

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Christchurch Suite, Frank Jordan Centre,
Lichfield Street, Stone
on Tuesday 3 October 2017

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: G. Collier, Mrs C. Collier, Mrs J. Hood, J. Davies, P. Leason,
Mrs E. Mowatt, A. Osgathorpe, M. Shaw, T. Jackson, G. Neagus, I. Fordham and
Mrs J. Farnham.

ABSENT: Councillors Mrs M. Goodall, Mrs J. Piggott, Mrs K. Green, M. Green and
M. Williamson

The change of meeting room (from St Michael's Suite, stated on the agenda) was
due to the availability of suitable furniture following the refurbishment works

GP18/069 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: Mrs M. Goodall, Mrs J. Piggott,
Mrs K. Green, M. Green and M. Williamson.

GP18/070 **Declarations of Interests**

None

GP18/071 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP18/072 **To receive the Report of the County Councillors**

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

Councillor Mrs Hood updated the Committee on the latest position with HS2 and
the potential issues related to the proposals for a construction hub near Yarnfield.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised that Staffordshire County Council would soon be going
into consultation on libraries. There are 43 in the county and 19 of them are already
community run, with plans to put forward additional proposals for changing
libraries to community operations including Stone. She urged the Town Council to
give consideration as to how this may be prevented. Stone Library is different from
many others as it is located in the High Street which is the heart of the community
and is very well used with all sorts of community events being held there.

Councillor Mrs Hood assured the Committee that she would do all she could to stop
the County Council from transferring the library from professionally managed to
one run by volunteers.

Councillor Mrs Hood reported that the Bank Manager of the National Westminster Bank had advised that the Stone branch will permanently close on 10 October 2017. There are plans to locate a mobile unit on the rear car park once a week for people to use banking services. She asked that the Town Clerk discuss with the Bank Manager the siting of the mobile unit and whether it might be positioned in the High Street.

There is no information yet on the close date for the Post Office, but it could be in January 2018. Councillor Mrs Hood stated that the loss of both the Post Office and Bank in Stone will have a huge negative impact on local shops as the footfall will reduce if people travel out of town to access these facilities and alternative shopping opportunities. There is a strong need to devise a plan to keep the Post Office in the town and protect the interests of traders in Stone.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP18/073 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP18/074 General Data Protection Regulation

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk* which details changes to data protection requirements as a result of new EU regulation which will supersede the existing Data Protection Act 1998.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which will not be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU, will increase the obligations of organisations when controlling personal data and increase the rights of individuals to ensure that their personal data is respected and used only for legitimate purposes.

The first direct impact on the Town Council will be the legal requirement to appoint a Data Protection Officer. The officer could be an employee or an external expert but the post holder would need expert knowledge and experience in this field. All Town and Parish Councils are likely to need to take on the services of an expert and SPCA and Staffordshire County Council are in discussion about offering these services to parishes.

RESOLVED:

- To note the need for the Council to comply with the GDPR when it comes into force on 25 May 2018
- To authorise the Town Clerk to undertake the necessary preparation to meet the Council's obligations, including investigating the options for the provision of a Data Protection Officer
- That the Town Clerk will not incur any expenditure that cannot be met from existing budgets without seeking further approval from the Committee

* 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.

GP18/075 **Mayoral Allowances**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk* which explored Mayoral Allowances for the 2018-19 and subsequent municipal years.

He reported that the current practice of paying a lump sum allowance direct to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor without the deduction of income tax cannot continue. Any lump sum payment to the Mayor must now be paid through the PAYE system to deduct income tax at source. A lump sum can no longer be paid to the Deputy Mayor.

The Committee considered the alternative options for paying the Mayor for the costs of the role in the future. These are to:

- Continue with the current lump sum payment system but to deduct tax via PAYE
- Pay a smaller lump sum allowance but meet some Mayoral costs by direct payment from the Council
- Pay no lump sum allowance, and meet Mayoral costs by reimbursement only

RESOLVED:

That in the financial year 2018-19 and subsequent municipal years:

- The Town Council continue to pay a lump sum allowance direct the Mayor, but deduct tax via PAYE
- That no lump sum allowance is paid to the Deputy Mayor but the Council will pay directly for event tickets, and reimburse for travel and other related expenses provided they are not 'optional' and were exclusively incurred when deputising for the Mayor.

GP18/076 **Consultation on Stafford Borough Council's Planning Application Validation Criteria**

The Committee considered a consultation on Planning Application Validation Criteria after Stafford Borough Council had refreshed the Criteria document with information guidance and support for those submitting planning applications.

