

Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in St Michael’s Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre on Tuesday 9 January 2018

PRESENT: Councillor I Fordham in the Chair and
Councillors: P. Leason, Mrs K. Green, Mrs J. Hood, M. Williamson and
Mrs C. Collier.

Co-opted Member: Mr J. Heal

By Chairman’s invitation: Councillor M. Green

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs J. Piggott

TTP18/025 Apologies

Councillors: Mrs J. Piggott

TTP18/026 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

None received

TTP18/027 Representations from Members of the Public

Mr Ed Stant, representative of ‘Stone Traders Group Ltd’, addressed the Sub-Committee.

Mr Stant advised that following a request made by the Town Council, as part of the recently approved Stone Town Centre Development Strategy, the local business community have officially come together to form a business group, named ‘Stone Traders Group Ltd’. The Group will represent traders within the town centre boundary and provide one voice to work with and develop clear communication lines with the Town Council.

During the course of January 2018, the Group intends to formalise its objectives and recruit as many of the businesses as possible. The Group would like two or three of its members to meet regularly with a similar number of Town Councillors.

Mr Stant said that he would, as Secretary of the Stone Traders Group, liaise with the Town Council during this process, and hoped the Group and Council would work positively and constructively in the future to pool ideas and develop initiatives that would achieve common objectives, and raise the profile of the town.

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TTP18/028 Train Service - To Receive Updates

Jon Heal provided an update on train services in Stone.

Abellio has now taken over the franchise, and routes previously operated by London Midland. From 10 December 2017 train services have been operated by The London North Western Railway, though the company is called West Midlands Trains.

The services will change in December 2018 when a new timetable is introduced.

Mr Heal advised that he will be able to pass on comments to the train company or to the people supervising the franchise, but after May 2018, will be resigning from his position as co-opted member of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee. The Town Council will thereafter need to invite him if further train service items are to be discussed.

Mr Heal suggested that the Town Council write to the train company (with copies of the letter sent to West Midlands Rail, the local authority consortium and Staffordshire County Council), about the promised connections at Stafford between the direct train to London (which won't be stopping in Stone) and the new service going to London via Birmingham.

RECOMMENDED: To write to West Midlands Rail seeking assurances regarding the London Service via Stafford.

TTP18/029 Stone Town Centre Development Strategy

The Sub-Committee received a progress report from the Chairman and working groups (following approval of the Development Strategy in July 2017):

Town Centre Appearance and Environment Working Group

Councillor Fordham advised that the improved appearance of the town centre was continuing as a result of work undertaken as part of Phase One of the Development Strategy. This has included:

- Further strengthening the working relationship with Stafford Borough Council's Streetscene service
- Plans for a 'Spring Clean' day in March 2018, for which interest from local groups is invited
- Cleaning of town centre signs and name plaques by the Community Payback Team
- Cleansing of the Frank Jordan Centre and Town Council car parks and surrounds
- Removal of old posters and notices from lamp posts and street furniture by volunteers
- Weedkilling undertaken by volunteers
- Seeking the support of the Borough Council to ensure that scaffolding remains on buildings only for as long as is necessary

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- That work by utility companies is carried out quickly
- Attending to 'new housing' signs around the town which have been found to be unauthorised or out of date.
- Working with Stafford Borough Council's Enforcement team to prevent unauthorised bill posting

Fingerposts and Notice Boards

Plans to restore finger posts and notice boards have been approved as the funding is being supported by the Town Council. Work should start in mid to the end of March and Staffordshire County Council and Stafford & District Access Group are being consulted as part of this project.

Maps and events information will be commissioned for display on the notice boards as well as use of electronic copies on the website (mid to end of March).

By the end of spring the town will need to be looking at its best.

RECOMMENDED: To note the progress report on the work of the group and to consider budgetary provision for the proposed initiatives within the Town Council's budget for 2018-19.

Town Centre Events and Attractions Working Group

Councillor Mrs Hood provided an update on the work of this group.

