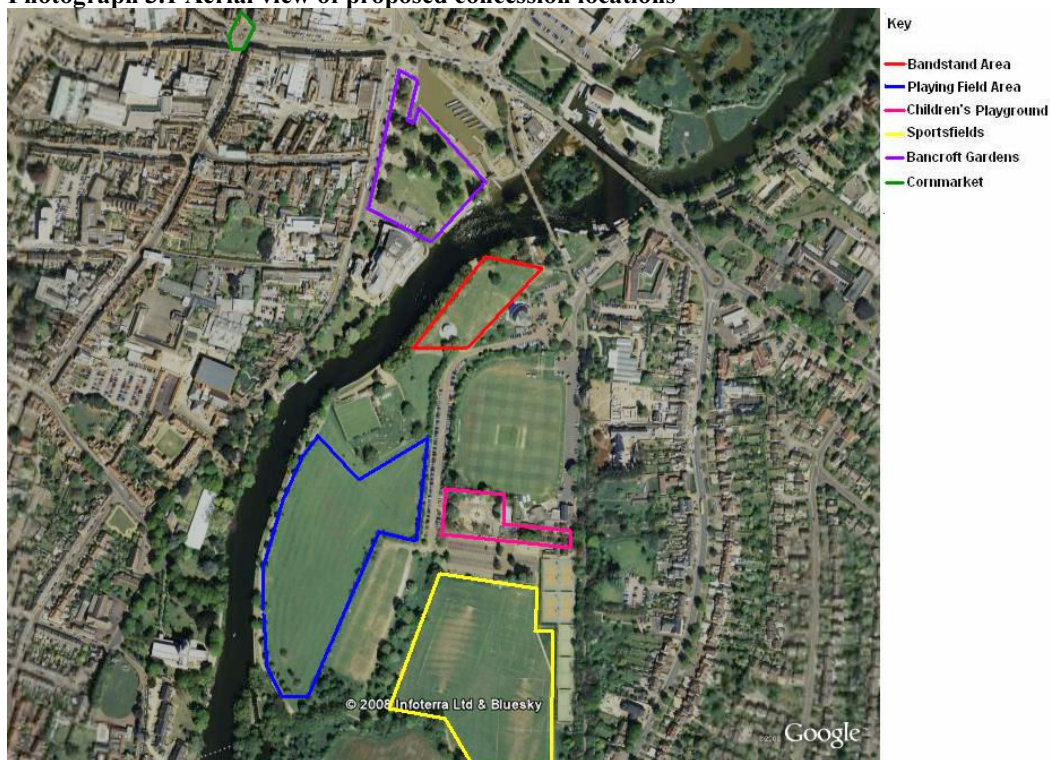
3. The Proposed Sites for Future Concessions

The Sites.

There are six areas to be included, of which the first five make up the majority of the flat riverside area known as the Recreation Ground. The sixth area is the Corn Market which is a paved open area in the centre of the town, at the intersection of High Street and Sheep Street.

- 1 The Bandstand Area
- 2 The Playing Field Area
- 3 The Children's Playground
- 4 The Sports Field
- 5 The Bancroft Gardens
- 6 The Corn Market.

Photograph 3.1 Aerial view of proposed concession locations



Source RGA/Google Earth.

NB. Layouts shown above are indicative only and will not form any part of an agreement or contract. The Mini golf area is not included on this visual, but is considered in the project

The Bandstand Area

This is the area at the entrance to the Recreation Ground so attracts the highest footfall. It contains the Bandstand that is used for regular concerts throughout the summer months and also has the Ripple Café which is not included within the proposed concessions. It can be accessed by road from Swan's Nest Lane and on foot from the Bancroft Gardens via the pedestrian only Tramway Bridge.

Possible events on this site could include:

- 1 Craft Fairs
- 2 Food Fayre – with the agreement of the catering concessionaire
- 3 Beer Festival – in conjunction with local landlords
- 4 Concerts within the bandstand
- 5 Large screen presentation of external events including the London 2012 Olympic Games
- 6 Christmas Winter Wonderland

Possible catering concessions would be limited by the proximity of the Ripple Café and café within the Crazy Golf area but could include:

- 1 Two mobile outlets serving different products, including ice creams, doughnuts or crepes.
- 2 Occasional mobile hot food outlets but only when there are major events on this site. These should offer a range of products reflecting 'healthy food' options.

The Ripple Café holds a liquor licence and with the exception of a properly managed Beer Festival, should be regarded as the only source of alcohol sales on this site.

The Playing Field Area

This is a large area of flat land close to the river. It can be accessed either by a passenger ferry from Waterside and Southern Lane or from the car park associated with the Recreation Ground. The area is surrounded with mature trees and is a pleasant setting for either a low impact event such as a balloon festival. It should be noted that the land in this area is alluvial deposits and is not strong enough to hold any significant weight. Also some of this area is prone to flooding in heavy rains.