RESOLVED: That Stafford Borough Council's Consultation on Planning Application Validation Criteria is noted.

GP18/077 **Civic Dinner**

The Committee considered the change of the date for the Civic Diner in 2018 from Saturday 28 April to Saturday 21 April at the request of the Town Mayor. The Stonehouse Hotel is unavailable to hold the event on 28 April 2018.

RESOLVED: That the Civic Dinner in 2018 would be held on Saturday 21 April.

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GP18/078 **Grant Application from AEDdonate**

The Committee considered a request for a grant from AEDdonate who are supporting the Coppice Estate which is on the other side of the railway line, to raise funds for a defibrillator.

A number of questions were raised relating to AEDdonate's accounts.

RESOLVED: To defer consideration of the application to the next meeting whilst clarification is sought on costs relating to fundraising events and AEDdonate premises.

GP18/079 **Purchase of Flags for Commemorative Events**

The Committee considered whether flags in the town should be replaced as the ones in use are looking tired.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council allocate an additional budget of £700 for the purchase of flags and bunting for the year 2017-18.

GP18/080 **Craft Market**

The Committee considered a Motion from the Chairman, Councillor Kenney:

'Stafford Borough Council is proposing to introduce a Makers' Market in Stafford town centre which will operate on the third Saturday of each month. This would put it in direct competition with the Town Council's Craft Market, both for stallholders and customers. Currently there is insufficient information available to be able to consider the impact of the new market fully, but it is important that the Council has the flexibility to act quickly, if necessary, to ensure the continued viability of the Craft Market'.

RESOLVED: To delegate to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and Estates Sub-Committee, the authority to vary prices and other arrangements for the Craft Market and Town Market in the short term.

RESOLVED: To note that this item will be brought back to the Committee in two months' time, when further information is available.

GP18/081 **Non- Cheque Payments**

RESOLVED: To note the list* of non-cheque payments made by the Council during the period 1 July 2017 to 31 August 2017.

GP18/082 **Update from Working Groups**

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Mrs Hood reported that progress with the Neighbourhood Plan was forging ahead, and that it would be submitted to Stafford Borough Council for screening tomorrow. It is hoped that the Council will be ready to go for Regulation 14 on 27 November 2017.

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RESOLVED: To note the update on the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Protocol for Marking the Death of the Sovereign or other member of the Royal Family Group

Councillor Davies reported that he had a discussion with Stafford Borough Council's Chief Executive's, Leader's and Mayoral Office and a detailed protocol had been produced for circulation to members of the Working Group. A schedule would then be formulated for use by the Town Council.

RESOLVED: to note the update on the work of the Marking the Death Working Group.

GP18/083 **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

The Mayor advised that he would be attending the AGM on 19 October 2017.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Mrs Collier reported that there had been no meeting.

Stone Town Band

The Mayor reported that no meeting had taken place.

Councillor Jackson advised that Stone Town Band were available to perform at Christmas events.

Walton Community Centre

No report was available.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Mrs Collier reported that a letter was being distributed to businesses by the Town Centre Manager, with guidelines on the best siting positions for A boards. An update on progress with development of the website was also given.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Mrs Hood reported that a meeting was taking place tomorrow.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Mrs Farnham reported that the Hub were going from strength to strength. An email newsletter was going to be issued every month detailing its work and services on offer. On 30 October 2017 the Hub will begin providing hot meals (for anyone wishing to enjoy one) from 12.30 to 1.30 pm on Mondays.

Canal & River Trust

Councillor Kenney reported that he and Councillor Mrs Hood had attended an informal meeting set up to explore the possibility of forming a group for the purpose of adopting the section of canal running through Stone with plans to include the stretch along Whitebridge Industrial Estate. Various community groups were invited and a discussion took place about creating a central point for dealing with canal issues. Another meeting is likely to be held at a later date.

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SPCA Executive Meeting

No report was available.

The meeting was suspended to enable the Planning Committee Meeting to take place, after which it was reconvened for the confidential items.

GP18/084 Exclusion of the Press and Public

To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission of 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 the Press and Public from the next item of business.

GP18/085 Internal Audit

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk* on internal audit arrangements for the current financial year and onwards. The Council's existing Internal Auditor had retired, leaving the Council to find a new auditor for 2017-18 and subsequent years.

RESOLVED: To appoint Sandra Morris as the Council's internal auditor for 2017-18 and subsequent years.

Town Mayor

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