

STONE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk

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25 May 2018

A meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** will be held in **St Michael's Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2018 at 7:05pm**, or on the rising of the Council meeting, if later.

I trust you will be able to attend.

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Requests for Dispensations Received**
4. **To receive the report of the County Councillors**
 - County Councillor Mrs J. Hood
 - County Councillor I. Parry
5. **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.
6. **To elect the Members of the following Sub-Committees:**
 - Mayor's Sub Committee
7. **Appointment to Outside Bodies**

To Make appointments of Council representatives to the following bodies:

 - Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

8. Review of Standing Orders

To consider updating the Council's Standing Orders – the draft presented to the last Committee meeting has not been circulated again but a copy has been included with the electronic version of this agenda.

9. Review of Financial Regulations

To consider updating the Council's Financial Regulations – the draft presented to the last Committee meeting has not been circulated again but a copy has been included with the electronic version of this agenda.

10. To consider the notes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting held on 16 May 2018

11. Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 14

To consider the public consultation process for the Council's Neighbourhood Plan, known as the Regulation 14 consultation, and:

- a. Approve the commencement of the public consultation process for the Council's draft Neighbourhood Plan at noon on 19th June 2018.
- b. Consider the draft consultation methods document attached as a basis for the process.
- c. Note the current Neighbourhood Plan timetable attached.
- d. Consider the draft response form attached.
- e. Delegate to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee, the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and/or the Council's planning consultants, authority to prepare all required correspondence, publicity and other materials in respect of the public consultation, to organise consultation events, and to make any required amendments to documents and processes.

12. Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day

To consider an email received from Seafarers UK

13. Update from Working Groups:

- a) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- b) Project Headstone (Protocol for Marking the Death of the Sovereign or other members of the Royal Family)
- c) Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

14. 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 – Mayor and Cllr M. Green

Age Concern Stone & District – Cllrs: Mrs K. Green and Mrs C. Collier

Stone Town Band – Mayor

Walton Community Centre – Cllr M. Green

Stafford & Stone Access Group – Cllr Mrs C. Collier

Stone Common Plot Trustees – Cllrs: M. Shaw, G. Collier, Mrs J. Hood, R. Kenney and Mrs C. Collier

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group – Cllrs: Mrs J. Farnham, M. Green, A. Osgathorpe, Mrs J. Hood and R. Kenney

SPCA Executive Committee – Cllr M. Williamson

Stone

Town Council



Standing Orders

Related to Council Business

June 2018

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1 GENERAL

- 1.1 These standing orders govern the conduct of the business of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council¹.
- 1.2 Should there be a clash between the provisions of this document and those within other documents which prescribe the activities of the Council, the order of precedence shall be:
 - a. National Legislation
 - b. The Council's Standing Orders (this document)
 - c. All other documents
- 1.3 All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting. *(NOTE: Where a standing order incorporates a mandatory statutory requirement, the requirement and the circumstances in which the requirement applies is indicated in brackets following the relevant standing order below. This does not indicate that the application of the standing order is limited only to those circumstances, but just indicates the extent to which the standing order can be suspended by this provision).*
- 1.4 A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10 below.
- 1.5 The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a Councillor as soon as possible after they have delivered their acceptance of office form.
- 1.6 The decision of the chairman² of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

2 RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- 2.1 Items on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- 2.2 A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- 2.3 A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer will be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- 2.4 If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder.

¹ All references to "the Council" in this document shall also be considered to refer to the General Purposes Committee for functions which have been delegated to that Committee.

² All references to "Chairman" and "Vice-Chairman" shall be considered to refer to the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor in respect of a full Council meeting.

- 2.5 The mover of a motion shall have a right to reply, not exceeding five minutes, at the conclusion of the debate immediately before the motion is put to the vote. No further debate shall take place once this right to reply has been exercised.
- 2.6 An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- 2.7 If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the amendment becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- 2.8 An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- 2.9 A councillor may make an amendment to their own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall require the consent of the seconder.
- 2.10 Subject to standing order 2.11 below, if there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, in the order directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- 2.11 In exceptional circumstances, several amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- 2.12 A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- 2.13 The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- 2.14 Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 2.15 Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
- a. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - b. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
 - c. to make a point of order;
 - d. to give a personal explanation; or
 - e. in exercise of a right of reply.
- 2.16 During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- 2.17 A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting, whose decision shall be final.
- 2.18 When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:

- a. to amend the motion;
- b. to proceed to the next business;
- c. to adjourn the debate;
- d. to put the motion to a vote;
- e. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
- f. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
- g. to exclude the public and press;
- h. to adjourn the meeting; or
- i. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.