Two Late Night Shopping events have been held, both of which were a huge success. Trade stands were lit and the Florence Band played with many shops remaining open until 9:00pm. The Christmas Lights Switch On and Christmas Extravaganza events were also a huge success with both being extremely well attended.

The preparations for a Music Festival in 2018 are well underway with the acts/performers and Market Square having already been arranged.

These events have lifted the High Street and brought a welcome boost to the local economy. Traders and all involved were thanked for their hard work and support.

Councillor Mrs Hood expressed her appreciation to Mr Stant for attending the meeting and said that discussions on further late-night openings would be taking place in consultation with The Stone Traders Group.

RECOMMENDED: To note the progress report on the work of the group.

Town Centre Partnership

Stone businesses have responded to the Town Council's request to form a body for the purposes of improving communication and the Chairman said that he was very pleased that the Stone Traders Group Ltd had been formed. He looked forward to a positive dialogue.

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Councillor Fordham proposed that the General Purposes Committee is asked to appoint representatives to liaise with the Group.

RECOMMENDED: That representatives nominated to the group be considered and determined at General Purposes Committee.

TTP18/030 Visit Staffordshire Subscription

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee, Councillor Fordham, made a verbal report on this item.

A small invoice in respect of the subscription for membership to Visit Staffordshire has been held pending enquiries, as questions have been raised about its benefits and value to the Town Council.

RECOMMENDED: That the annual subscription continues to be paid whilst consideration is given to how the Town Council's continued membership, may in the future, be put to best use.

TTP18/031 Budgets 2018-19 to 2020-21

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk* which considered the level of budget that the Sub-Committee may wish to recommend to the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 23 January 2018 for the services under its control.

The Sub-Committee suggested the budget for advertising should be increased as the promotion of Stone to a wider audience could be improved. Graphics for maps and improved advertising of the town were suggested as well as promoting reciprocal advertising arrangements and offering support to the Stone Traders Group.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget figures included in the Clerk's report are accepted with the advertising budget being increased by £5000.

TTP18/032 Arrangements to Celebrate the Centenary of the Formation of the Royal Air Force

Councillor Davies gave a verbal report on this item. The centenary of the RAF will be commemorated and celebrated around the country in 2018, alongside the main 1918 World War 1 commemoration.

The RAF are planning the following program of local events:

- A high-profile event will be held in Stafford and the local branch of RAFA will keep the Town Council in touch with what is being planned.
- 7 April 2018 – RAF Centenary celebrations and raising of the Ensign flag in Stone. It is hoped that the Mayor's Cadets, Tactical Supply Wing and Stone Town Band will be in attendance.

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- 11 May 2018 – RAF Association Annual Conference at Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre
- 2 -9 September 2018 – RAFA have arranged for a token which will be travelling from Leek to Stone to Stafford
- 11 November 2018 - Battle's Over Commemoration

RECOMMENDED: That arrangements to celebrate the centenary of the formation of the Royal Air Force are considered by the Commemoration to Mark 100 years since the end of WW1 Working Group (Great War Working Group).

TTP18/033 **Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute**

The Sub-Committee considered an email from the Pageant Master, Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute, with an update on taking part in Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute on 11 November 2018. A new guide had also been enclosed, which was forwarded to members electronically.

The tribute involves the following four elements:

- 6:00am: Sleep in peace, now the Battle's Over
- 6.55pm: Battle's Over – The Last Post
- 7:00pm: WW1 Beacons of Light
- 7:05pm Battle's Over – Ringing out for peace

Following the Council's decision to take part in the lighting of beacons, a further request is made for the Town Council to arrange with local churches to ring bells as part of the event.

RECOMMENDED: That Councillor Kenney discusses the item with the St Michael and St Wulfad Church bell ringers and that this item be progressed by the Commemoration to Mark 100 years since the end of World War 1 Working Group (Great War Working Group).

TTP18/034 **Update from Working Group**

Commemoration to Mark 100 years since the end of World War 1 in 2018

Councillor Mrs Hood said that the group was meeting on the 18th.

Town Mayor

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