This area is predominantly used for relaxation and picnics but could be used for a range of low impact activities over the summer months. These could include:

- 1 Hot Air Balloon Festival
- 2 Historic Car Rallies
- 3 Light steam engine rallies.
- 4 River Regattas and Boat Shows
- 5 Kite Flying Festivals
- 6 Falconry
- 7 Sporting events
- 8 Music in the Park events and concerts
- 9 Outdoor film screenings

Heavy rains have occurred in recent years, even in summer and flooding on some of this area has occurred on several occasions. It would be good practice to have an alternative venue available for any scheduled event that involved this land.

Catering concessions could include:

- 1 Providing ice cream and soft drink sales on a regular basis from a mobile unit.
- 2 During festivals and events, there may be scope to provide additional hot food and drinks outlets around this site.

The Children's Playground

This is a very popular attraction and is used heavily by families with young children throughout the summer holidays and at weekends during the shoulders of the season. The area has several fixed activities including:

Small scale family and community activities could be programmed into this area, such as:

- 1 Face painting
- 2 Mobile exhibitions
- 3 Wildlife activities
- 4 Circus skills

A small mobile unit can offer a range of suitable ice creams, confectionary and soft drinks during summer weekends and school holidays when the facility will be busy.

The Sports Fields

This area is used as football pitches during the school term period. It is however available for use during the summer holiday period from mid July until the end of August. The sports fields use is scheduled so the fields are not in constant use during term time, to allow some availability for events. The land which extends to 3.5 hectares (8.6 acres) is available for events during this period providing that they do not cause damage to the playing surfaces.

The land is away from the main areas of the Recreation Ground and the bandstand but is well served by car parking, although alternative parking and transport arrangements will be required for large scale events. Access is restricted as the only vehicle entrance is via Swan's Nest Lane and the main entrance to the Recreation Ground car park. There is a smaller pedestrian entrance through an underpass in the railway embankment from the A3400 Shipston Road. This is unsuitable for vehicles, except to enable emergency vehicle or servicing access.

Event organisers could consider using this site for larger public events including:

- 2 Displays and historic re-enactments
- 3 BMX and skateboarding events – providing all constructions are removed afterwards
- 4 Carnival
- 5 Circus
- 6 Larger sporting events
- 7 Pop or classical concerts
- 8 Events in conjunction with the London 2012 Olympic Games

Catering concessions would only be relevant in conjunction with such events. These would need to be appropriate to the event and would only be on site during events. They could include suitable hot food outlets including healthy food options and a beer tent(s) managed with an occasional licence managed by a local licensee.

The Bancroft Gardens

A major refurbishment programme of the Bancroft Gardens and the Theatre Promenade will be completed during the autumn of 2008. This £3 million investment will make a significant improvement to the area around the Canal Basin and in front of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. The work has included the landscaping of the area with 55 new trees and new lawns, together with new granite paving on the pathways throughout the site. The Bancroft Gardens are a main focal point of focus for the town around the River Avon and attract large numbers of visitors each day.

Plan 3.2 Bancroft Gardens Plan



Source World Class Stratford

The existing concessions held by The 'Baguette Barge' and 'Ice Cream Barge' together with the 'Barge Gallery' and the River Cruises and Restaurant Cruiser will remain and are not part of the current tender process, falling outside of the control of Stratford upon Avon District Council.

The area along the Theatre Promenade will provide an attractive and high quality space for a range of temporary events. A new amphitheatre area will seat an audience of around 100, and will provide an elegant setting for small scale concerts, street performances, and childrens entertainment. The infrastructure will support modest lighting and technical presentation. The promenade leading to the theatre will suit the presentation of a string of small scale entertainments, along with space adjacent to the fountain. Activities must be of a quality that

reflects the ambiance and image of the theatre, gardens and of a World Class Stratford but events may include:

- 1 Art Exhibitions
- 2 Temporary craft stalls
- 3 Street Theatre and entertainment

Catering concessions should be restricted to the sale of ice cream from small mobile units.

The Corn Market.

This is a paved area at the junction between Sheep Street and High Street. It offers a small area in the centre of town where performing events can take place.

The area is suitable to host small performances such as:

- 1 Street Theatre
- 2 Madrigal Singers
- 3 String Quartets
- 4 Charity fund raising
- 5 Promotion of other town events.

The space is small and is set amongst other retail businesses so there is no scope to offer catering or ice cream retailing on this site.

4. Consultation

The consultation process is ongoing, culminating with consideration by the South Joint Committee on the 25th September. Meetings with the Business Improvement District, the World Class Stratford Community Forum, Cultural Consortium, and an Officer logistics group are scheduled in the interim.