- 2.19 Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that sufficient information is available to make a sound decision, the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- 2.20 Excluding motions moved under standing order 2.18 above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed five minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

3 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- 3.1 No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- 3.2 If these person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- 3.3 If a resolution made under standing order 3.2 above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

4 MEETINGS GENERALLY

- 4.1 Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost. *(Mandatory: Council only)*
- 4.2 Public notice of the time and place of meeting shall be given by posting it outside the Council's offices at least three days before the meeting. The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning. *(Mandatory: Council. For committees, the minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the*

day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting. There are no mandatory requirements for sub-committees)

- 4.3 Meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
(Mandatory: Council and Committees)
- 4.4 Subject to standing order 4.3 above and the provisions of the Council's scheme of public participation, members of the public are permitted to:
- a. Make representations or raise issues at any ordinary Council meeting in relation to the work of the Council.
 - b. Raise issues at any ordinary committee or sub-committee meeting related to items of business on the agenda.
 - c. Present petitions at any ordinary Council meeting on issues within the Council's remit.
- 4.5 Subject to standing order 4.4, no more than two members of the public are entitled to speak at any full Council meeting, and shall each shall speak once only, for not more than 10 minutes. Where more than two members of the public have requested to speak, the Proper Officer shall determine which requests shall have preference, based on their relevance to the meeting, the urgency of the matter to be raised and the time that the request was received.
- 4.6 In accordance with standing order 4.4 above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a full Council meeting shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question.
- 4.7 In accordance with standing order 4.6 above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response, to a committee or sub-committee for further consideration or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- 4.8 Subject to standing order 4.4, no more than four members of the public are entitled to speak at any committee or sub-committee meeting, and shall each shall speak once only, for not more than three minutes (five minutes if there are two or less speakers). Where more than four members of the public have requested to speak, the Proper Officer shall determine which requests shall have preference, based on their relevance to the meeting, the urgency of the matter to be raised and the time that the request was received.
- 4.9 No response shall be made to a public submission made under paragraph 4.8 above, nor any debate entered into, as the item will be fully debated when the agenda item itself is considered.
- 4.10 A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- 4.11 A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

- 4.12 A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- 4.13 Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- 4.14 The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present. *(Mandatory: Council and Committees)*
- 4.15 Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council. *(Mandatory: Council)*
- 4.16 The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting. *(Mandatory: Council)*
- 4.17 Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting. *(Mandatory)*
- 4.18 The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote. *See standing orders 6.8 and 6.9 below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council. (Mandatory)*
- 4.19 Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, their own vote will be recorded in the minutes. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- 4.20 In addition, any councillor may request that the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.
- 4.21 The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
- a. the time and place of the meeting;
 - b. the names of councillors present and absent;
 - c. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - d. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - e. if there was a public participation session; and
 - f. the resolutions made.
- 4.22 A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.

- 4.23 No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council, committee or sub-committee are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.
- 4.24 If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- 4.25 A meeting shall not exceed a period of 1.5 hours, nor any group of meetings held on the same evening exceed 2.5 hours without a resolution of the meeting to continue beyond this limit.

5 COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- 5.1 The council may appoint standing committees or other committees and sub-committees as may be necessary, and:
- a. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - b. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
 - c. shall permit a committee and sub-committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - d. shall appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee or sub-committee;
 - e. shall, after it has appointed the members of a committee or sub-committee, appoint the chairman of that committee or sub-committee;
 - f. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - g. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
 - h. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
 - i. may dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
- 5.2 Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee or sub-committee may appoint a working group whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the appointing committee or sub-committee.
- 5.3 Notwithstanding any appointments made to sub-committees and working parties under standing orders 5.1d and 5.2 above, the Town Mayor and the chairman of the parent committee shall be ex-officio members of all sub-committees and working parties with full voting rights.
- 5.4 The members of a committee, sub-committee or working group may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.
- 5.5 Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.

6 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- 6.1 In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
- 6.2 In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.
- 6.3 All meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees shall take place at 15 Station Road, Stone, with the first meeting commencing at 7:00pm, unless:
 - a. it is specifically agreed otherwise at a previous meeting, or,
 - b. it is anticipated, prior to the dispatch of meeting notice(s), that a meeting will be attended by a Councillor who would be physically unable to access that location, wherein the Town Clerk would be authorised to arrange an alternative, accessible location for the meeting(s).
- 6.4 In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.
- 6.5 The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor.
- 6.6 The Town Mayor, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.
- 6.7 The Deputy Mayor, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Town Mayor at the next annual meeting of the council.
- 6.8 In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a successor Town Mayor has been elected. The current Town Mayor shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 6.9 In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a new Town Mayor has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 6.10 Following the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting may include:
 - a. In an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
 - b. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
 - c. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - d. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - e. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;

- f. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- g. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- h. Appointment of any new committees;
- i. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- j. Review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
- k. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- l. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- m. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
- n. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;
- o. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- p. Review of the council's complaints procedure;
- q. Review of the council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998;
- r. Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press/media; and
- S. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council.

7 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- 7.1 The Town Mayor may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.
- 7.2 If the Town Mayor does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.
- 7.3 The chairman of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- 7.4 If the chairman of a committee or a sub-committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee or a sub-committee.

8 PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- 8.1 A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least six councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in

accordance with standing order 10 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

- 8.2 When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 8.1 above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

9 VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- 9.1 Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

10 MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- 10.1 A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- 10.2 No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least ten clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice, the day of the meeting, Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays.
- 10.3 The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 10.2 above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- 10.4 If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 10.2 above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least ten clear days before the meeting.
- 10.5 If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- 10.6 Subject to standing order 10.5 above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- 10.7 Should any urgent business arise between scheduled meetings of the Council or any standing committee or sub-committee, the Proper Officer will call a special meeting to deal with the issue.

- 10.8 Where urgent planning business occurs between ordinary meetings of the Council's Planning Committee, the Proper Officer shall circulate details of the business to Members, asking if a special meeting of the Planning Committee should be arranged to discuss the business. If no requests to arrange a special meeting are received, the Council's support for the proposal shall be conveyed to the Borough Council.
- 10.9 Where any matter is so urgent that it is not possible to call a special meeting with the legally required notice periods, the Council's Proper Officer is authorised to take any decision on behalf of the Council which can legally be delegated by the Council to an officer. Before taking such a decision, the Proper Officer shall take reasonable steps to consult with Council Members, and shall report the decision and the reason for its urgency at the next ordinary meeting of the Council or one of its committees if the decision would normally have been taken there.

11 MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

- 11.1 The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
- a. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - b. to move to a vote;
 - c. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - d. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - e. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - f. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - g. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - h. to require a written report;
 - i. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
 - j. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - k. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - l. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
 - m. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - n. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - o. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
 - p. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - q. to close a meeting.

12 HANDLING CONFIDENTIAL OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION

- 12.1 The agenda, papers that support the agenda, and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- 12.2 Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

13 DRAFT MINUTES

- 13.1 If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- 13.2 There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 11.1a above.
- 13.3 The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- 13.4 If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:
- “The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but that view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- 13.5 Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.
- 13.6 Draft minutes of the Council’s committees and sub-committees will be presented to the parent committee for approval, rather than the (sub-) committee itself, providing all councillor members of the (sub-) committee are also members of the parent committee.

14 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 4.22 above.

- 14.1 All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- 14.2 Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- 14.3 Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall not take part in any debate or vote at a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a personal interest, though they would be permitted to take part in a public participation item in the same way as any member of the public.
- 14.4 Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer before the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

- 14.5 A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the meeting of the council, committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- 14.6 A dispensation request shall confirm:
- a. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - b. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - c. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding the remaining time to the next Council election) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - d. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- 14.7 Subject to standing orders 14.4 and 14.6 above, dispensation requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- 14.8 A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 14.5 above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:
- a. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business, or
 - b. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area, or
 - c. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

15 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- 15.1 Upon formal written notification from Stafford Borough Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 12 above, report this to the council.
- 15.2 Where the notification in standing order 15.1 above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Town Mayor of this fact, and the Town Mayor shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 15.4 below.
- 15.3 The council may:
- a. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
 - b. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- 15.4 Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if

any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office. *(Mandatory)*

16 PROPER OFFICER

16.1 The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent or otherwise unable to act.

16.2 The Proper Officer shall:

- a. at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda. *(Mandatory for council and committees. See standing order 4.2 above for the meaning of clear days.);*
- b. give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them); *(Mandatory for council and committees. See standing order 4.2 above for the meaning of clear days.);*
- c. subject to standing order 10 above, include on the agenda all motions put forward by councillors unless withdrawn by the councillor themselves at least six clear days before the meeting;
- d. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in the office *(Mandatory);*
- e. facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
- f. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities *(Mandatory);*
- g. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- h. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- i. assist with responding to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the council's policies and procedures relating to the same;
- j. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- k. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;
- l. arrange for legal deeds to be executed; See also standing order 23 below.
- m. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;
- n. record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority;
- o. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
- p. retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used for the sealing of legal deeds without a resolution to that effect. *See also standing order 23 below.*

