

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 5 November 2019

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: T. Adamson, A. Best, Mrs A. Burgess, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies,
Mrs K. Dawson, M. Green, M. Hatton, J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, P. Leason,
J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

ABSENT: Councillors K. Argyle and I. Fordham

GP20/114 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors K. Argyle and I. Fordham

GP20/115 **Declarations of Interests**

None

GP20/116 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP20/117 **To receive the report of the County Councillors**

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

Councillor Mrs Hood had no report on this occasion.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP20/118 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP20/119 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 1 October 2019 (Minute Numbers GP20/097 – GP20/113), be approved as a correct record.

GP20/120 **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Management Sub-Committee held on 24 September 2019 (Minute Numbers MAN20/008 – MAN20/014), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers MAN20/012 and MAN20/013 be adopted.

* 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.

- b) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 15 October 2019 (Minute Numbers TTP20/021 – TTP20/028), that the draft minutes be noted.
- c) Environment Sub-Committee held on 15 October 2019 (Minute Numbers ENV20/018 – ENV20/023), that the draft minutes be noted.

GP20/121 Neighbourhood Plan

The Committee considered the current position of the Draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan following a summary, provided by the Town Clerk.

The Inspectors report has been considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the outcome of that consideration is the report circulated (today) from planning consultant, Urban Vision. The report accepts the majority of the inspectors proposals with a small number of changes. If the Town Council approves the changes, the document will be submitted to Stafford Borough Council for further consideration.

RESOLVED: That the proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are supported, with authorisation given to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, to make minor amendments as necessary.

GP20/122 HS2 Phase 2a

The Committee considered the current position with regard to the Council's petition to the House of Lords.

The Town Clerk provided an update from a letter supplied by HS2 Ltd. It said that HS2 Phase 2a had moved towards the final stages of the parliamentary process and would end with the Royal Assent of the Bill. Once passed the Act would give HS2 Ltd the powers it needs to build and run the railway. HS2 Ltd is currently undertaking groundwork investigations. It has established a number of information points, the closest one being the library in Stone. There are plans in the future to invite the Town Council to meet with representatives for a discussion on its 'Growing Spaces' project involving local schools, and also skills and employment initiatives.

The Town Clerk confirmed that little reference had been made to the petition process in the House of Lords where the Town Council has a petition waiting to be presented. There has been some problems with the date of the hearing and it wasn't known whether this had been resolved.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised that everything will now be on hold until after the General Election.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised that residents have expressed concern about the proposal to build an extra lane at the Aston Roundabout and are extremely concerned about the road safety issues it will create.

Councillor Kelt informed the Committee that email updates are issued regularly by HS2 and members of the public can sign up to receive them.

GP20/123 Financial Regulations

The Committee considered updating the Town Council's Financial Regulations to allow the Council to make payments by PayPal. If agreed, paragraph 5.10 of Financial Regulations would need to be updated as follows:

- "5.10 Payments may be made by way of cheque, direct debit, bank transfer, purchasing card, PayPal, internet banking, BACS or CHAPS, provided that:*
- a. All cheques and the initial authorisation for direct debits shall be signed by two individuals included within the bank mandate, at least one of which shall be a Member of the Council and not more than one shall be an officer.*
 - b. Transfers between Council bank accounts may be authorised by the RFO.*
 - c. Payments via purchasing card can be made by a single authorised officer, and are limited to £1,000 in any single transaction, with a maximum of £5,000 outstanding at any one time.*
 - d. Electronic payments, including PayPal and payments via internet banking, can be made by a single authorised officer, but the supporting paperwork should also be signed by a second officer. All such payments should be included within a monthly report to the General Purposes Committee which lists "non-cheque" payments since the last report, subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 5.8 above."*

RESOLVED: That the changes to the Financial Regulations are accepted to enable the Town Council to make future payments by PayPal.

