

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Dove Suite, Alleyne’s Academy on Tuesday 04 April, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor R Kenney in the Chair and
Councillors J Davies, Mrs J Farnham, Mrs M Goodall, Mrs K Green, M Green,
Mrs J Hood, P Leason (until Minute Number GP17/185), Mrs E Mowatt, G Neagus,
A Osgathorpe, Mrs J Piggott, M Shaw and M Williamson

ABSENT: Councillors Mrs C Collier, G Collier, I Fordham and T Jackson

GP17/172 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C Collier, G Collier I Fordham and T Jackson

GP17/173 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received

GP17/174 **To receive the Reports of the County Councillors**

County Councillor P Jones reported that Highways now have a fourth machine for repairing potholes.

He also reported that a five year lease has been signed allowing the Stone Youth & Community Centre to remain open.

County Councillor Jones has made enquiries regarding the future of the Post Office. He has been told that the Post Office is committed to providing a full service in Stone.

A project has started to make Stone a destination Town. When some details have been drawn up there will be a public consultation and consultation with the Town Council. He reported that there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes.

Councillor G Neagus asked if Highways could look at removing the “temporary” splinter island at the bottom of Christchurch Way to ease congestion. County Councillor Jones said that he would refer the item to Highways as requested.

Councillor M Williamson reported that the potholes at the top of Pirehill Lane have been repaired.

It was noted that County Councillor I Parry was again absent from the meeting.

GP17/175 **Representations from Members of the Public**

Mr Jim Harvey – Stone Leisure Centre Consultation

Mr Harvey visited the Stone Leisure Centre Consultation on 24th March. He stated that there was a representative from the developers there, but no representatives from Stafford Borough Council. The drawings did not have any scale on them or show how they would fit onto the site. A 3-dimensional model would have been helpful. The new development does not offer all sports facilities under one roof – there would be two studios, a pool and a fitness suite but no sports hall.

GP17/176 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

- a) Estates Sub-Committee held on the 14th March, 2017, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee at Minute EST17/037 be adopted.
- b) Management Sub-Committee held on the 14th March, 2017, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee at Minute MAN17/031 be adopted.
- c) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on the 14th March, 2017, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee at Minute TTP17/023 be adopted, subject to the further RESOLUTION that a working group be formed including two co-opted traders, with regards to organising three late night shopping events in May, June and July.
- d) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on the 15th March, 2017, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Steering Group at NP17/014 be adopted.

GP17/177 **Presentation by AED Donate**

Jamie Richards, Chief Executive of AED Donate, thanked Members for allowing him to speak.

Mr Richards gave an overview of how AED Donate was formed and the service it provides. He also said that two training sessions were being held to teach people how to use defibrillators. He also said that they have a community room available to hire.

GP17/178 **Annual Review of Risk Management**

The Clerk presented his report* which proposed no changes to the policy, but had updated a number of the risk scores and proposed actions as a result of a review.

RESOLVED: to accept the Annual Review of Risk Management

* Items marked with an asterisk refer to reports or papers circulated with the agenda or distributed at the meeting. They are attached as an appendix to the signed copy of the Council minutes.

GP17/179 **Noticeboard in Stone High Street**

Councillor Kenney referred to Minute Number GP14/114 where it was agreed to provide an Information Board at the top of the High Street relating to traders in the area. The Clerk advised Members that the planned board is the largest allowed without having to have planning permission. It is estimated that it will cost approximately £2,000. It is expected that traders will keep the information on the board up to date.

It was also noted that the Noticeboard on Christchurch Way needs moving to be in line with the pedestrian crossing.

RESOLVED: to order and install the Information Board.

GP17/180 **Letter from Sir William Cash MP**

Sir William Cash MP wrote to Stone Town Council asking a series of questions about the Town.

RESOLVED: to send the following responses to Sir William Cash MP

- Are there any incentives that can be offered to the Co-operative store to retain its presence in the High Street?
 - No incentives can be offered
- Are there any incentives that can be offered to Sainsbury's to retain its local frozen food depot in Stone?
 - No incentives can be offered
- Can we establish full agreement that an information board and funding for the trader's Christmas Market is essential and that this will need to be financed?
 - The Information Board will be installed. With regards to the Christmas Market, Stone Town Council will assist as much as possible
- Can we establish agreement that we need a parking scheme for local traders from the High Street and the surrounding roads? Can anything further be done to promote car parking for visitors with attractive signs in the car parks and signs in the High Street highlighting the short walk to these car parks e.g. Mill Street to Christchurch is less than 3 minutes?
 - Car Parks are owned by Stafford Borough Council. A request for a change to the current parking arrangements has already been refused by Stafford Borough Council
- Could any further preparatory work be done to build on events and festivals, including superb farmers markets and the Stone Food & Drink Festival, so that Stone has its own music or cheese and wine events and festivals?
 - Members wished to remind Sir William Cash that the Town also has a successful week long festival and there will also be a Music Festival on 8th July. Plans are under way for a series of three late night shopping events in the Town in May, June and July.
- Can further steps be taken to promote local cultural initiatives such as the recent unveiling of innovative artwork produced for Stone Station by a group of local artists who worked with London Midland in order to show their pride for their local community?