17 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 17.1 The Town Clerk shall undertake the role of responsible financial officer, unless there is a council resolution appointing a different officer. The council shall appoint an appropriate staff member to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

18 ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- 18.1 “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide (England)
- 18.2 All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- 18.3 The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise the Council’s income and expenditure compared with the approved budget and an explanation of significant variances.
- 18.4 As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide each councillor with a statement summarising the council’s income and expenditure for the year and the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of the annual return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- 18.5 The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices for a year to 31 March. The annual return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

19 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- 19.1 The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
- a. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - b. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
 - c. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - d. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council’s accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - e. procurement policies (subject to standing orders 19.3 to 19.8 below).
- 19.2 Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly for fitness of purpose.
- 19.3 The letting of contracts by the Council must be in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, or subsequent replacement/supplementary legislation.

- 19.4 Contracts below the value of £25,000 are outside the scope of standing orders, but may be governed by the provisions within the Council's financial regulations.
- 19.5 Contracts above the value prescribed in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 of £181,302³ or £4,551,413³, which have "detailed and complex" requirements related to the EU Public Contracts Directive will be undertaken in partnership with the Borough or County Council, who will be able to ensure that these complex regulations are adhered to.
- 19.6 Between these two figures, the Council may:
- a. Advertise the contract or otherwise offer it on the open market. In this case the provisions of the 2015 regulations apply, and the contract must also be published on the "Contract Finder" website.
 - b. Offer the contract to a closed list of contractors, whereby the provisions of the 2015 regulations do not apply.
 - c. Offer the contract to its "preferred contractor" identified for that area of work, where the 2015 regulations regarding advertising on the "Contracts Finder" website would also not apply.
- 19.7 Subject to any additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works under standing orders 19.6a and 19.6b above where the value is anticipated to exceed £60,000 shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- a. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - b. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - c. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and/or other manner that is appropriate (standing order 19.6a only);
 - d. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - e. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - f. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- 19.8 Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value, or any, tender.

20 STAFFING MATTERS

- 20.1 The Town Clerk shall act as employer for of the Council's paid employees and voluntary staff.

³ April 2018 values. These figures may vary from time to time.

- 20.2 All written records in respect of staffing matters shall be kept confidential and secure. Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records if so justified.
- 20.3 Appointments, dismissals, performance, disciplinary issues and grievances shall be considered in accordance with the Council's Staffing Guidelines.

21 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

- 21.1 Requests for information held by the council shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 21.2 Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee. The said committee shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

22 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

- 22.1 Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

23 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing orders 16.2l and 16.2p above.

- 23.1 A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- 23.2 Subject to standing order 23.1 above, the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.

24 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- 24.1 No Councillor shall purport to represent the Council, or make any suggestion that they have the authority to make a binding decision on behalf of the Council, unless previously authorised by a properly minuted resolution.
- 24.2 Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
- a. inspect any land and/or premises which the council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - b. issue orders, instructions or directions.

Stone

Town Council



Financial Regulations

June 2018

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1 GENERAL

- 1.1 These regulations govern the conduct of the financial activities of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council or the General Purposes (GP) Committee¹.
- 1.2 Should there be a clash between the provisions of this document and those within other documents which prescribe the activities of the Council, the order of precedence shall be:
 - a. National Legislation
 - b. The Council's Standing Orders
 - c. Financial Regulations (this document)
 - d. All other documents
- 1.3 The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.4 The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - a. for the timely production of accounts;
 - b. that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - c. to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - d. identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.5 These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.6 Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7 Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Town Clerk shall be the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), and as such shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. The terms "Town Clerk" and "RFO" are, however, used separately throughout this document to allow for a situation where this may not be the case.

¹ All references to "the Council" in this document shall also be considered to refer to the General Purposes Committee for functions which have been delegated to that Committee.