A presentation and discussion was held with a group of key stakeholders and Councillors on the 13th August, chaired by World Class Stratford. A range of issues were raised and discussed. The need to ensure that event programming and planning responsibilities were clear, with the Culture Consortium taking the lead on event programming was pointed out, as was the need to ensure that logistical arrangements were effective. The benefits of animating public space were confirmed, qualified by concerns that the quality of events and concessions was appropriate. Large scale events must have effective and enforceable guidance concerning transport, noise and potential nuisance.

5. Comparators

Four comparators have been identified to inform proposals in Stratford upon Avon. Detailed reports of their arrangements will be included in the final report. Initial comparative work has included face to face and telephone consultation. Supplementary documentation is being provided by the comparators, and will inform discussions with the Council about the desirability of site visits schedule. Birmingham City Centre Management Team operates events in the city

centre, as well as concessions and street entertainment. Key concerns are maintaining a high quality environment for the public and the retail sector. The income derived from events and related concessions pays for the employment of officers who oversee and administer arrangements. Promotional arrangements have created growth in activity and income. The view of the City Centre Director was that responsibility for attracting and administering an events programme needed to remain in the publicly accountable body. The Parks and Green Space section of the City of Edinburgh Council hosts a wide range of events every year, with the largest attracting 100,000 people to the Meadows. Legal services contract both concessions and events with a dedicated member of staff and two staff members undertake events and concessions work in the parks team. Income covers these costs and related overheads, and contributes to parks upkeep. A bond of up to £10,000 is required against potential damage. A standing event forum oversees planning, licensing and safety concerns. Concessions are from one month to three years in length, depending on the scale of the concession. Bath and North East Somerset also provide this type of service and are reviewing their arrangements due to growth in demand. Administration is carried out by Property Services. In Harrogate the Estates Department also operates concessions, which are advertised locally and held on a three year licence.

6. Conclusions to date

The procurement of concessions should be prepared on the basis of the findings outlined in section three of this report. RGA will work with the District Council in preparing tender documentation and will support the tender and interview process. The new arrangements will be in place during March 2009.

The mechanism to licence and co-ordinate events on public spaces in Stratford upon Avon needs to remain in the hands of the District Council in the first instance. Income from events is likely to cover the costs of a dedicated officer, who will maintain the diary, ensure licensing and planning arrangements are carried out, promote the spaces for events usage, and co-ordinate arrangements with the Cultural Consortium. The oversight of event related activity outside of office hours will also form part of the remit. The viability of this approach will be tested and presented within the business model and financial projections in the final report.

7. Next Steps

A round of consultation in Stratford upon Avon involving Officers of the Council, the Cultural Consortium, World Class Stratford, and the Business Improvement District will consider key issues of infrastructure, planning, co-ordination, strategy, and delivery. This process will allow for an update to be made available to the South Joint Committee shortly before their meeting on the 25th September.

RGA will continue to work with the District Council on the concessions procurement process to ensure implementation in March 2009. Comparator analysis will be fully drafted, and agreed visits organised.

A business model for the management and co-ordination of events and concessions on public spaces will be prepared, with associated documentation such as risk mitigation, financial projections, and job or contract specifications.

RGA Ltd.
7 Dean Bank Lane
Edinburgh
EH3 5BS
Tel: 0131 343 1115
Fax: 0131 343 2273
Web: www.rgaconsulting.co.uk

Comments made by working groups at the World Class Stratford Community Forum on
10 September 2008 on possible future events and concessions

Group A

Included representatives from:

Stratford upon Avon Town Council, Access Advisor,
Warwickshire County Council
Stratford upon Avon College
Stratford upon Avon District Council
Stratford Voice

Comments made:

- Need to manage factors such as noise, traffic and sensitivity in relation to adjacent businesses
- Historically the Recreation Ground was for local people
- Needs a sense of shared space/sensitivity between uses
- Activities need to be family orientated
- More public toilets are needed
- An alternative river crossing close to the town would be useful
- Possibly vending limited to coffee/tea, light refreshments from an appropriate unit
- Need to balance between traditional picnics and walking and commercial activities
- Work to Stannell's Bridge is essential

Group B

Included representatives from:

Stratford upon Avon Society
Stratford upon Avon Town Council
Stratford upon Avon Society

Comments made:

- Consider 'branding' selective month's activities to allow Stratford to be known for certain themes
- Activities should draw people towards the town centre

Group C

Included representatives from:

Shakespeare Country
Stratford upon Avon College
Stratford upon Avon Town Trust
King Edward VI School
Stratford upon Avon Hospitality Association

Comments made:

- Need for family based activities
- Need for contingency plans – consider a good sized covered area for wet weather?
- Against portable vans for vending and need control quality of refreshments sold
- Favour vending from boats on the river
- More variety of entertainment from the Bandstand - free of charge
- Need to have greater promotion/publicity
- Broad variety of activities needed – appeal to a range of people

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