

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in St Michael's Suite, Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone on Tuesday 22 January 2019

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

ABSENT: Councillors: T. Jackson, G. Neagus and M. Shaw

GP19/153 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: T. Jackson, G. Neagus and M. Shaw

GP19/154 **Declarations of Interests**

None

GP19/155 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP19/156 **To receive the report of the County Councillors**

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

Budget Shortfall – Councillor Mrs Hood gave a report on Staffordshire County Council's £35 million budget shortfall for 2019-20 and the difficult decisions it was needing to take to make savings within its non-statutory service areas.

She said she was very pleased to report that, after listening to feedback from schools and general public, the County Council had decided not to withdraw the £1.4 million funding for the school crossing patrols service.

Rail Meeting – Councillor Mrs Hood reported on a meeting she had attended at Stone Station with North Staffs Rail Promotion Group and West Midlands Trains. She advised that the street lighting in Station Approach is bright orange and she had raised questions about the need to retain this colour. The response given was that bright orange was part of West Midlands Trains' branding.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP19/157 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP19/158 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) Environment Sub-Committee held on 18 December 2018, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers ENV19/012, ENV19/013 and ENV19/014 be adopted. The recommendations contained in Minute Number ENV19/011 were considered under Minute Number GP19/161, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.
- b) Management Sub-Committee held on 18 December 2018, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record and that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number MAN19/021 be adopted. The recommendations contained in Minute Number MAN19/022 were considered under Minute Number GP19/161, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.
- c) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 8 January 2019, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP19/024 were considered under Minute Number GP19/161, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.
- d) Estates Sub-Committee held on 8 January 2019, copies having been circulated to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number EST19/029 were considered under Minute Number GP19/161, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.

GP19/159 **National Pay Awards 2019-20**

The Committee considered the report* of the Town Clerk (which had been circulated with the agenda) on the outcome of the 2019-20 national pay award negotiations for local government staff and its impact on the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council adopts the new salary levels for staff for 2019-20, as set out in the report.

GP19/160 **Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Committee considered the report* of the Town Clerk (which had been circulated with the agenda) on the Council's requirements to keep its Local Government Pension Scheme under review.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council notes the recommendations in the report and reaffirms the existing policy (determined on 4 September 2014) set out in appendix 2, subject to removal of date sensitive cash figures.

* 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.

GP19/161 2019-20 Budget for Recommendation to the Council

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk* (which had been circulated with the agenda) considering the budget and precept level for the financial year 2019-20 for recommendation to the Council.

An additional financial summary* containing recommendations from all Sub-Committees budget proposals to the Committee for 2019-20, indicative budgets for 2020-21 and 2021-22 and the potential impact on Council Tax, was issued at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Council:

- a) The budget set out in the Clerk's report adjusted to include the Sub-Committee proposals in full (£1,500 added for the maintenance of unregistered uncultivated land in Abbey Street (2019-20 to 2021-22), £2,500 added for additional water taps at the Town Council's Newcastle Road allotment site (2019-20) and £1,500 added for paperless meetings (2019-20) with reductions of £300 in each of 2020-21 and 2021-22).
- b) A Council Tax increase of 1.1% for 2019-20 to £50.10 for a Band D property with further indicative increases of 1.1% in each of the following two years.
- c) To set a precept on Stafford Borough Council for 2019-20 of £297,860 plus Local Council Tax Support Grant of £18,399.

GP19/162 To consider taking advice from Sport England in respect of Planning Application Number 19/29876/FUL – LNT Care Developments

The Committee considered the option to seek advice from Sport England following notice from Stafford Borough Council that a planning application had been submitted for the development of a 66 bedroom care home on the site of the recreation ground/playing field at Tilling Drive, Walton, which is described as Green Space in the emerging Stone Neighbourhood Plan.

The advice/information received would be taken into consideration when the Town Council formulates its observations in response to the development proposal, at its Planning Committee meeting on 5 February 2019.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is asked to write to Sport England seeking its advice on the proposal to develop the care home on a site currently used for recreation and a playing pitch.

