

# Stone Town Council – Planning Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2016

**PRESENT:** Councillor G Neagus in the Chair and  
Councillors Mrs C Collier, G Collier, J Davies, Mrs J Farnham, Mrs M Goodall,  
Mrs K Green, M Green, Mrs J Hood, R Kenney, P Leason, A Osgathorpe,  
Mrs J Piggott, M Shaw and M Williamson

**ABSENT:** Councillors T Jackson and Mrs E Mowatt

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**P17/044**      **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors T Jackson and Mrs E Mowatt

**P17/045**      **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Councillor Mrs C Collier declared an interest in planning application  
16/24242/FUL

**P17/046**      **Representations from Members of the Public**

None received

**P17/047**      **Planning Applications**

**RESOLVED** that the following observations be made on the Applications as listed:

**Application Number** – 15/23264/FUL

**Location** – Land between Boat Yard and Chandlers Way, Newcastle Road, Stone

**Development** – Construction of 4 x four bed houses. There is no demolition  
(amended plan)

**Observation** – Members object due to the extremely dangerous junction onto  
Newcastle Road

**Application Number** – 16/23975/FUL

**Location** – Land off Diamond Way, Stone

**Development** – Development of the site for Industrial/Warehouse use (Use Class  
B1, B2, B8) – amended plan

**Observation** – Members object due to the inappropriate development in close  
proximity to a residential area and concerns regarding noise and vibration

**Application Number** – 16/24662/HOU

**Location** – 50 Mount Avenue, Stone

**Development** – Side / rear single storey extension

**Observation** – No objections

**Application Number** – 16/24655/HOU

**Location** – 24 Longfield Avenue, Stone

**Development** – Alterations and two storey extension to side and rear

**Observation** – No objections but this was without the benefit of neighbours' consultation

**Application Number** – 16/24635/HOU

**Location** – 12 Telford Close, Stone

**Development** – Bedroom extensions to side with covered area and patio deck area

**Observation** – No objections

**Application Number** – 16/24533/OUT

**Location** – Land at Uttoxeter Road, Stone

**Development** – Outline Application with all matters reserved (with exception of the main vehicular access) for development of site for residential uses (Use Class C3) with associated infrastructure and landscaping

**Observation** – Members wish to support the comments of Stone Rural Parish Council, and add that they object due to over intensification of the road network

**Application Number** – 16/24700/FUL

**Location** – Dukes Court, 8 Newcastle Street, Stone

**Development** – Alterations and extensions to two storey offices to create additional B1 (a) office space and ancillary car parking spaces

**Observation** – No objections providing construction traffic does not enter the site from the rear, and the heritage of the crinkle-crankle wall is preserved

**Application Number** – 16/24706/HOU

**Location** – 6 Aston Chase, Aston Lodge, Stone

**Development** – First floor bedroom extension to front above existing kitchen

**Observation** – No objections

**Application Number** – 16/24713/FUL

**Location** – 25 Church Street, Stone

**Development** – Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of three-bedroom, two-storey dwellings

**Observation** – Members object due to insufficient parking and added stress to the already narrow Church Street

**Application Number** – 16/24644/FUL

**Location** – 100 Newcastle Road, Stone

**Development** – Retention of 3 x external open sided valeting bays

**Observation** – Members object on the grounds of a) retrospective application and b) the excessive noise from the valeting bays that has been noted by comments from local residents to STC based on 7 days a week activity, and its general out of keeping with the area to have such an operation.

**Application Number** – 16/23973/COU

**Location** – Former ‘The Maltings’, Crown Street, Stone

**Development** – Conversion of former ‘The Maltings’ Hotel accommodation, Gym and Retail Unit – see also 16/23974/LBC

**Observation** – No objections providing the heritage is preserved in a sympathetic way and the number of rooms is reduced

**Application Number** – 16/24587/HOU

**Location** – 86 Church Street, Stone

**Development** – Two storey side extension

**Observation** – No objections

Councillor G Collier left the room at the commencement of this item.