- It is hoped that the proposed development of the Crown Wharf site would create a Real Ale Trail which could be promoted via the railway network to encourage people to use the trains to come to Stone. In terms of tourism, is there anything further we can do to promote the Stone rail station with remarkable growth in its annual passenger footfall figures, so that new visitors can come to the town to spend money?
- A Member of the North Staffordshire Rail Promotion Group has said that this is something that can be taken to the next meeting. It was also suggested that Stone be advertised in other Towns to encourage people to make the journey to Stone.
- Could preparatory works begin to ensure brown tourism signs – the white on brown signs – that enable essential directional guidance to attract people into the centre of Stone from the main roads running through the town?
 - There are already brown signs in the Town
- There have in the past been proposals for a great Community Heritage/Museum Centre to make the approach into the High Street much more attractive. Would that be something the Council would consider?
 - The Crown Wharf project covers this (see above)

GP17/181 Stone Leisure Consultation

Members were disappointed with the short consultation period for such a large project.

RESOLVED: to respond to the Stone Leisure Consultation, by stating:

- The whole site strategic view should have been considered. There are serious concerns that there will not be space for all of the facilities e.g. tennis courts, MUGA, skate park, if the whole area of Westbridge Park is not considered
- Clarification is required regarding the use of Alleyne's Sports Centre, as facilities offered there are not going to be offered at the new facility. Will the public be able to hire the facility or will it be solely for the Academy's use? The proposed new development does not include indoor team sport facilities
- The Neighbourhood Plan consultation highlighted the requirement for leisure facilities, but this does not cover all leisure components. It is disappointing that it is just a fitness centre and pool. A warm water teaching pool had been requested as part of the consultation.
- The building does not fit in with the adjacent Conservation Area.
- The parking is for the use of M&S customers, but does not include the use of the fitness centre
- It is suggested that the entrance foyer be made larger to allow non-members of the facility to meet for walking, running, cycling etc
- It was suggested that the facility would not be good value for money
- There needs to be changing facilities for outdoor sports
- The consultation took place at Westbridge Park which does not accurately reflect the views of all of the residents of the Town, as most people questioned will already be users of the current facility.
- Members questioned why the consultation closed early?
- Members expressed their disappointment that facilities for teenagers have not been considered yet.

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GP17/182 Appointment of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor Elect

RESOLVED: The Mayor Elect for 2017-18 is Councillor J Davies, and the Deputy Mayor Elect is Councillor I Fordham

GP17/183 Update from Working Groups

a) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Mrs J Hood reported that the Neighbourhood Plan is on track. A consultation letter is ready to be sent out to residents.

GP17/184 To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings of local organisations and outside bodies as a representative of the Town Council

Stone ATC – Councillor J Davies reported that the last meeting was on 23rd March. He and the Mayoress will be attending the annual dinner on 9th April

Age Concern Stone & District – No meetings have taken place

Stone Town Band – No meetings have taken place

Walton Community Centre – Councillor M Shaw reported management issues at Walton Community Centre. He will report further at the next meeting

Stafford District & Stone Access Group – Councillor Mrs C Collier was absent but asked that it be known that the new website will be up and running soon

Stone Common Plot Trustees – No meetings have taken place

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group – No meetings have taken place

Staffordshire Parish Councils Association – No meetings have taken place

The meeting was adjourned at this point and reconvened after the Planning Committee meeting

GP17/185 To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960, the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next item of business is discussed on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the debate

RESOLVED: to exclude Press and Public from the next item of business.

GP17/186 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED

- a) That the Confidential minutes of the Estates Sub-Committee held on the 14th March, 2017, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee at Minute EST17/039 be adopted subject to the further resolution below.

The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that Standing Order 19.7 required various specific procedures in respect of contracts anticipated to exceed £60,000. This included drawing up a specification and undertaking a full tendering process.

It was noted that this contract was not originally expected to exceed the sum set out in standing orders, and that quotations had been received below this sum which had ultimately proved unsuitable for the Council's needs, including one where the contract had been awarded and the contractor subsequently withdrew. In the circumstances, it was considered essential that the planned work's proceed without any further delays.

RESOLVED: To suspend Standing Order 19.7 to allow this contract to be let in accordance with the recommendation from the Estates Sub-Committee

Town Mayor