

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 1 November, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor R Kenney in the Chair and
Councillors J Davies, Mrs J Farnham, I Fordham, Mrs M Goodall, Mrs K Green,
M Green, Mrs J Hood, P Leason, Mrs E Mowatt, G Neagus, A Osgathorpe and
M Williamson

Absent: Councillors Mrs C Collier, G Collier, T Jackson, Mrs J Piggott and M Shaw

GP17/087 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C Collier, G Collier, T Jackson,
Mrs J Piggott and M Shaw

GP17/088 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received

GP17/089 **To receive the reports of the County Councillors**

County Councillor P Jones tendered his apologies.

County Councillor I Parry was absent.

GP17/090 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP17/091 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

- a) that the minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on the 18th October, 2016, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee at Minutes TTP17/011, TTP17/012 and TTP17/013 be adopted.
- b) that the minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee held on the 18th October, 2016, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee at Minutes ENV17/004, ENV17/005, ENV17/007 and ENV17/008 be adopted.

With reference to minute number ENV17/007, Tree Planting/Hedge Laying, it was agreed to forward the suggested areas to Campaign to Protect Rural England, but as Stone Town Council do not own any of the land, ask them to ensure that they contact the landowners for the necessary permissions before planting.

GP17/092 **Northesk Street Car Park**

The Clerk reported that there had been a communication with Kier on behalf of the Police regarding the sale of the former police station on Radford Street, and associated land currently being used as a Town Council car park on Northesk Street. Advance notice has been given that there is approximately one year until the land will be sold. Formal notice will be given in due course.

The Clerk is currently awaiting costs to Stone Town Council for buying or renting the land.

It was noted that the land has always been a temporary arrangement for as long as the police were in the Radford Street building. It was also noted that parking in that area is already problematic, and the closure of the car park will make parking outside of houses worse.

RESOLVED: to note the information from Kier, and to bring back to General Purposes for discussion when further information has been received regarding purchase or rental costs.

GP17/093 **Transfer of Services from Stafford Borough Council**

The Committee considered whether to propose to Stafford Borough Council that the Town Council should take over the management of the area of land to the right of the service road on Westbridge Park. Stafford Borough Council had informed the Clerk that maintenance was currently costing the Borough £4,238 per annum, excluding the works/inspections and remedial works after events. The Clerk suggested that a budget of around £6,000 per annum should be considered in the Committee proceed.

RESOLVED: to authorise the Clerk to enter its discussions with Stafford Borough Council with a view to drawing up a formal management agreement, to be reported back to the Committee for final approval

GP17/094 **Budget Monitoring – 30 September 2016**

The Clerk reported that the accounts are generally in good order and there are no major concerns. The Frank Jordan Centre income is down due to a frequent user leaving. Also, Markets income is down but Markets expenditure has not fallen at the same level due to a minimum charge being applied to the setting up of marquees.

RESOLVED: to accept the report of the Town Clerk.

HS2 Phase 2a: West Midlands to Crewe

Members had major concerns regarding the Railhead and HS2.

RESOLVED: to send the following response to the consultation:

Stone Town Council object most strongly to the development of the Railhead and insist that a more suitable, brownfield site is used. We feel that the original Crewe site was more appropriate. Of particular concern are:

- The impact of construction traffic and ongoing HS2 operations on the town of Stone. Stone is a quiet canal/market town, whose character is totally inconsistent with either the demands placed by construction work or the longer term requirements of a maintenance depot.
- The pressure of construction traffic on the local road infrastructure around Stone, particularly Eccleshall Road, which could become a main feed for the transport of construction materials.
- The impact on the Walton area of Stone, where a strategic development location (SDL) for 500 houses has been identified in the Plan for Stafford Borough. The proposed railhead and sidings encroach onto this land.
- The potential for light and noise pollution from the proposed construction/maintenance depot.
- The closure of Yarnfield Lane, resulting in issues such as:
 - Travel times for Yarnfield residents being significantly increased in the Stone direction, resulting in increased travel times for school children and a reduced inclination for Yarnfield residents to visit the Stone town centre. Access for emergency service vehicles may also be compromised.
 - Over 80,000 visitors per annum are attracted to the prestigious, regionally significant footballing facility at Wellbeing Park, Yarnfield. The closure of Yarnfield Lane will reduce the accessibility of this facility and force users to approach it through the village of Yarnfield, rather than via the A34.

In addition, the Council is also extremely disappointed with the level of consultation with Stone residents. Most residents in the area are unaware of this proposal, despite the profound effect it could have on them. No consultation meeting has been held in the town, nor any adequate attempts made to publicise other consultation events to people within the town. Even a simple request to provide more printed consultation materials so that the Council could at least go some way to informing residents itself did not result in the delivery of any documents for over a week. By this time, only two full working days remained before the closure of the consultation.

The Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 – Main Modifications Plan

RESOLVED: to send the following response to the consultation:

Main Modifications P2-MM3a and P2-MM3b

Stone Town Council support the proposed Main Modifications detailed above as proposed by the Planning Inspector. Removing any part of Westbridge Park from within the settlement boundary will help to secure the parks future as an important leisure/ recreation asset for the residents of Stone and the surrounding area.

We share the concerns of the Planning Inspector as laid out within his note advising on the proposed modifications. However, we are disappointed with total disregard afforded to the Planning Inspectors comments when Stafford Borough Council planning committee granted planning permission on 31st October 31, 2016 for a M&S food store on the area of land in Westbridge park to which the inspector referred to when he stated:

“3. Amend the Stone settlement boundary to exclude the land on the edge of Westbridge Park which is located to the east/south-east of the A520 (Stafford Road) and to the west/south-west of the Trent and Mersey Canal, currently occupied by a surface car park and other community uses, including a leisure centre and tennis courts

The full reasons for the above modifications will be given in my report but in regard to the third modification in the above list, the principal reasons are: the potential impact which could result from the location of the settlement boundary as submitted on the openness of the park and on the setting of the Stone Conservation Area and key listed buildings which can be viewed from the park; concern over flood risk; concern over the location and impact of retail development on the town centre; and the strong and clear physical boundary of the canal.”

GP17/096 **Neighbourhood Plan**

The Clerk presented the latest draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, and reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had already commenced the Local Green Space consultation in order to save time. The Committee were invited to confirm this action.

RESOLVED: to support the current version of the plan for the purpose of Regulation 14 consultations.

RESOLVED: to confirm the actions of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group of commencing the Local Green Space consultation.

RESOLVED: to record the commendation of the members of the steering group for the work they have done on the Neighbourhood Plan.

* 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.

GP17/097 **Bank Mandate**

The Clerk reported that past Councillors needed to be removed from the bank mandate as a prelude to setting up internet banking. The proposed wording of the resolution was as required by the bank.

RESOLVED: that the authorised signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in Section 2, be changed in accordance with sections 5 and 6 and the current mandate will continue as amended

GP17/098 **Grants**

Chuckle Productions Limited

Chuckle Productions Limited requested a grant of £500 to continue the Sound Connection Project for Children.

Members commented on the good work of the organisation but decided not to award a grant on this occasion.

RESOLVED: to refuse a grant to Chuckle Productions Limited

GP17/099 **Member's Motions under Standing Order 4**

Councillor M Williamson

"I ask the Council to request the Clerk to write to London Midland thanking them for their gesture in painting out station signs with gold paint to celebrate the gold medal won by Joe Clarke in the recent Olympic Games held in Rio."

RESOLVED: to write a letter of thanks to London Midland as per the Members Motion above

GP17/100 **Update from Working Groups**

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Mrs J Hood stated she was delighted to put the Neighbourhood Plan through to regulation 14, and thanked everyone on the Steering Group for their input. Part of the Local Green Space consultation will take place on Saturday 5th November from 10 to 1 in the High Street.

GP17/101 **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 – Councillor J Davies attended the AGM. They are financially sound and are delighted to provide a Mayor's Cadet. Councillor Davies has been made honorary president, and he commented that he hopes the excellent relationship with the Town Council continues.

Age Concern Stone & District – Councillor Mrs C Collier tendered her apologies for the meeting but sent a report as follows:

Report of the Age Concern meeting on the 20/10/2016

The lunch clubs are doing well with around 35 attending the Monday one at the Crown, the Friday club is not quite so well supported.

The Hospital volunteer drivers scheme is very successful but more volunteers are needed.

Councillor Mrs K Green also reported on the meeting stating that a new treasurer has been appointed and lunch club is going well. The transport to medical appointments is also going well but more volunteer drivers are required.

Stone Town Band – Councillor J Davies attended a meeting where it was reported that band members are down. They have a very competent conductor and the band will be supporting the Remembrance event.

Walton Community Centre – Councillor M Shaw was not in attendance

Stafford & Stone Access Group – Councillor Mrs C Collier sent the following report:

Report of the Access group meeting on 12/09/2016

We welcomed Daniel Baldawi to the group, he is a wheelchair user and gave a lot of input of his experiences and problems. The web site is being redesigned for better access. Ricawatch invited members with older people and those with disabilities to join their panel of mystery shoppers - a small fee is paid for a research report. (RICA = Research Institute for Consumer Affairs). Flip Out Stoke is hoping to offer trampolining in Stoke for those less abled. Daniel commented on the need for much more provision for adult changing rooms with hoists and adult changing tables. In Stafford the only one we know of is in the County Council. It is not well known, has some deficiencies, and is not open evenings.

Stone Common Plott Trustees – no meetings have taken place

Town Mayor