- 1.9 The Town Clerk and/or RFO may delegate items ascribed to them within this document to another employee, but will still remain accountable to the Council for those items.
- 1.10 The RFO;
- a. acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - b. administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - c. determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - d. ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - e. maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - f. assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - g. produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.11 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.12 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- a. entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - b. a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
 - c. wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.13 The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- a. procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - b. procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - c. identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - d. procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and

- e. measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.14 The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular, any decision regarding:
- a. setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
 - b. approving accounting statements;
 - c. approving an annual governance statement;
 - d. borrowing;
 - e. writing off bad debts;
 - f. declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
 - g. the consideration of any report from the Council's internal or external auditors,
- shall be a matter for the full council only.
- 1.15 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.
- 1.16 In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2 ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2 The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.3 The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

- 2.4 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.5 The internal auditor shall:
- a. be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - b. report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - c. to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - d. have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.6 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- a. perform any operational duties for the council;
 - b. initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - c. direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.7 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms ‘independent’ and ‘independence’ shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.8 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors’ rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.9 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any report from internal or external auditors.

3 ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1 The Council’s budget shall be prepared on an “Income and Expenditure” basis.
- 3.2 The GP Committee shall consider a report of the RFO setting out the prospects for the following three years’ capital and revenue budgets no later than January each year. Each Sub-Committee shall be asked to formulate its proposed budget for the next three years based on policy guidelines determined by the GP Committee, and to submit these proposals to the Committee for further consideration.
- 3.3 After considering the Sub-Committees’ proposals, the GP Committee shall determine a balanced and affordable budget to be recommended to the Council for the following three financial years.

- 3.4 The Council shall review the GP Committee's recommendations not later than the end of February each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year and determine indicative precepts for the following two years.
- 3.5 The annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4 BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1 The Town Clerk is authorised to seek tenders/quotations, place orders and make payments in accordance with the approved annual budget, the Council's policies, and these Financial Regulations. Where the annual budget identifies specific items for which no expenditure should be incurred without the express approval of the Council, the Clerk should refer proposed spending for approval before that spending is incurred. In all other cases, the Clerk is authorised to proceed without specific approval.
- 4.2 The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a budget monitoring statement comparing actual expenditure against that planned for each approved budget head.
- 4.3 The Town Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure. Where there is no available budget, the Clerk shall, wherever possible, discuss the issue with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee or, in their absence, the Vice Chairman or Town Mayor before incurring the expenditure. Where no or insufficient budget provision existed, the Town Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.4 In general, unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Where a budget has been agreed by the Council as a "rollover budget", then unspent amounts may be rolled-over into the subsequent financial year by making use of a rollover reserve. This provision may also be used on a one-off basis for specific items, subject to agreement of the Council.
- 4.5 All expenditure and income of the Council shall be included within its revenue account unless a specific Council resolution has determined that it shall be treated as capital. Once such a resolution has been passed, no expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any such capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained, to meet the full projected costs of the project.
- 4.6 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.7 Changes in earmarked reserves, other than the rollover reserve, shall require approval by council.
- 4.8 Notwithstanding the provisions above, all expenditure and income related to the Town Mayor's charity will, in the interests of transparency, be accounted for by the use of a specified reserve account for each Town Mayor.

5 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND PAYMENTS

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed.
- 5.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk. The Clerk shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received or carried out in accordance with the needs of the Council.
- 5.3 The RFO shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetic accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The Clerk shall settle invoices promptly.
- 5.4 All cash received must be banked intact.
- 5.5 No petty cash account shall be maintained.
- 5.6 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance, pension contributions or other reasons, should be made from the Council's bank account.
- 5.7 A schedule showing payments from the Council's bank accounts shall be prepared by the RFO and presented:
 - a. To the Council on a quarterly basis in respect of payments over £250, and,
 - b. To the General Purposes Committee within each budget monitoring statement for payments of all values.
- 5.8 For the purposes of the schedules referred to in paragraph 5.7 above:
 - a. Staff salary and related payments should not be included, but total figures for a period should be made available to any Member on request. Details of payments to individual employees will only be made available in accordance with paragraph 6.4 below.
 - b. Payments in respect of the Mayor's Charity Fund will not be included, but should be made available to any Member on request.
- 5.9 The Council acknowledges that the commitment to make a payment occurs at the time an order is placed or similar arrangement made, not at the time a payment itself is made. It does not, therefore, consider that excessive controls on payments which may hamper the efficient operation of the Council need to be applied, providing that adequate controls over ordering and reporting are in place in accordance with these regulations.
- 5.10 Payments may be made by way of cheque, direct debit, bank transfer, purchasing card, internet banking, BACS or CHAPS, provided that:
 - a. All cheques and the initial authorisation for direct debits shall be signed by two individuals included within the bank mandate, at least one of which shall be a Member of the Council and not more than one shall be an officer.
 - b. Transfers between Council bank accounts may be authorised by the RFO.

