

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 2 July 2019

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: K. Argyle, J. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson, I. Fordham, M. Hatton, J. Hickling,
Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt (to GP20/051), P. Leason, J. Powell and C. Thornicroft

ABSENT: Councillors: T. Adamson, A. Best, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs L. Davies, M. Green, T. Kelt
(from GP20/052) and R. Townsend

GP20/036 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: T. Adamson, A. Best, Mrs A. Burgess,
Mrs L. Davies, M. Green, T. Kelt (from GP20/052) and R. Townsend

GP20/037 Declarations of Interests

Councillor K. Argyle declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number
GP20/043) - Requests for grants from local organisations: Stone Community Hub

Councillor P. Leason declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number
GP20/043) - Requests for grants from local organisations: 1st Stone Cubs, Scout &
Guide Band and 1st Oulton Scout Group

Councillor Mrs K. Dawson declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number
GP20/043) - Requests for grants from local organisations: 1st Stone Cubs, 1st
Oulton Scout Group, Scout & Guide Band and Crossings Community Centre

Councillor J. Davies declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number
GP20/043) - Requests for grants from local organisations: 2352 (Stone Sqn) ATC
and Scout & Guide Band

Councillor I. Fordham declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number
GP20/043) - Requests for grants from local organisations: Stone Community Hub

Councillor T. Kelt declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number
GP20/043) - Requests for grants from local organisations: Stone Community Hub
and Douglas Macmillan Hospice

Councillor R. Kenney declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number
GP20/043) - Requests for grants from local organisations: Crown Wharf Theatre

Councillor Mrs J. Hood declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number
GP20/043) - Requests for grants from local organisations: Crown Wharf Theatre

GP20/038 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP20/039 **To receive the report of the County Councillors**

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee about Staffordshire County Council's 'People Helping People' fund and '#DoingOurBit' campaign which has been devised to encourage people to do one more small thing to help themselves, their family or their community. The County is looking to encourage active community involvement in supporting the non-statutory services it is no longer able to provide.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that she had been awarded a sum of £2,500 under the People Helping People Fund and will be looking for projects to invest in. The money will be distributed to eligible groups and organisations looking to create/devise something new in the community. The groups don't have to be a registered charity or have a constitution. The project will need to provide support to vulnerable people, children and families. It will also require match funding, but this doesn't have to be in cash (it can be in time and donations such as a free room). Grants will be issued in small sums and the two County Councillors in Stone could pool their allocations if considered beneficial.

Councillor Leason raised a question about the inadequate maintenance of grass verges. It was noted that this was to be considered further, later in the meeting.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP20/040 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP20/041 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on the 4 June 2019 (Minute Numbers GP20/021 – GP20/035), be approved as a correct record.

GP20/042 **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 18 June 2019 (Minute Numbers TTP20/001 – TTP20/011), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers TTP20/009 and TTP20/010 be adopted.
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 18 June 2019 (Minute Numbers ENV20/001 – ENV20/008), that the draft minutes be noted.
- c) Mayor's Charity Sub-Committee held on 18 June 2019 (Minute Numbers MC20/001 – MC20/004), that the draft minutes be noted.

* 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.

GP20/043 **Requests for Grants from Local Organisations:**

1st Stone Cubs - £495

The Committee considered the grant application from 1st Stone Cubs requesting £495 towards the cost of holding a Christmas Camp (venue hire) in December 2019.

RESOLVED: To award £495 to 1st Stone Cubs.

2352 (Stone Sqn) ATC - £500

The Committee considered the grant application from 2352 (Stone Sqn) ATC requesting £500 for signwriting on the squadron minibus purchased last year.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to 2352 (Stone Sqn) ATC.

The Crossings Community Centre - £500

The Committee considered the grant application from The Crossing Community Centre requesting £500 for the purchase of badminton equipment and a table tennis table. The sports equipment will benefit current community groups and enable the Centre to attract new groups to the venue.

RESOLVED: To decline the award of a grant to The Crossings Community Centre.

As the Chairman and Vice Chairman & Deputy Mayor, had both declared interests in Crown Wharf Theatre Company, Councillor J. Davies was appointed to take the Chair for the following item.

Crown Wharf Theatre Company - £500

The Committee considered the grant application from Crown Wharf Theatre Company requesting £500 towards the cost of fixtures and fittings for conversion of the building to a theatre.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to the Crown Wharf Theatre Company.

On conclusion of the Committee's consideration of this item Councillor Kenney resumed in the Chair.

Douglas Macmillan Hospice - £550

The Committee considered the grant application from Douglas Macmillan Hospice requesting £550 to enable the purchase of a Dyna-Form Mercury Advance mattress to update inpatient equipment.

