

## **STONE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Town Clerk**

Les Trigg

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15 Station Road  
STONE  
ST15 8JP

16<sup>th</sup> January, 2017

A meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber, 15, Station Road, Stone** on **TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2017** at 7pm.

I trust you will be able to attend.

Les Trigg  
Town Clerk

### **AGENDA**

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations Received**
3. **Representations from Members of the Public**

To consider representations from members of the public on items to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation

4. **To consider the Minutes and recommendations of the undermentioned Committees:**
  - a) Management Sub-Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2016, Minute Numbers MAN17/021 – MAN17/027 (attached)
    - i. To consider the Minutes
    - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Numbers MAN17/024 and MAN17/027
  - b) Environment Sub-Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2016, Minute Numbers ENV17/010 – ENV17/013 (attached)
    - i. To consider the Minutes
    - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Number ENV17/013

- c) Estates Sub-Committee held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, Minute Numbers EST17/028 - EST17/033 (attached)
  - i. To consider the Minutes
  - ii. To consider the Recommendations
  
- d) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, Minute Numbers TTP17/014 - TTP17/019 (attached)
  - i. To consider the Minutes
  - ii. To consider the Recommendations
  
- 5. **To determine budget 2017-18 for recommendation to the Council** – to consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached)
  
- 6. **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.**
  
- 7. **To consider the confidential Minutes and recommendations of the undermentioned Committees:**
  - a) Management Sub-Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2016, Minute Numbers MAN17/021 and MAN17/027 (attached)
    - i. To consider the Minutes
    - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Number MAN17/027
  
  - b) Estates Sub-Committee held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, Minute Numbers EST17/028 and EST17/033 (attached)
    - i. To consider the Minutes
    - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Number EST17/033

Members of the public are welcome to attend the General Purposes Meeting as observers. Persons attending should enter the Borough Area Office through the rear entrance door (adjacent to the car park). The Council Chamber is at the top of the stairs.

# Stone Town Council – Management Sub-Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 13 December, 2016

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Osgathorpe in the Chair and  
Councillors Mrs J Farnham, M Green, Mrs E Mowatt, G Neagus and M Williamson

By Chairman's invitation: Mrs K Green, Mrs J Hood and P Leason

**ABSENT:** Councillors J Davies, I Fordham and T Jackson

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**MAN17/021** Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors J Davies and T Jackson

**MAN17/022** Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

**MAN17/023** Representations from Members of the Public

None received

**MAN17/024** Budget 2017-18 to 2019-20

The clerk presented his budget report to the Committee.

RECOMMENDED: to accept the proposed budget as set out in the report

**MAN17/025** Update on current issues

- Website

The Clerk has held a meeting with Lawrence Davis regarding the Members side of the site. The Clerk will report back when he has costs and ideas of what the site would look like.

The town promotion aspect of the website will be looked at when the working group has met to discuss it.

- Outstanding actions listed in the Council handbook
  - Data Protection policy
  - Asset register
  - Business Continuity Plan

The Clerk stated that the first item to be looked at will be the Asset Register, which will need to be in place by the end of March 2017. The insurance register is currently being used for this purpose.

**MAN17/026** 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 the Press and Public for the next item of business.

**MAN17/027** Town Council Staffing

The Clerk has looked at four other similar councils to compare staffing costs.

RECOMMENDED: To accept the conclusion reported by the Town Clerk.

Town Mayor

# Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 13 December, 2016

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Leason in the Chair and  
Councillors Mrs K Green, R Kenney, Mrs E Mowatt, G Neagus, A Osgathorpe and  
Mrs J Piggott

By Chairman's invitation: Mrs J Farnham, M Green, Mrs J Hood and M Williamson

**ABSENT:** Councillors G Collier, J Davies, Mrs M Goodall and M Shaw

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**ENV17/010**    **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors G Collier, J Davies, Mrs M Goodall and  
M Shaw

**ENV17/011**    **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received

**ENV17/012**    **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**ENV17/013**    **Budget 2017-18 to 2019-20**

Members considered the report of the Clerk.

RECOMMENDED: To approve the proposed budget and to include the following  
additional sums:

- £800 for tree maintenance on Crown Meadow
- £800 for maintenance of "No Man's Land"
- £700 for maintenance of benches on Amphitheatre and Kingfisher bench
- £250 for side entrance gate onto Crown Meadow

**Town Mayor**

# Stone Town Council – Estates Sub-Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 17 January, 2017

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Green in the Chair and  
Councillors I Fordham, Mrs J Hood, T Jackson and A Osgathorpe  
By Chairman's invitation: Councillors J Davies, Mrs K Green, R Kenney, P Leason,  
G Neagus, Mrs J Piggott and M Williamson (EST17/028 to EST17/031)

**ABSENT:** Councillors Mrs J Farnham, Mrs M Goodall and Mrs E Mowatt

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**EST17/028**     **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs J Farnham, Mrs M Goodall and Mrs E Mowatt

**EST17/029**     **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received.

**EST17/030**     **Representations from Members of the Public**

None received.