- c. Payments via purchasing card can be made by a single authorised officer, and are limited to £1,000 in any single transaction, with a maximum of £5,000 outstanding at any one time.
 - d. Electronic payments, including payments via internet banking, can be made by a single authorised officer, but the supporting paperwork should also be signed by a second officer. All such payments should be included within a monthly report to the General Purposes Committee which lists “non-cheque” payments since the last report, subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 5.8 above.
- 5.11 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted. Officers authorising payments will be required to follow these same arrangements in respect of pecuniary or other interests.

6 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 6.1 As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 6.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 6.3 Once an employee’s salary and conditions has been determined by the Council or an authorised Appointments Panel and a contract of employment has been signed, no changes shall be made to any employee’s pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council, except where required for the payment of overtime, absence cover, incremental progression or similar matters.
- 6.4 Payments to individual employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall not be open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
 - a. by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b. by the internal auditor;
 - c. by the external auditor; or
 - d. by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 6.5 Any termination payments beyond those required by law shall require the approval of the Council.

7 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 7.1 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 7.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the council in the first instance, though the renewal and extension of existing leases may be authorised by the Town Clerk providing that there is provision within the Council's budget and that he/she is satisfied that the arrangement represents value for money for the Council.
- 7.3 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 7.4 The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 7.5 All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 7.6 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 7.7 Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 above.

8 INCOME

- 8.1 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 8.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied by the Council shall be considered annually by the council as part of the budget process, and notified to the RFO who shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 8.3 The council will undertake a full review of all fees and charges periodically, following a report of the Clerk.
- 8.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 8.5 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

- 8.6 A record shall be maintained by the RFO of the amounts making up the total of each paying-in slip.
- 8.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 8.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 8.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 8.10 Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting (see also Regulation 15 below).

9 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 9.1 An official order number shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Details of orders shall be retained.
- 9.2 All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction.
- 9.3 A Member may not specify the use of a particular supplier, issue an official order or make any contract (verbal or written) on behalf of the council.
- 9.4 The RFO shall satisfy themselves as to the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of an order.

10 CONTRACTS

- 10.1 Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to the following items:
 - a. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - b. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;

- c. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - d. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
 - e. for additional audit work of the external auditor;
 - f. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price: and
 - g. In circumstances where continuity of supplier is considered by the RFO to offer greater benefits to the Council than retendering.
- 10.2 Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations².
- 10.3 The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive (which may change from time to time)³.
- 10.4 When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- 10.5 Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- 10.6 All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.

² The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

³ Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£181,302)
- b. For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,551,413)

- 10.7 Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to the requirements of Standing Orders related to procurement⁴ and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 10.8 Where the Clerk has determined that there is a benefit to the Council to let a contract in association with one or more other partners, or to make use of another authority's facilities such as the County Council's e-tendering system, the requirements of these regulations shall be replaced by the requirements of the regulations of the lead body for the letting of the contract.
- 10.9 When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 but in excess of £3,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph 10.1 above the Clerk or RFO shall, where possible, obtain 3 quotations. Below this figure, the Clerk or RFO shall seek to obtain the best overall value for money for the Council after taking into account cost, quality of service and availability, and shall strive to obtain one or more estimates for the work/service to be performed.
- 10.10 The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 10.11 Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

11 PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)

- 11.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 11.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 11.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Council and notified to the Contractor in writing before any work has begun, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision as a result.

⁴ Standing Order 19 based on the version effective from June 2018 which was current at the time of preparing this document. This reference may change in subsequent versions of standing orders.

12 STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 12.1 Where the Council operates a system of stock control, or holds a supply of equipment for the use of a number of people, the Town Clerk shall be responsible for the arrangements for the care and custody of these stores and equipment.
- 12.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 12.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 12.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

13 ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 13.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 13.2 No tangible moveable property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 13.3 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.5 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

14 INSURANCE

- 14.1 Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.

- 14.2 The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 14.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 14.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 14.5 All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council, or duly delegated committee.

15 CHARITIES

- 15.1 Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

16 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 16.1 The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 16.2 When considering any new activity, the Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

17 SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 17.1 It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 17.2 The council may, by resolution, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that the advice of the RFO regarding the risks and implications has been considered prior to the suspension. Details of the suspension must be recorded in the minutes, and must include a record of the advice of the RFO if the council has chosen not to follow it.