GP19/163 New Train Timetable from Stone Station

The Committee considered appointing representatives to meet with London Northwestern Rail as referred to in Minute GP19/145.

RESOLVED: That Councillors: Mrs J. Hood, R. Kenney and M. Williamson are appointed to meet with London Northwestern Rail.

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GP19/164 Non-Cheque Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of non-cheque payments made by the Council during the period 1 November 2018 to 31 December 2018.

GP19/165 Update from Working Groups:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Councillor Mrs Hood, informed the Committee that the Neighbourhood Plan is now at Regulation 16 stage. The Council is currently awaiting Stafford Borough action to arrange inspection of the Plan.

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies reported that a meeting of the Stone Area Parish Liaison Group would be held next week on 30 January.

Bus Services Working Group

It was reported that the Bus Services Working Group had not yet met.

Traffic Management in High Street Working Group

Councillor Kenney reported that the Traffic Management in the High Street Working Group were currently co-ordinating the availability of representatives of Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council in order that a meeting could be arranged.

GP19/166 Members' Motions' under Standing Order 4

Councillor Mrs Jill Hood

'Stone and District Swimming Club at Alleyne's pool have been teaching generations of children from Stone and its surrounding areas for over 45 years . The club has recently been informed that they can no longer look forward to teaching children age 4-5 years (Little Ducks) to swim at the new pool at Westbridge Park, operated by Freedom Leisure. A recent press statement by Stafford Borough Council stated "The council, Freedom Leisure and the club all want to promote swimming in Stone". This does not appear to be the case with this group of children and I ask for the support of Stone Town Council in putting pressure on Stafford Borough Council and Freedom Leisure to urgently find a compromise and accommodate SADSC at the new pool. I'm asking for Stone Town Council to write to Sir Bill Cash MP to ask him to intervene and also to arrange a meeting with Freedom Leisure and Stafford Borough Council to see how we can work together to make sure that a swimming club in Stone town which is not for profit can continue to teach 4-5 year olds to swim. Freedom's refusal to help a local swimming club cannot be in anyone's interest either promoting community spirit or for the safety of our children who live in a town with a canal and a river . The club offers an affordable alternative to parents other than private swimming lessons'.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk writes to Sir Bill Cash, MP, to ask him to intervene and also to arrange a meeting with Freedom Leisure and Stafford Borough Council to see how we can work together to make sure that a swimming club in Stone town which is not for profit can continue to teach 4-5 year olds to swim.

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RESOLVED: That Councillors: Mrs J. Hood, M. Williamson and A. Osgathorpe are appointed to attend as representatives of Stone Town Council.

GP19/167 **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

It was reported that a meeting had been held on the 16th January 2019 but neither the Mayor nor Deputy Mayor had been able to attend.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillors Mrs K. Green and Mrs C. Collier reported that a meeting had not taken place.

Stone Town Band

The Mayor reported that she was not aware of the dates of meetings.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Mrs C. Collier reported that no meeting had taken place.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Members of the Stone Common Plot Trustees reported that no meeting had taken place.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Members of the Stone Community Hub Liaison Group reported that no meeting had taken place.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor M. Green reported that he had attended the Annual General Meeting of Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association and that four meetings of the Executive Committee are scheduled for the year. The next meeting will take place in March.

The meeting was temporarily suspended at this point to enable the open session of the Planning Committee Meeting to take place.

GP19/168 **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 exclude the public and press from the next item of business.

GP19/169 **Insurance Renewal**

The Committee considered the report* of the Town Clerk (which had been circulated with the agenda) exploring renewal of the Council's insurance arrangements beyond 31 May 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

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- a) Accepts the offer of a five year agreement with Zurich Municipal from 1 June 2019, including key personnel cover as set out in the report.
- b) Accepts the exemption from competition in accordance with Financial Regulation 10.1g

TOWN MAYOR