

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in St Michael's Suite, Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone on Tuesday 5 December 2017

- PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: Mrs J. Hood, J. Davies, Mrs E. Mowatt, M. Shaw, I. Fordham,
Mrs K. Green, M. Green, Mrs J. Farnham, Mrs M. Goodall, T. Jackson, G. Neagus,
M. Williamson and P. Leason (from GP18/125).
- ABSENT:** Councillors: P. Leason (to GP18/124), A. Osgathorpe, G. Collier, Mrs C. Collier and
Mrs J. Piggott
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GP18/107 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: P. Leason (to GP18/124), A. Osgathorpe,
G. Collier, Mrs C. Collier and Mrs J. Piggott

GP18/108 **Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Mrs Farnham declared a personal interest in GP18/118:
Stone Community Hub – Review of Grant

Councillors: Mrs J. Hood and R. Kenney declared a personal interest in GP18/117:
St Michael's Community Hall – Request for a Grant

GP18/109 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP18/110 **To receive the Report of the County Councillors**

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

Councillor Mrs Hood did not have any updates for the Council on this occasion.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP18/111 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP18/112 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

Estates Sub-Committee held on 21 November 2017, copies having been circulated
to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the

recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers: EST18/017 and EST18/018 be adopted.

Management Sub-Committee held on 21 November 2017, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number MAN18/008 be adopted.

GP18/113 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee

The notes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting held on 22 November 2017 were noted.

GP18/114 Budget 2018-19 to 2020-21 - Overview

The Committee received the report* of the Town Clerk setting out the prospects for the Council's 2018-19 to 2020-21 budget. The report considers the overall position of the Council, the context in which the budget needs to be set and the standstill budget, which is the starting point for determination of the precept for 2018-19.

RESOLVED: To note the standstill budget position for 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 and the issues related to setting the precept.

RESOLVED: That each sub-committee considers its financial needs for the next three years and report back to the General Purposes Committee on 23 January 2018 with its budget proposals.

**GP18/115 Stafford Borough Council Local Plan Review
Plan for Stafford Borough – Draft Supplementary Planning Documents**

The Committee considered the letter from Stafford Borough Council (brought forward from the previous meeting) with information on the launch of three consultations:

- Call for Sites – Brownfield sites. Applications are invited for Brownfield sites which will be assessed for inclusion in the updated Brownfield Land Register during 2018.
- Call for Sites – Local Green Space. Applications are invited for Local Green Space designations which will be assessed as part of the Local Plan Review.
- Draft Supplementary Planning Documents – Comments are invited on the following draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD): The Design SPD, The Re-use of Rural Buildings SPD and the Shopfronts and Advertisements SPD.

RESOLVED: To inform Stafford Borough Council that the Town Council is in the process of preparing its Neighbourhood Plan, and to submit a copy of the plan as the Town Council's response to the consultation.

GP18/116 Changes to Subsidised Bus Journeys in Staffordshire

The Committee considered a letter from Mark Deaville, Cabinet Member for Commercial with the results of an eight-week public consultation on how best to spend its £1.3m annual bus subsidy. Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet has agreed to implement the option that safeguards the most bus journeys.

* 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.

RESOLVED: To note the information provided by Councillor Mark Deaville.

GP18/117 **Grant Application from St Michael's Community Hall**

The Chairman, Councillor Kenney, and Vice Chairman, Councillor Mrs Hood, had declared an interest in this item and did not take part in the discussion or vote. The Mayor, Councillor Davies was nominated, and after a vote, elected to take the chair (for this item only).

The Committee considered a request for a grant from St Michael's Community Hall. The Town Council is being asked to consider awarding £500 towards the cost of refurbishing the ladies' toilet facility at the hall.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that he had raised a query as part of the process but that this had been resolved satisfactorily.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council awards a grant of £500 to St Michael's Community Hall for the purposes of refurbishing the ladies' toilets.

GP18/118 **Stone Community Hub**

Councillor Mrs Farnham, who had declared an interest in this item did not take part in the discussion or vote.

The Committee were asked by the Town Clerk to review the grant payment to Stone Community Hub in accordance with Minute Number GP18/018.

An 18-month period has lapsed since the previous award and Stone Community Hub has not applied for further financial support.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council ceases its financial support to the Hub at the end of the 18 month period.

GP18/119 **Copeland Drive Play Area – Disability Swing**

The Committee considered a letter from Stafford Borough Council requesting the support of the Town Council in purchasing a disability swing for installation at Copeland Drive play area. The swing is required for use by a disabled child who enjoys visiting the facility.

It was concluded that this is the responsibility of Stafford Borough Council who should take charge of the matter.

RESOLVED: That Stafford Borough Council are asked to find a solution that will facilitate the purchase of play equipment at Copeland Park, to meet the needs of the child wishing to access the facility.

GP18/120 **Finger Posts/Display Boards**

Discussions have taken place in recent meetings of the Tourism & Town Promotion and Estates Sub Committees about upgrading finger posts and display boards in the town.

Following discussions with Stafford Borough Council officers, the Committee were asked to consider a schedule of the works, prepared by Stafford Borough Council, which incorporate all the issues discussed. An estimate of the costings for upgrading the finger posts and display boards is £21,000 (subject to seeking formal quotes when budgets have been secured).

Stafford Borough Council is reviewing its budget for these works and would welcome any financial contributions that Stone Town Council are able to make in order to ensure that all works are achievable.

RESOLVED: That the committee agree in principle to make a financial contribution towards improvement works to the finger posts and display boards.