**Application Number** – 16/24242/FUL

**Location** – Westbridge Park Sports Centre, Stafford Street, Stone

**Development** – Amended Plan – Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a foodstore (use Class A1) with ancillary café, car parking with associated access work, landscaping and other works

**Observation** – Members object on the following grounds:

1 – The revised plans and designs that have been submitted do not, in the eyes of the Stone Town Council members, do not materially alter nor address the previously issued concerns that members have over a number of items, including and not limited to areas such as:

- a) The impact of the design of the building being proposed is still deemed to be wholly inappropriate in keeping with architectural and heritage of Stafford Street and the rest of the Town Centre of Stone especially when entering the town from the Walton Roundabout. It is a large modern building in line with the standard M&S “Look and Feel” more appropriate to locations on Retail Parks such as Wolstanton near Stoke for example and not with a historic canal market town of Stone. It will destroy views of the historic landscape setting
- b) especially buildings of historical importance such as the St Michaels and Wulfads Church which today can be seen above The Moorings when approaching from Walton roundabout. This does not blend in sympathetically with the current image of Stone
- c) At its highest point, the proposed building is around 1.5m taller than the current Sports facility to its right
- d) The response given to our first objection of the plans seems to focus more on the m2 of the property being proposed rather than the m3 which is where the main issue comes in terms of the overall design and height / scale of the said building.
- e) The height and sheer size of this proposal (as in the original proposal) will have significant impacts to local residents living close by at the Moorings
- f) The impact of regular HGV deliveries and refuse removal within the car park area and the delivery bay of the proposed building would impact on pedestrian safety, parked cars, noise and light pollution (Reversing warning devices as well as engine noise / refrigeration noise etc). This has not been addressed and we feel would seriously impact the area.

- g) The safety of pedestrians and especially school children, across the revised entrance has not been considered. Twice a day, Monday to Friday, school children use this route crossing where the new entrance is proposed. Additional school traffic entering the store would make this even more hazardous.
- h) The new slightly wider entrance still does not we feel address the issues around Stafford Road and traffic congestion even with an additional widening / filter lane. The likely congestion backing up to both the Town Centre One Way System to the North West and the traffic coming into Stone from the East down from Walton Roundabout would be potentially excessive to the point of causing a huge “Bottle neck or Pinch Point” in traffic movements in and around Stone. Again the normal location of such stores is often in Retail Park developments or in High Streets where there are existing traffic networks designed to cope with extra traffic and certainly new stores such as that being proposed have caused similar traffic chaos in other towns such as Stafford with the Tesco store and the backup of traffic at times through the traffic lights and back past the Station. Not only is this detrimental to overall traffic flow but also deeply frustrating for travellers and can undermine the desire to visit the locality in the first place.

2 - This planning application doesn't provide a wider opportunity to enhance an existing space resulting in improved natural environment for the neighbourhood amenity.

- 1) **The application is contrary to SBC policy for acceptable development. i.e. P4SB Spatial Principle 7** which supports new development sited in Settlement Boundaries providing it

- “f) will not impact adversely on the special character of the area, including not impacting on important open spaces and views, all designated heritage assets including, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and locally important buildings, especially those identified in Conservation Area Appraisals...” (e.g. *Grade II listed buildings, canal and green open space*).
- “i) “will not lead to the loss of locally important open space or, in the case of housing and employment, other locally important community facilities (unless adequately replaced); (e.g. *three tennis court – not replaced*)
- j) will not be located in areas of flood risk or contribute to flood risk on neighbouring areas;” (*area is on the Trent Flood Plain in level 2 & 3 flood*)
- k) will ensure adequate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access as well as cycle and short stay parking facilities on the site; and (No consideration current amenity use see below)
- l) will not adversely affect the residential amenity of the locality.” (HMI Pratt P4SBP1 ... “*could also begin to change the character*

*of this fringe of the park, and erode the appearance of this important gateway into the town and its historic Conservation Area”*

**2) Attempted mitigation against these factors is not acceptable** e.g. **Impact on Grade II listed residential amenity** e.g. “The Moorings” for our elderly residents, specifically, size and location of intended building will result in:

- **Increase of unwanted noise** from traffic including 16.5m deliveries deliveries – Noise survey gives an inadequate profile noise profile for “the Moorings” (duration/time of experiment/weather condition, poor position of microphone, exclusion of short duration noise and no consideration of actual plant used on site).
- **Reduction in direct sunlight** falling on these buildings and their gardens will decrease the benefits of passive solar heating to the flat and reduce light intensity. Rooms will be colder and darker. No consideration on well-being of elderly residents.
- **Historical views** -Completely destroyed forever the view of these building and others from the main gateway entry into Stone. (Ref: Stone Conservation Area Character Appraisal: Adopted 2 October 2008:  
“The most prominent landmark within the conservation area and beyond is the stone-built tower of St Michael’s Church which can be viewed from many parts of the town and from the canal towpath and is one of the defining features of the town. The most impressive view is obtained along the approach to Stone from Walton where the church stands well above its surroundings.”)