GP20/124 Bank Mandate

The Committee considered the following proposed resolution in order to update the Council's bank mandate:

*"That a banking relationship will be maintained with National Westminster Bank Plc (the **Bank**) in accordance with this mandate and that:*

- *the individuals identified as **Authorised Signatories** may, in accordance with the **Signing Rules**:*
 - *sign cheques and give instructions for Standing Orders, Direct Debits, electronic payments, banker's drafts and other*
 - *payments on the accounts even if it causes an account to be overdrawn or exceed any limit*
 - *sign, accept or endorse bills of exchange.*
 - *request and give counter-indemnities for the issue of letters of credit or Guarantees (including bonds, indemnities and*
 - *undertakings)*
- ***Authorised Signatories** identified in the **Signing Rules** for unlimited amounts may, in accordance with the **Signing Rules**:*
 - *sign agreements for electronic products, including payment systems, and appoint or remove administrators and operators of those electronic products. The Business / Organisation authorises the administrators and operators to exercise the powers detailed in the terms of each electronic product. These powers may be extensive and include the power to make payments and access*

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information on behalf of the Business / Organisation, and in the case of administrators, the power to appoint and remove other administrators (with the same powers) and operators

- *any **Authorised Signatory** may give other instructions or requests for information to the Bank in relation to the accounts; opening accounts with the same **Signing Rules and Authorised Signatories**; closing accounts; or other banking services or products*
- *the Bank may accept instructions that do not have an original written signature provided the Bank is satisfied that the instruction is genuine and subject to any other agreement the Bank may require for those instructions*
- *The mandate will continue until the Customer completes a new mandate I passes a new Authority advising the changes in authority on the account(s)."*

RESOLVED: That changes to the bank mandate are accepted.

RESOLVED: That the authorised signatories are: Councillors Andrew Best, Kerry Dawson, Jim Davies, Lin Davies, Mark Green and Jill Hood together with the Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Clerk (business), and the signing rules are as stated in paragraph 5.10 of the Council's Financial Regulations (GP20/123 above).

GP20/125 Richard Vernon Trust

The Committee considered the appointment of a new Trustee to the Richard Vernon Trust following Councillor Kenney's decision to step down.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Jonathan Powell is appointed as a Trustee to the Richard Vernon Trust (to 2023).

GP20/126 Rural Services Network

The Committee considered an invitation from Rural Services Network for the Town Council to join a new Special Interest Group of the Local Government Association, with a mission to be the national champion for rural market towns.

An email and letter from the Director of Rural Services Network, a leaflet explaining the work of the Rural/Market Towns Group and a list of councils who have been approached, had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council declines the invitation to become a member of the special interest group.

GP20/127 Non-Cheque Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of non-cheque payments made by the Council during the period 1 September to 30 September 2019.

GP20/128 Update from Working Groups:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Councillor Mrs Hood, had shared information about the work of the Group, earlier in the meeting (GP20/121).

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Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies advised that the next meeting of the Stone Area Parish Liaison Group would be taking place in the New Year.

Traffic Management in High Street Working Group

Councillor Kenney confirmed that no meeting had taken place.

The Group was asked to consider the issues of cycle routes through the town and the proposed changes to the Aston roundabout.

VE Day 2020 Commemoration Working Group

Councillor Kenney reported that the VE Day 2020 preparations were progressing and that a full report would be given in the New Year.

GP20/129 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 the Annual General Meeting on 8 October and was pleased to report that the Squadron was in good health. The Acting Commanding Officer was providing excellent leadership to a record number of 40 cadets. The Squadron will be meeting on Wednesday evening and will be on parade on Remembrance Sunday.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised that no meeting of Age Concern Stone & District had taken place.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor T. Kelt advised that he had attended an interesting meeting of the Access group and the Stafford Borough Mayor had also been present. The next meeting of the Access Group will be held next week.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

It was reported that a meeting of the Trustees had taken place but no details were available on its content.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Mrs Hood reported that she had attended the Annual General Meeting last week and was pleased to hear the report given. The Community Hub are looking to set up a new Youth Club in Stone (with some difficulty experienced in forming and running it). The Hub are working hard and providing a good service to the town with the Food Bank providing an essential life line to service users.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Green confirmed that no meeting had taken place.

The meeting was adjourned to enable the Planning Committee meeting and confidential items on the Council Meeting agenda to take place, before reconvening for the confidential items on this agenda.

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GP20/130 **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.

GP20/131 **Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 1 October 2019 (Minute Numbers GP20/097 and GP20/113), be approved as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN