

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in St Michael's Suite, Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone on Tuesday 08 January 2019

- PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair and
Councillors: Mrs J. Hood, J. Davies, G. Collier (from Minute number GP19/152),
M. Shaw, Mrs C. Collier (from Minute number GP19/152),
A. Osgathorpe, Mrs J. Piggott, M. Green, Mrs K. Green and P. Leason
- ABSENT:** Councillors: T. Jackson, M. Williamson, Mrs M Goodall, I. Fordham, G. Neagus,
Mrs E. Mowatt and Mrs J. Farnham
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GP19/147 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: Mrs J. Farnham, M. Williamson,
Mrs M. Goodall, T. Jackson and I. Fordham

GP19/148 **Declarations of Interests**

None

GP19/149 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP19/150 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP19/151 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960, the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next item of business is discussed on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the debate

RESOLVED: To not exclude the public and press, but to allow them to remain in the meeting room for the next item of business.

GP19/152 **Community Bus**

The Committee considered the pilot for the provision of a community bus service in Stone to assist residents isolated by the withdrawal of former D & G bus routes.

The Town Clerk distributed bus route usage statistics* for the three month trial which began on 19 October 2018. The statistics included a breakdown of the numbers of service users travelling into and out of Stone on the four services: Route 1 (Aston Lodge) Route 2 (Stonefield), Route 3 (Walton) and Route 4 (Cherryfields).

* 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.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that when discussing piloting the bus service at a previous meeting, it had been decided that a benchmark of an average of 10 users of each service (return) would be considered a success.

The committee considered the cost of providing the service, which was estimated at £14,376 per annum gross, or £11,004 per annum net, after taking into account the average level of fares received. This was considered to be unsustainable in the longer term, with the average subsidy per journey being higher than the cost of the equivalent taxi fare. It was agreed that the wider general public/residents of Stone could not be expected to subsidise these values.

The Committee suggested that the services available from taxi firms be explored and this could be done through the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: That the bus service trial will stop at the end of January 2019 and the Community Link membership fee paid by each service user who subscribed (in order to access the service), is reimbursed in full by the Council.

TOWN MAYOR