**Flood mitigation** still using the same flood models for level 2 & 3 flood plains (1 in 100 probability + 20% climate change). Last winter, serious questions were asked regarding it **“fitness for purpose” in this age of climate change**. Locally, last winter floods occurred a Tesco & Sainsbury’s Stafford, A34 Meaford road, Stone. Indeed, Scotch Brook calculations are considered using silt accumulation models when really flash flooding (volume flux) of precipitation and subsequent obstruction of water courses due to storm would be better considered if possible. e.g. Scotch Brook 1987. Indeed, an earlier report from Stafford Borough (Feb 2008) “Delivering the Plan for Stafford Borough- issues and options”. It clearly states that “floodplain areas in Stone should not be used for new housing and employment development.

**Protected playing fields in the form of three tennis courts** have no mitigation to date despite Sport England's request.

- 3) **M&S customer are already served** by a wider range of goods at M&S Stafford and more locally Food store at Stone Services (1MI. away)
- 4) **The application removes green space from the children's play area and makes it space smaller with the same facilities space and indeed there is an overall reduction in the green space on this side of the park.**

**The park as whole gives the town's people a capacity to celebrate, enjoy leisure, recreation and play and a fundamental change in use to any part of the park would endanger the well-being of Stone people.**

**These changes to availability of the car park will have a significant and adverse impact on the vitality and viability of Stone town centre as per NPPF Paragraph 27.**

**Traffic Assessment: Doesn't identify traffic on the current site.**

- 5) **Highway Safety: - The application poses a serious risk to public safety as there is no consideration of pedestrian density or flow at peak times.**
  - (i) No account has been taken of the festival/destination nature of the park or indeed of the role of its existing car parks in supporting the town centre on markets days. As such, the large number of visitor to the site, both now and with **future developments** intended under the Stone Leisure Strategy, **poses a serious risk public safety.**  
*e.g. Joe Clarke celebration brought over 3000 visitors to the park and Food & Drink festival (Sept/Oct 2016) will bring over 15,000 visitors the park during the week.*
  - (ii) Is the children's play area an appropriate location?
  - (iii) Delivery vehicles of 16.5 m entering the park, then reversing in front of "disabled" car parking spaces into a loading bay is not a safe manoeuvre.
  - (iv) Pedestrians from the town centre enter the park through the proposed store area and car park area. This includes school children using the gym facilities at Westbridge Fitness centre. This is not a safe option.
- 6) **Loss of an existing amenity car park: Replaces the current feely available public car park (Fitness Centre, Town Centre over spill and Park users) with a private facility beyond the control of SBC and directed at M&S customers. The intended car park is simply not big enough to support the total activity of this site.**
  - (l) The current car park is a public amenity and already provides an opportunity for residents to park their vehicles as and when and

for as long as they want. This becomes particularly important at festival/market times when thousands of visitors descend onto the park and most afternoon and evening when Westbridge Fitness Centre and the park are used by the public. This limited space is already supplemented with park & ride facilities at peak times and it loss of control would seriously hamper and disadvantage access to park.

The application replaces existing readily accessible provision with a private amenity mostly for the benefit of M&S customers. The operation and pricing policy of which has not been defined.

- i. *e.g. **M&S Northwich** used a Car Parks contractor - People had to pay £1 to park for one hour in the car park which can be redeemed when customers spend £5 or more in Marks and Spencer. Motorists who fail to comply with the car park regulations will receive a £70 penalty charge notice, or £40 if it is paid within 14 days of being issued.*
- ii. ***M&S Stockton Heath's Forge car park** had a free for first hour period, unfortunately the period wasn't long and other traders noticed a distinct **drop in footfall** since M&S arrived ... "The days of free parking are over"*

(II) The car parking spaces allocate for supermarket is not consistent with Plan for Stafford Borough standards as set out by Policy T2. This is NOT a new car park; it is an existing car park. Furthermore, there appears to be no consideration for trips or parking due to the mixed use of this site. The current car park, which serves the fitness centre, (particular in the evenings) shoppers from the town centre, as well people using the parks open spaces for casual sport and recreation. It does not meet the criteria in NPPF para 39 in considering the type, mix and use of development and is inconsistent with Plan for Stafford Borough, Policy T2. The demand in this space will far outstrip the supply of spaces and it is probably that M&S will protect their customers by imposing appropriate tariffs.

(III) The existing site is the only large venue in the town capable of parking coaches for visitors e.g. Twinning organisations, organised trips and clubs. it is also used as a destination for international scouts visiting the International Scout Camp. It is the home of Stafford & Stone Canoe Club. This club is the nursey for world class canoeist whose competitions are organised on the park.