RESOLVED: That the item is brought forward for consideration at the budget meeting so that a value can be earmarked as the Town Council's contribution to Stafford Borough Council.

GP18/121 **HS2 Briefing Offer**

The Committee considered an email from HS2 Ltd (the Stakeholder Advisor – West Midlands to Crewe) which has been considering an alternative location, known as Aldersley's Rough for the proposed railhead and maintenance base near Stone. However, after completing its analysis, they had concluded that the Stone site continues to represent the best location for the railhead and maintenance base.

HS2 Ltd would like to offer the Town Council an update briefing, and as the timescales might be short, suggest a single, joint briefing for two or three representatives with the parish councils closest to the site (Swynnerton, Chebsey and Stone Rural).

Eight Town Council Committee members indicated a desire to attend the meeting and it was concluded that there was no justification for limiting numbers to two or three representatives.

RESOLVED: To accept the invitation of a briefing, and to advise HS2 Ltd that the number of Councillors in attendance would be the total of those wishing to attend, with no exclusions.

GP18/122 **Car Park at Former Stone Police Station**

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that an agreement had been secured with Staffordshire Police for the Town Council to take over management and use of the former Police Station Car Park (located off Station Road), for a time period of up to two months, at no charge.

The car park would be made available for use by members of the public until mid-January 2018 and would be open between the hours of 10:00am and 6.30pm daily. The Car park would be available for use all night during the late-night shopping event on 6 December 2017.

The Town Clerk further reported that, due to limited timescales he took the decision to proceed under Standing Order 10.9, after consulting with the Committee Chairman.

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RESOLVED: The management and free use of the Police car park by Stone Town Council and members of the public, was noted.

GP18/123 **Non-Cheque Payments**

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

GP18/124 **Update from Working Groups**

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Mrs Hood reported that some slight changes had been made to the Neighbourhood Plan after a meeting with the Principal Planning Officer at Stafford Borough Council. A special meeting of the General Purposes Committee must now be called. The project is almost on schedule and Councillor Mrs Hood thanked the group for the tireless work that had been done to get to this stage.

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 a meeting of the Group had taken place and a second draft of a protocol had been formulated. The Council is now in possession of black armbands (to be worn by Members and staff) and black rosettes/bow are in the process of being obtained for the Mayor's chain.

The Group are currently considering the condolence book and would like to see how it will look and view an example of a page. No one seems able to provide an example of the pages, which are currently being held in storage by Staffordshire County Council.

An outline agreement has been made for the book to be placed in St Michael & St Wulfad Church and for floral tributes to also be made there. A proclamation will take place when Her Majesty the Queen dies and this will be in Market Square and Granville Square.

Councillor Mrs Farnham and Councillor Leeson were thanked for the assistance they have offered with this item.

RESOLVED: To note the update on the work of the Marking the Death of the Sovereign or other member of the Royal Family Group.

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies informed the Committee that a meeting of the Stone Area Parish Liaison Group would be taking place in January 2018.

RESOLVED: To note that a meeting of the Group would be held in January 2018.

GP18/125 **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 no meeting had taken place.

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Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Mrs Green reported that no meeting had taken place.

Stone Town Band

The Mayor reported that he had not attended a recent rehearsal.

Walton Community Centre

Councillor Green has not been invited to any meetings and is still waiting for a reply to the letter sent.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Mrs Collier had forwarded a written report:

- Post Office: It is noted that the Post Office reports nationally on accessibility facilities at local post offices and a similar system could be used for surveying.
- Family Sports club: to ask Councillor Mike Smith if there will be changing facilities/WC's.
- Town Centre stalls: Lisa Clemson has referred the group to the Markets Manager Kevin re: leaving routes past the stalls. He agreed to look at it.
- A Boards: Lisa referred the Access Group to the County who say it is a district matter.
- The difficulty of managing wheelchairs on sideways cambered paths, which are common in Stafford, were commented upon.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Mrs Hood had no update following the previous report on the work of the Trustees.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Mrs Farnham advised the Committee that a Christmas lunch would be served on Friday 22 December.

Canal & River Trust

Councillor Kenney reported that no meeting had taken place.

SPCA Executive Meeting

Councillor Williamson reported that he had attended Staffordshire Parish Council's Association AGM last night (4 December). An address had been given by the recently appointed Chief Constable of Staffordshire, Gareth Morgan.

Another address had been given by Gareth Epps, Liaison Officer for HS2 Ltd. He deals with issues and problems relating to the project.

Councillor Williamson advised that Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had attended the AGM of the National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) and confirmed that there would be no capping of town and parish council precepts next year.

There is a problem with GDPR but NALC is optimistic that it will be resolved.

Councillor Neagus asked for a report of the HS2 meeting before next week's meeting with HS2 Ltd.

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Crown Wharf

Councillor Kenney reported that during this afternoon (5 December 2017) contracts had been exchanged for Joules to purchase Crown Wharf from the Canal and River Trust, in early 2018. The work will involve the future development of a Heritage Centre, Theatre and Cinema.

The meeting was suspended at this point to enable the Planning Committee Meeting and Confidential item on the General Purposes Committee Meeting to take place. The meeting was then reconvened for the confidential items to be considered.

GP18/126 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.

GP18/127 Debt Recovery

The Committee received an update from the Town Clerk on the current situation relating to Minute number GP18/106.

The Committee had also received a copy of the written report submitted to the meeting in September 2017.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council asks the debtor to clear the outstanding balance by April 2018. The Committee agreed to require that the debtor clears the debt and actions to be taken if this does not happen.

Town Mayor