# Stratford’s Mr Shakespeare resigns amid racial remarks controversy before annual parade



A prominent Shakespeare impersonator in Stratford-upon-Avon has stepped down from his role following allegations of making racially insensitive remarks. Paul Workman, 74, known locally as 'Mr Shakespeare', had been a well-known figure in the town for eight years but resigned ahead of an annual Shakespeare birthday parade after the Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council received a complaint related to his comments.

The accusations revolve around remarks allegedly made in a pub earlier this year, which reportedly referenced 'Muslims and Jews'. The council summoned Workman for a meeting to discuss the allegations; however, he chose to resign before it could occur, citing concerns that he was a victim of what he termed 'cancel culture'.

In his own words, Workman expressed confusion over the situation, stating he did not recall the specific comments he made but acknowledged that some individuals might have found his statements 'triggering'. He shared his perspective: "One thing I do know is that I am not racist. I feel I'm being smeared by people who are jealous of my position and my success."

Workman recounted his conversation in the pub, describing it as casual and part of a discussion with a friend about setting up a pottery class. After having reportedly consumed a few pints, he found himself discussing current affairs and historical parallels, suggesting that he compared contemporary conflicts to past events in World War Two.

In response to the complaint, Workman claimed he felt pressured to resign due to the potential fallout from unverified accusations. He said, "I now regret not telling my side of the story because I feel like I've been victimised on the basis of pub gossip and rumour."

The resignation has not diminished Workman’s popularity among some community members, as he has reportedly received numerous requests to return to his role since stepping down. "I've been inundated by people saying how badly treated I've been and how I shouldn't have been forced to quit," he noted.

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council confirmed the transition to a new impersonator, who will be accompanied by an actress playing Shakespeare’s daughter, Susanna. Town clerk Caroline Nash commented on the situation: "Following a complaint regarding alleged comments made in a public setting, Mr Workman was invited to a meeting to discuss this matter. He did not take up this offer, and we then received a response resigning from his voluntary role."

Since his departure, Workman has reflected on his time as Mr Shakespeare, expressing his regret over leaving a role he cherished: "I will really miss being Stratford's Mr Shakespeare. It's a big role with responsibility."

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.stratford-herald.com/news/the-stratford-librarian-who-doubles-as-william-shakespeare-9197216/> - This article discusses William Stafford, a librarian in Stratford-upon-Avon who also performs as Shakespeare, highlighting the town's tradition of Shakespeare impersonators.
2. <https://www.stratford-herald.com/news/shakespeare-celebrations-blog-9138374/> - This blog post mentions Paul Workman taking on the role of William Shakespeare at the Birthday Celebrations in 2017, indicating his involvement in local Shakespeare events.
3. <https://www.stratford-herald.com/news/festivals-in-doubt-and-questions-over-how-town-centre-is-run-after-stratford-bid-manager-diane-mansell-dramatically-quits-9303872/> - This article reports on the resignation of Diane Mansell, the BID manager, raising questions about the management of town events, which may relate to the Shakespeare birthday parade.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/50s8fcLv2RJ72tK5MvRX8FP/the-year-that-shakespeares-home-town-banned-plays> - This BBC article discusses historical events in Stratford-upon-Avon, including the banning of plays in the town, providing context to the town's complex relationship with Shakespearean performances.
5. <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/garricks-shakespeare-jubilee-first-announcement/> - This article details David Garrick's efforts to honor Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon, reflecting the town's longstanding engagement with Shakespearean celebrations.
6. <https://www.shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/meeting-stratford-upon-avon-corporation-which-john-shakespeare-was-elected-bailiff> - This document provides historical records of Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation meetings, offering insight into the town's governance and its historical figures.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14674081/Shakespeare-impersonator-quits-job-racism.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data