**7) The application is unwanted and contrary to designation of Westbridge Park in the Stone Neighbourhood Plan.**

Unwanted because the majority residents of Stone have expressed their wishes on numerous occasions building a supermarket on the park is not acceptable and Leisure & Recreational facilities on the park should be improved.

*e.g.*

- *In 2013 Public meeting at Alleyne's Academy*
- *4771 signature petition against the supermarket build.*
- *Beattie Consultation – majority against. -Cllr Mike Heenan, said: "It is obvious from the feedback that people would rather not have another food store in Stone – but they do support better leisure facilities"*
- *HMI at Plan for Stafford Borough (P4SB) Part 1, commented that the introduction of new buildings, ... could also begin to change the character of this fringe of the park, and erode the appearance of this important gateway into the town and its historic Conservation Area"*
- *2015 Survey conducted "A little bit of Stone "social media site found 71% of respondents said 'no' to an M&S on Westbridge Park*
- *2016 saw Westbridge park identified as 2<sup>nd</sup> most important issue in the **Stone Neighbourhood Plan**. This site forms one of fifty-six recently identified and recorded green spaces in the parish of Stone. The evidence gathered forms part of the Stone Neighbourhood Plan evidence base which is used to shape and inform the policies. The site identified is number 55 known as Westbridge Park. We would welcome the opportunity to enhance this open green space with further planting & formal landscaping to provide a natural screen and buffer for the neighbouring development. (note P4SB p32 6.65 states "In due course, it is intended that development allocations for specific sites will be identified within the Settlement Boundaries (and the Boundaries themselves) through the **Neighbourhood Planning process**, or through the preparation of a Site Allocations Development Plan Document"*

**8) There is no evidence of a "link" between the M&S planning application and the Stone Leisure Project** despite SBC proclamations. This is confirmed by the:

- **absence of a Grampian Condition** (ref: NPPF 2012 Planning



Guidance, Para 009)

- **M&S application being submitted before the Leisure & Recreation** and contrary to information given by SBC in the Beattie Consultation (April 2013) which states:

*“Q) When would the leisure centre and food store be delivered if this were to go ahead?”*

*“A) The replacement leisure centre would come first in 2015 and the food store would follow.”*

Indeed, this application actually replaces protected Sports & Recreation facilities in the form of three public tennis courts which are to be removed to build the store. The applicant has still to respond to Sport England request on this matter.

- 9) **With the latest SBC proposal of a multicourt to be built on Westbridge Park to mitigate for the loss of three tennis courts, the re-sighting of the store (10m), the easement required around sewage and high pressure gas supplies, there are serious questions concerning the space for the recreation development. Exactly where is Girl Guiding hut and the Multicourt going to go?**

- 10) **We are led to believe that retail development is required to supplement the Stone Leisure Project, yet SBC cabinet minutes and press releases imply otherwise:** Ref: Agenda of Cabinet. 5 November 2015.

*“5.3.15 The plan currently assumes the continuation of the borrowing requirement for Stone Leisure Strategy, however the predicted increase in surpluses to 2017-18 and available capital resources now available are likely to negate that need. The actual borrowing requirement will be assessed as part of this year’s budget process.”*

and local press in March 2016 responds to SBC comments concerning improvements to Victoria Park. (

[www.staffordshirenewsletter.co.uk/fun-victoria-park-families-say-improvement-plans/story-29018846-detail/story.html](http://www.staffordshirenewsletter.co.uk/fun-victoria-park-families-say-improvement-plans/story-29018846-detail/story.html).

*“The plans will now go back to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which will make a decision whether to fund the project. The council has set aside around £800,000 and is aiming to get another £1.7 million from the HLF. Final plans will be assessed next summer and work would begin in 2018.”*

A named vote was called for the proposal to send the above comments to Stafford Borough Council:

Councillor	R Kenney	For
	P Leason	For
	G Neagus	For
	A Osgathorpe	For
	Mrs J Piggott	Abstain
	M Shaw	Abstain
	M Williamson	Abstain
	Mrs C Collier	Declared an interest
	J Davies	For
	Mrs J Farnham	Abstain
	Mrs M Goodall	Abstain
	Mrs K Green	For
	M Green	For
	Mrs J Hood	For

**P17/048**      **To note the following items considered under delegated powers where no objections were forwarded to Stafford Borough Council due to no Member asking for the item to be considered by a special meeting of the Committee.**

None.

**Town Mayor**