RESOLVED: To decline the award of a grant to the Douglas Macmillan Hospice.

1st Oulton Scout Group - £500

The Committee considered the grant application from 1st Oulton Scouts Group requesting £500 to enable the purchase of a metal shed to be used as a storage facility.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to 1st Oulton Scout Group.

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Stone Scout & Guide Band - £500

The Committee considered the grant application from Scout & Guide Band requesting £500 towards the costs of competing in the Traditional Youth Marching Bands Association Competition at Portsmouth in September 2019.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone Scout & Guide Band.

STING - £1000

The Committee considered the grant application from STING requesting £1000 to support local people with differing neurological conditions in living well and to optimise their recovery.

RESOLVED: To decline the award of a grant to STING.

Stone Community Hub - £500

The Committee considered the grant application from Stone Community Hub requesting £500 towards the cost of replacing ageing laptops and software, used by staff and volunteers.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone Community Hub.

STONE LIONS - £500

The Committee considered the grant application received from Stone Lions requesting £500 towards the costs of Prostate Screening PSA Blood Tests.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone Lions.

Stone RUFC (Juniors) - £500

The Committee considered the grant application received from Stone Rugby Union football Club (Junior and Mini Section) requesting £500 for the purposes of growing new junior, mini and ladies teams.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone RUFC (Juniors).

GP20/044 Redundant Bus Shelters

The Committee considered whether it should continue maintaining redundant bus shelters on routes where bus services have been withdrawn. This would include bus shelters in Manor Rise, St Vincent's Road and Whitemill Lane.

The Committee explored the advantages and disadvantages of retaining/removing the bus shelters, taking account of: future maintenance obligations (repainting every two years with 3 or 4 cleans a year), that retention may lead to people incorrectly thinking a bus will arrive, that bus routes may be reinstated again in the future, that unidentified services may still be running on the routes, and, that shelters may be useful for other purposes.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council retains and maintains the bus shelters for a further 12 month period, after which the Estates Sub-Committee will be asked to consider the issue again.

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GP20/045 Actions from Annual Public Meeting

The Committee considered the following matters raised by residents at the Annual Public Meeting on 16 April, Minute Number APM19/006, and the actions that needed to be taken:

Improving access to primary care facilities

Although Stone has improved dramatically, the town's primary care medical facilities are inadequate (there are too few), given the size of the town.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is asked to write to the Clinical Commissioning Group expressing the Town Council's concerns about the widespread difficulty that people are experiencing in accessing timely and good quality Primary Care Medical Services in Stone.

Bus Stop in Poor Condition outside Weatherspoon

The bus shelter situated outside Weatherspoon in Granville Square has been reported as being in a poor condition.

RESOLVED: That the Estates Sub-Committee is asked to consider how the bus shelter in Granville Square should be managed in the future, along with the other bus shelters in Stone.

Installation of 'For Sale' signs at the entrance to Trent Close

Residents of Trent Close and Trent Court are not permitted to install 'For Sale' signs at the entrance to this private road in order to advertise their homes to passing traffic on Stafford Street. It had been suggested that Stone Town Council (which manages Crown Meadow) had objected to this practice.

RESOLVED: That the issue of 'For Sale' signs being installed on Crown Meadow, adjacent to the entrance to Trent Close, is referred to the Environment Sub-Committee for consideration.

Poor Condition of the 'Old Bowling Green' and 'The Maltings'

The poor condition of the 'Old Bowling Green' and 'The Maltings' building, both on Crown Street, were highlighted as issues that should receive attention due to the poor condition of the sites.

It was agreed that nothing could be done about the Old Bowling Green.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is asked to contact Stafford Borough Council to ask for an update on the enforcement action being taken as a result of the poor state of repair of The Maltings building.

GP20/046 Highways Grounds Maintenance

The Committee considered the approach the Town Council should take on areas of Highways' grounds that are currently unmaintained.

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The Committee agreed that there were many areas of land around Stone which are uncultivated and unkept, portraying an unsightly image for the town.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is asked to contact Staffordshire County Council to request a complete list of highways land/sites held, and to ask for clarification of its plans with regard to commencement of a future maintenance programme.

RESOLVED: The Environment Sub-Committee will be asked to consider Staffordshire County Council's response to the enquiry and recommend a course of action by the Town Council.

GP20/047 Working Groups – Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the draft Terms of Reference* (circulated with the agenda for the meeting) for all Town Council working groups.

RESOLVED: To adopt the terms of reference for all Town Council working groups.