* * *

Neighbourhood Planning Steering Committee

Notes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone on Wednesday 16 May 2018

PRESENT: Councillors:
Mrs J. Hood (Chairman), A. Osgathorpe, R. Kenney, J. Davies and Mrs J. Piggott

Also: Mrs H. Barter (Urban Vision), Mrs J. Bonser and Mrs T. Williams

APOLOGIES: Councillors: I. Fordham, M. Green, M. Williamson and T. Jackson

Also: Mrs B. Fradley

To discuss the next steps post Neighbourhood Plan screening

Hannah Barter (of Urban Vision) informed the Working Group that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan was now ready to go to Regulation 14. There has been no request for a Strategic Environmental Assessment or a Habitats Regulations Assessment. All agencies have returned their screening representations to Stafford Borough Council.

Hannah discussed consultation methods. The methods include: who the press releases are issued to, where posters would be displayed, the websites to which material would be uploaded, how direct engagement with members of the public would take place, who the statutory consultees are for Regulation 14 and locations for displaying hard copy plans.

Hannah asked that the Town Clerk emails the Principal Planning Officer during the week prior to the start of Regulation 14 and requests the 'full list of statutory consultees'.

A copy of the Plan will be submitted to Stafford Borough Council with a hard copy made available for public display in reception and an electronic copy uploaded onto the website.

The Consultation period will last for six weeks in total, perhaps running from 12 noon to 12 noon, starting on a Tuesday.

Starting Regulation 14 is important. When the consultation closes all responses will be collated and Hannah will provide a summary. It was suggested that a small group be appointed to consider consultation responses over one full day.

The Working Group considered a revised programme of dates in respect of: Regulation 14 (start and finish), Steering Group meeting dates for consideration of consultation responses, the date the Plan should be submitted to the General Purposes Committee and date of submission to Stafford Borough Council. Hannah will forward a copy of the timetable to the Town Council.

* 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.

A meeting of the Working Group was arranged for Wednesday 8 August 2018 in the Council Chamber at 6.30pm.

Hannah suggested using the General Purposes Committee meeting on 4 September 2018, as a target for submitting the Plan. The Plan could be considered by the Working Group on the Wednesday before the agenda is issued.

The Town Council could aim to submit the Plan to Stafford Borough Council on 5 September. It should be sent by recorded delivery after which the Borough will register it and prepare for Regulation 16.

AGREED:

That Hannah supplies a revised schedule/timetable to Stone Town Council and that the next Working Group meeting be arranged for 8 August at 6.30pm.

That the details of the Consultation Scheme be prepared for the General Purposes Committee on 5 June 2018.

That the Plan incorporates the time scales for Regulation 16 when it is submitted to Stafford Borough Council for Regulation 14.

* 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.

Draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan

Proposed Public Consultation

Publicity/ Press Releases:

- Stone and Eccleshall Gazette
- A Little Bit of Stone
- Sentinel
- Newsletter
- Express and Star
- Radio Stations: Signal 1; BBC Radio Stoke; Stone Radio

Publicity/ Posters (subject to agreement by each proposed venue):

- All venues where a hard copy is available to view/comment on
- Stone Town notice boards
- Morrisons
- Fire Station
- Walton Chip Shop
- Launderette

Publicity/ Website:

- Stafford Borough Council
- Stone Town Council

Publicity/ Direct Engagement:

- Pop-up at Stone Markets
- Pop-up at other Stone events
- Coffee Mornings at the three residential homes

Statutory Consultees:

- Stafford Borough Council to provide Stone Town Council with a list of the Statutory Consultees for Regulation 14
- Stafford Borough Council

Publicity/ Hard Copy Plan Locations (subject to agreement by each proposed venue):

- Alleyne's Leisure Centre
- Christchurch
- Costa
- Frank Jordan Centre
- Granvilles
- Library
- Little Stoke Cricket Club
- Stone SP Cricket Club
- Stone Town Council Ground Floor
- Stone Station
- Tennis Club
- The Borehole
- The Crown Hotel
- The Pheasant
- The Red Lion
- The Royal Exchange
- The Swan
- Walton Community Centre

Revised Timetable, June - September 2018:

Date	Task
5 th June 2018	General Purposes Committee
19 th June 2018	Commence Regulation 14
31 st July 2018	Close Regulation 14
8 th August 2018	Collation Group meeting to consider consultation responses
8 th August 2018	Steering Group meeting to consider consultation responses
22 nd August 2018	Make final amendments to the plan (UVE to issue final word version)
22 nd August 2018	Write basic conditions statement
22 nd August 2018	Write consultation conditions statement
4 th September 2018	General Purposes Committee
5 th September 2018	Submit to Stafford Borough Council

Stone Neighbourhood Plan

Public Consultation on the Draft Plan

**12:00 noon 19th June 2018
to 12:00 noon 31st July 2018**



Response Form

This pre-submission consultation is a continuation of the consultation to date, which has led to the current draft Neighbourhood Plan. We want to hear from you, please give your views on any of the policies in the draft Plan and any other comments you would like to make.