**EST17/031**     **Budget 2017-18 to 2019-20**

The Clerk presented his budget report\* and drew attention to three areas for consideration:

- Bus shelter on A34 requires refurbishment (£1,000) or removal (£200)
- Bus shelter on Oulton Road needs refurbishing (£700)
- Northesk Street Carpark will need to be closed later in the year. Closure on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 would reduce the required budget by £1,500

**RECOMMENDED:** to accept the proposed budget as set out in the report, and to provide £800 to deal with the bus shelter on the A34, and £700 to refurbish the bush shelter on Oulton Road

Councillor M Williamson left the meeting at this point

**EST17/032** 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

This was RESOLVED.

**EST17/033** Frank Jordan Centre Refurbishments

The Clerk reported that the contractor authorised to complete the works at the Frank Jordan Centre has withdrawn from the project. The Sub-Committee considered how to proceed in the light of this information.

Town Mayor

# Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 17 January, 2017

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs J Hood in the Chair and  
Councillors Mrs K Green, P Leason, G Neagus, Mrs J Piggott and M Williamson  
Co-opted Member: Mr J Heal  
By Chairman's invitation: Councillors J Davies, I Fordham, M Green, R Kenney and  
A Osgathorpe

**ABSENT:** Councillors Mrs C Collier and M Shaw

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**TTP17/014**    **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C Collier and M Shaw

**TTP17/015**    **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation**

None received

**TTP17/016**    **Representations from Members of the Public**

None received

**TTP17/017**    **Proposed variation to extend the hours of the licence authorising the sale or supply of alcohol**

The Chairman reported that it would be beneficial to the Town to extend the alcohol licence in the High Street, Market Square and Westbridge Park. Members considered the proposal included with the agenda.

RECOMMENDED: to apply for an extension to the permitted hours in for the sale or supply of alcohol in High Street, Mill Street and Market Square in accordance with the proposal considered.

**TTP17/018**    **A Nations Tribute and WW1 Beacons of Light 11 November 2018**

Members considered a proposal included with the agenda regarding a national tribute and lighting of beacons in 2018.

RECOMMENDED: To contact the organisers to say that Stone Town Council would like to be involved in the lighting of the beacons on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018.



**TTP17/019**     **Budget 2017-18 to 2019-20**

The Clerk presented his budget report\*.

The Chairman stated that tourism and the promotion of the Town are vital to the survival and persona of the Town. Also, Stone is in the middle of a tourist trail, and people travelling to other areas along the A34 should be encouraged to stop at Stone.

It was suggested that the following amounts be added to the figures in the budget report:

- £6,000 for a music festival
- £500 to run a Christmas traders market (rentals will be charged)
- £5,500 for marketing

This is an additional £12,000 to add to £7,900 already in the budget as a general contingency for town promotion events

**RECOMMENDED:** to accept the proposed budget as set out in the report, with the addition of the proposed £12,000.

**Town Mayor**

## **Stone Town Council - General Purposes Committee**

**24<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

### **Budget 2017-18 to 2019-20 – Recommendations to Council**

#### **Report of Town Clerk**

##### **Introduction**

1. This report considers the Budget to be recommended to the Council for 2017-18 and the indicative budgets for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

##### **Background**

2. At a series of meetings during December 2016 and January 2017, this Committee and its Sub-Committees have considered their potential budgets for 2017-18 to 2019-20. It is now the role of this Committee to consider those potential budgets and decide, for recommendation to the Full Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017:
  - a. The budget for 2017-18 for each Budget Head.
  - b. Any contributions to or from reserves to be built into the budget.
  - c. The precept for 2017-18.
  - d. Indicative figures for 2018-19 and 2019-20 for each of the above items.
3. At the time of writing this report, the recommendations from all Sub-Committees are not yet available. This report will thus focus on the sums available to spend and the impact on reserves. Details of all Sub-Committee budget proposals will be made available at the meeting.

##### **Payments by Stafford Borough Council**

4. For a number of years, the Council has received payments of almost £30,000 from Stafford Borough Council in addition to the precept. This has included £18,069 to compensate for changes to the benefits system a number of years ago, which reduced this Council's Taxbase, and £11,461 for the cost of concurrent functions. Neither of these payments are a legal requirement, however the Borough Council have confirmed that for 2017-18 they will pay this Council £18,165.72 in Council Tax Support Grant and £11,461 for the cost of concurrent functions. Neither of these figures have been confirmed for continuation beyond 2017-18. The figures in this report, however, assume that these payments will continue into the foreseeable future at the same cash level as in the current year.

