

Stone Town Council – Management Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 24 September 2019

PRESENT: Councillor J. Davies in the Chair and
Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham and R. Kenney

By Chairman's invitation: Councillors: A. Best, Mrs J. Hood, P. Leason and
R. Townsend

ABSENT: Mrs A. Burgess, M. Green and T. Kelt

MAN20/008 Apologies

Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, M. Green and T. Kelt

MAN20/009 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

MAN20/010 Representations from Members of the Public

None received

MAN20/011 Minutes

That the Minutes of the Management Sub-Committee Meeting held on the 16 July 2019 (Minute No's MAN20/001 – MAN20/007), be approved as a correct record, subject to adding Councillor R. Kenney to the list of Councillors present at the meeting.

MAN20/012 Grant Aid Process

The Sub-Committee considered the Town Council's grant aid process and whether the qualifying criteria make clear the limits on the grants that are available. The Chairman said that the grant aid system works satisfactorily but he believed prospective applicants could be assisted further (with additional criteria and definitions) to make sure their applications are compliant.

The Chairman suggested that some clarification could be considered to make clear the grant aid process and minimise potential risks to the Town Council.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that grants are awarded only to

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organisations and not directly to events, eliminating any risk of Town Council liability or responsibility issues.

The Sub-Committee considered the need for a straightforward system which does not (due to any unnecessary complexity) discourage organisations and community groups from making a grant aid application. It was acknowledged that the Town Clerk filters the applications to ensure compliance before the Town Council is asked to determine their outcome.

RECOMMENDED: That the Chairman in consultation with the Town Clerk make slight revisions to the grant application and guidance notes to ensure they make clear the terms of engagement. The proposed revisions will then be submitted to the General Purposes Committee for consideration.

MAN20/013 IT Support

The Sub-Committee considered the performance of the IT Support contractor which has now been providing its services to the Town Council for a period of two years.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that he no longer had to spend as much time on IT although the service could be more successful. He said on balance the contract was advantageous to the Town Council even though it did not provide the level of benefits he had originally hoped for. He said the reasons for this can be attributed to the complexity of the system they had installed, and that IT support can present a greater challenge when operating remotely, away from the office environment.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council continue with the contract and the Chairman works with the Town Clerk to identify potential improvements in preparation for a further review in one year's time.

MAN20/014 Updates

The Sub-Committee received updates on the following:

a. Plan HEADSTONE

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the final touches to the death of the Queen and other members of the Royal Family protocol are currently being made. A revised version of the Headstone Protocol would be submitted to the General Purposes Committee for consideration as soon as it is completed.

b. Website

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that he was meeting with

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the County Council the following day with the Assistant Town Clerk (Democratic) to assess the offer of websites for town and parish councils. It was noted that interviews for the Marketing & Events Assistant post will take place in two weeks and the new postholder will be involved in improving the website's content.

c. Service Continuity Plan

The Town Clerk advised that although preparations for a Service Continuity Plan had not been documented, the Town Council was continuing to improve its preparedness. Electronic documentation is well advanced but paper record keeping requires careful management.

d. Data Protection Act 2018

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Council had already complied with the necessary key requirements (as advised by NALC) by the deadline of 25 May 2018 and other items were being dealt with as they arise. From 1 October 2019 Town Councillor email addresses will be used for Council business (in favour of personal addresses). All agendas will be issued electronically from this date although paper copies will be available to the Chairman of the committees and sub-committees and Councillors who have requested them in preference to being issued with iPads.

Chairman

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