

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in St Michael's Suite, Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone on Tuesday 18 December 2018

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair and
Councillors: Mrs J. Hood, J. Davies, G. Collier, M. Shaw, Mrs C. Collier,
Mrs E. Mowatt and Mrs J. Farnham

ABSENT: Councillors: T. Jackson, A. Osgathorpe, M. Williamson, Mrs M Goodall,
Mrs J. Piggott, M. Green, Mrs K. Green, I. Fordham, P. Leason and G. Neagus

GP19/141 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: T. Jackson, A. Osgathorpe,
M. Williamson, Mrs M. Goodall, Mrs J. Piggott, M. Green, Mrs K. Green and
P. Leason

GP19/142 **Declarations of Interests**

None

GP19/143 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP19/144 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP19/145 **New Train Timetable from Stone Station**

Mr John Heal, Chair of the local Rail User Group, provided the Committee with information on the implications of the proposed new train timetable to be introduced by London Northwestern Railway. He advised that the original plan was for the timetable changes to be introduced from December 2018 but a delay had now resulted in the changes taking effect from May 2019. A final decision on the schedule will be taken in January and he encouraged the Town Council to be part of the discussion. As a consequence there will be changes to the trains that stop at Stone and he warned the Committee that there will be a good deal of confusion for service users.

The new timetable will result in a number of improvements which will include a direct service to Birmingham every hour, a greater number of trains than at present, an increase in the capacity of some trains (which will have eight carriages rather than four - but these cannot stop at Stone), and a direct train to London (although a longer journey). The majority of people using the train service from Stone travel to Stoke and Stafford and will not be affected by the timetable changes.

There are however some complications which include long waits between connections at certain times (particularly mornings) and the loss of some connections. These will impact travel to London at the weekend.

Mr Heal reassured the Committee that the new train company are willing to communicate with the general public. Train schedules are also reviewed every year so any inconveniences may be ironed out in the future.

Mr Heal read out an email he had received from the Head of Stakeholder and Community at London Northwestern Railway (dated 17 December 2018), stating that the May 2019 timetable queries had been considered along with issues raised in the Town Council's letter (requesting reassurances on connection times). A number of local meetings will be held before the timetable goes live and Stone Town Council will be invited to a meeting with representatives and other stakeholders.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is awarded delegated powers to liaise with the train company, London Northwestern Railway, in respect of matters relating to train service timetable changes and their impact on passengers travelling from Stone.

GP19/146 Budget 2019-20 to 2021-22 – Overview

The Committee received the report* of the Town Clerk setting out the prospects for the Council's 2019-20 to 2021-22 budget. The report considers the overall position of the Council, the context in which the budget needs to be set and the standstill budget, which is the starting point for determination of the precept for 2019-20.

RESOLVED: To note the standstill budget position for 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 and the issues related to setting the precept.

RESOLVED: That each sub-committee considers its financial needs for the next three years and report back to the General Purposes Committee on 22 January 2019 with its budget proposals.

TOWN MAYOR

* 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.