It is very important to the process that you (*and any other members of the household or community over the age of 16 years*) indicate acceptance or otherwise of the Plan and if you wish changes to be made, to make those known to inform the final Plan to be sent for Examination.

The closing date for submissions is 12:00 noon on 31st July 2018

Name		Signature (paper copies) I confirm I am aged 16 years or over <input type="checkbox"/> (please tick box)
Address		
Organisation (<i>where appropriate</i>)		

Please note that without your contact details your views cannot be considered.

How the Information in this form will be used:

Information given on this form will be used to help prepare the final Stone Neighbourhood Development Plan for Examination. Please be aware that the forms will be shared with the Council's planning consultants and your comments, including personal details, may be made publicly available, for example, if a challenge is made regarding the validity of responses. The Council's privacy notice can be viewed on its website.

Further copies of this form and a 'Word' version for those preferring to type their response can be downloaded from the Stone Town Council website at www.stonetowncouncil.gov.uk. Please use this form for your comments as it will make the task of collating views so much easier. Please submit your response in one of the following ways:

- Email as an attachment to clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk
- Post to 'Stone Neighbourhood Plan', Stone Town Council, 15 Station Road, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 8JP
- Hand deliver as a paper copy (*addressed to Stone Neighbourhood Plan*) to: Stone Town Council, 15 Station Road, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 8JP

General Comments:

I am generally in favour of the Plan Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to see changes to the Plan Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments on the Plan overall: 	

Specific Comments:

Policy Number		Do you agree? (delete as appropriate)	Comments/suggested changes – please be as clear and concise as possible
Housing	H1 Housing Tenures and Types	YES/NO	
	H2 Housing Design	YES/NO	
Business and Employment	BE1 Small Home Based Business	YES/NO	
	BE2 Stone Town Centre and Local Retailing	YES/NO	
Community Assets and Facilities	CAF1 Local Play, Sports and Recreational Facilities	YES/NO	
	CAF2 Green Infrastructure	YES/NO	
	CAF3 Protected Views and Vistas	YES/NO	
	CAF4 Local Green Space	YES/NO	

From: Seafarers UK <mnfund=seafarers.uk@cmail19.com> on behalf of Seafarers UK <mnfund@seafarers.uk>
Sent: 09 May 2018 10:54
To: Town Clerk
Subject: Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day, 3rd September 2018

[Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day](#)

No Images? [Click here](#)



Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day

Thank you for appreciating our Merchant Navy seafarers - past, present and future

I am delighted to report that our popular campaign to raise public awareness of seafarers and shipping resulted in the Red Ensign being flown ashore at 650 locations in 2017. Please can Seafarers UK count on your support for Merchant Navy Day on 3rd September this year?

As you know, the Red Ensign is the official flag of the British Merchant Navy and those men and women on whom we depend to keep our island nation supplied with food, fuel and most other imports.

Flying the Red Ensign on a public building, prominent flagpole, civic or church location in your neighbourhood provides a great opportunity for you to commemorate and celebrate our Merchant Navy seafarers - past, present and future - and to issue a local press release and use social media channels for wider publicity.

Hopefully you will be able to arrange a flag-hoisting ceremony, ideally inviting local Merchant Navy veterans and cadets to attend alongside your staff, councillors and VIPs? If so, feel free to read out the message from HRH The Earl of Wessex that is included in our [guide to taking part](#).

Let us know what you are planning to do by completing the [online registration form](#). Please be sure to register again - even if you participated in previous years - to enable us to keep our records up to date and in accordance with GDPR requirements.

All participating organisations and locations will be added to a prestigious 'Roll of Honour' on our [Merchant Navy Day website](#). And all those who email us a photograph will be sent a Commemorative Certificate.

On behalf of Seafarers UK may I thank you in advance for continuing to support this important initiative.

Yours sincerely



Nick Harvey
Campaigns Manager
Seafarers UK

Email: nick.harvey@seafarers.uk
Phone: 020 7932 5969

P.S. As Merchant Navy Day falls on a Monday this year, you may wish to arrange for your Red Ensign to be flown for the whole week and the preceding weekend? There are no restrictions on when or where a Red Ensign may be flown ashore in the UK.



Seafarers UK
8 Hatherley Street,
London SW1P 2QT

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