GP20/048 HS2 Phase 2A (West Midlands to Crewe) Community and Business Funds

The Committee considered an email from HS2 (circulated with the agenda for the meeting) with information about funding opportunities dedicated to communities and businesses disrupted by the construction of Phase 2a.

The Committee were very keen to take advantage of the funding and agreed that every local organisation should be made aware of it.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council monitors opening of the funding opportunity, and considers it further.

GP20/049 Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement

The Committee considered a public consultation on Staffordshire County Council's draft revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which explains how people and organisations will be consulted, when preparing planning policies or processing planning applications.

An email from the Senior Planning Officer had been circulated with the agenda. The draft revised Statement of Community Involvement (June 2019) and Table of Revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement (June 2019) had been attached to the electronic version of the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council note the content of the consultation.

GP20/050 Members Motion under Standing Order 4

Councillor Kenney

'Next year's early May bank holiday will be moved back by four days for the whole of the UK to coincide with the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

May Day is traditionally held on a Monday but will be put back to Friday 8 May 2020.

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VE Day, or Victory in Europe Day, marks the day towards the end of World War Two when fighting against Nazi Germany came to an end in Europe.

The holiday will form part of a three-day weekend of commemorative events.

I propose that Stone Town Council places a budget of £4,000 in next year's finances to cover the costs of the events over the commemorative VE weekend and also forms a working group to organise such events'.

A letter from Pageantmaster VE Day 75 outlining the national plans for celebrating and commemorating the 75th Anniversary of VE Day was circulated during the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Stone Town Council places a sum of £4,000 in the budget for next year (2020-21) to cover the costs of commemorating and celebrating the 75th anniversary of VE Day in Stone.

RESOLVED: That a working group with the following members be set up to organise and oversee the arrangements:

J. Davies, Mrs J. Hood, R. Kenney, P. Leason and J. Powell

GP20/051 Non-Cheque Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of non-cheque payments made by the Council during the period 1 May to 31 May 2019.

GP20/052 Update from Working Groups:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Councillor Mrs Hood, informed the Committee that the Examiner would be releasing his comments on the draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan, after the Principal Planning Officer had returned from holiday. She said the Plan was still on schedule and the working group had done everything it had set out to do.

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that a successful and interesting meeting of Stone Area Parish Liaison Group had been held on 19 June. Representatives from Stone Rural, Yarnfield & Cold Meece, Hilderstone and Sandon & Burston Parish Councils had attended and shared information on the work they are doing in their communities.

Each local council gave an update on the status of their neighbourhood Plans.

It had been agreed that a letter expressing parish and town councils views about Stafford Borough Council's management of planning application consultations should now be sent off on behalf of the Liaison Group.

The Group also talked about issues relating to car parking in Stone, the devolution of services – with examples of parish councils undertaking grass cutting and gully clearing services, and a lively discussion took place on HS2.

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Councillor Davies informed the Committee that the value of the group was significant and consideration may in the future be given to how its powers may be extended.

Traffic Management in High Street Working Group

Councillor Kenney reported that no meeting had taken place.

GP20/053 To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings of local organisations and outside bodies as a representative of the Town Council

Stone ATC

Councillor Davies advised that he had attended a welfare meeting on 5 June. He said the Squadron was in a good state and he is looking forward to seeing the Cadet's presence at the Civic Sunday parade.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised that a meeting of Age Concern would be taking place on Friday.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor T. Kelt was not present to provide a report.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

It was reported that a meeting was coming up soon.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

It was reported that no meeting had taken place.

SPCA Executive Committee

No report was available as Councillor M. Green was not present at the meeting.

The meeting was suspended to enable the Planning Committee and Confidential item on the Town Council meeting to take place. The Committee was then reconvened for the confidential item on the agenda.

GP20/054 Exclusion of the Press and Public

To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next items of business are 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 Press and Public from the next item of business.

GP20/055 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on the 4 June 2019 (Minute Numbers GP20/021 and GP20/035), be approved as a correct record.

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GP20/056 **Staffing Matters**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk* which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

The report proposes to employ a part time member of staff specifically to support the promotion and marketing of Town Council facilities, activities and events.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- a. Supports recruitment to the post of Marketing & Events Assistant in accordance with his report and the job description at Appendix 1 on the basis of a 12 month fixed term contract.
- b. Gives authority to the Town Clerk to recruit to this post in accordance with the Council's staffing Guidelines.
- c. Does not offer the option to join the pension scheme unless otherwise required by regulations.
- d. Agrees to the use of the £5000 advertising budget to fund the post, as set out in the Town Clerk's report, with any additional funding required being met from reserves.

CHAIRMAN

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