##### **Council Tax**

5. With reference to the determination of the Council Tax level by the Council, the Secretary of State has the power to require a referendum of local people before the Council Tax can be put up by more than a specified percentage. For the 2015-16 budget, the specified percentage was 2%. Parish

councils were exempted by the Secretary of State from this requirement, but he is free to change that decision year on year.

6. As previously reported to this Committee, the Secretary of State issued a consultation document earlier this year which suggested that the largest parish and town councils should now be the subject of a capping regime, and also asked the question whether this should be extended to smaller parishes. Based on the consultation document, this Council would not be affected by the proposed capping. This may, however, change when the final proposals are published.
7. At the time of writing this report, these proposals have not yet been published. If the Secretary of State follows the normal publication timetable, we would expect to know the final position in late January or early February. The Council will thus be able to take it into account when setting the budget at the Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017, but the information may not be available in time for today's meeting.

### **Standstill Budget**

8. A "standstill" budget was presented to the last meeting of this Committee as follows<sup>1</sup>:

<b>Actual</b>		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>2015-16</b>		<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
8,560	Estates	81,400	75,500	32,000	28,900	29,300
11,549	Environment	20,200	18,500	21,500	22,100	22,700
27,982	Tourism & Town Promotion	41,700	36,800	32,400	33,400	33,400
166,248	Management	176,000	176,100	167,700	169,800	198,700
8,305	Neighbourhood Plan	15,000	8,000	22,000	0	0
2,090	Earmarked Reserves	-61,000	-54,000	-22,000	0	0
<b>224,734</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>273,300</b>	<b>260,900</b>	<b>253,600</b>	<b>254,200</b>	<b>284,100</b>

9. In order to be able to consider the budget bids from Sub-Committees, illustrations are set out below showing the effect of a Council Tax standstill and an increase of 2% each year for the standstill budget.

	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Council Tax Standstill</b>			
Required Contribution from Reserves	6,231	2,710	28,601
Band D Council Tax for Year	40.09	40.09	40.09
<b>Council Tax Increasing by 2% Per Annum</b>			
Required Contribution from Reserves	1,658	-6,718	14,097
Band D Council Tax for Year	40.89	41.71	42.54

<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Minor amendments have been made to the standstill budget since the last meeting reflecting updated information. These have no effect on the 2017-18 budget, but reduce the 2018-19 figure by £1,000 and the 2019-20 figure by £2,000.

10. Thus, for example, if the Council were to decide to hold the Council Tax at its current level of £40.09 for a Band D property for 2017-18, and indicate that it plans to do the same for the next two years, there would appear to be a budget shortfall of £6,231 in 2017-18, followed by further shortfalls of £2,710 in 2018-19 and £28,601 in 2019-20.
11. The Council is, of course, free to set the Council Tax at any level in any year. In addition, only the decision regarding the 2017-18 precept is binding on the Council. The indicative figures for the following two years can be changed as part of future budget setting processes.
12. The other factor that the Committee may wish to take into account is that the Council is forecast to underspend by around £12,400 in the current year. This figure, or a proportion of it, could be available for one-off spending to support the budget in future years. The money will otherwise be added to the Council's reserves.

### **Reserves and Balances**

13. In considering its recommendations to Council, the Committee will also need to consider the level of general reserves (balances) held by the Council.
14. Excluding the reserves previously earmarked for the Crown Wharf project, the neighbourhood plan, and rollovers, the Council held balances of £169,147 at the beginning of 2016-17. These are forecast to reduce to around £150,649 by the end of the current year as follows:

	<b>£</b>
Opening Balances – 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016	169,147
Planned Contribution to 2016-17 Budget from Balances	-18,998
Budget Adjustments (net) <sup>2</sup>	-11,900
Forecast Underspending 2015-16	+12,400
Forecast Balances – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	<u>150,649</u>

15. Without allowing for any change in the level of Council Tax, the three-year standstill budget would result in movements in these balances as follows:

	<b>Budgeted Contribution to (from) Balances £</b>	<b>Estimated General Fund Balance £</b>	<b>Number of Months Net Expenditure</b>
31 March 2017	-	150,649	-
31 March 2018	6,231	144,417	6.5
31 March 2019	2,710	141,707	6.4
31 March 2020	28,601	113,106	4.6

<sup>2</sup> NOTE: This includes supplementary estimates approved within the year. In addition, the unused Building Maintenance rollover has been offset against the Frank Jordan Centre supplementary estimate for building works.

16. I would recommend that a Council the size of Stone Town Council should hold balances equivalent to around six to nine months' net expenditure. It can be seen from the above table that this is achieved in each of the first two budget years by the standstill budget at the current Council Tax level, however the projected 2019-20 standstill budget falls well short of this target by reducing balances to only 4.6 months' expenditure. Any recommendations from Sub-Committees that are accepted by this Committee, or changes made by the Committee itself, will clearly change these figures.

### **Recommendations**

17. That Members consider Sub-Committee budget proposals alongside the additional information in this report and determine the budget and precept level for recommendation to the Council.