



Stone

Town Council

Town Clerk

Les Trigg

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15 Station Road

STONE

ST15 8JP

29 July 2024

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 6 AUGUST 2024 at 7:05pm**, or on the rising of the Council meeting, if later.

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence, and to consider the approval of any reasons given for absence under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Requests for Dispensations Received

4. To receive a report from County Councillors representing Stone Town

- County Councillor Mrs J. Hood
- County Councillor I. Parry

5. To receive a report from Borough Councillors representing Stone Town

6. Representations from Members of the Public

To consider representations from members of the public on items to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation.

7. Minutes of Previous Meetings

- a) To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 2 July 2024, Minute No's GP25/023 – GP25/038 (attached).

8. Minutes of Sub-Committees

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 16 July 2024, Minute Numbers TTP25/001 – TTP25/008 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes
 - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Numbers TTP25/007
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 16 July 2024, Minute Numbers ENV25/001 – ENV25/010 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes
 - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Numbers ENV25/007 (i) and ENV25/010
- c) Mayor's Charity Sub-Committee held on 16 July 2024, Minute Numbers MC25/001 – MC25/006 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes

9. Budget Monitoring – June 2024

To receive the report of the Town Clerk (attached).

10. Heritage Centre

To consider an update on the Stone Heritage Centre.

11. Town Council Payments

To receive a list of payments made by the Council during the period 1 to 30 June 2024 (attached).

12. Update from Working Groups:

To receive updates from Working Group co-ordinators:

- a) Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group (Chairman: R. Kenney)
- b) Engagement with Young People Working Group (Co-ordinator: K. Dawson)

13. To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings as a representative of the Town Council

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group – Cllr J. Davies
Stone ATC – Town Mayor & one Cllr – Cllrs: P. Leason and J. Davies
Age Concern Stone & District – Cllrs: J. Davies and C. Thornicroft
Stafford & Stone Access Group – Cllr T. Kelt

Stone Common Plot Trustees – Cllrs: A. Burgess, J. Hood, T. Kelt, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group – Cllrs: J. Battrick, J. Hood and J. Powell

SPCA Executive Committee – Cllr T. Kelt

Stone Traders' Group Directors Meeting – Cllrs: A. Burgess, I. Fordham, J. Hood and T. Kelt (Councillors attend on a rotating basis)

West Midlands Railway and other rail matters – Cllr T. Kelt

14. 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.

15. Staffing Matters

To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached).

Members of the public are welcome to attend the General Purposes Committee meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of the scheme are displayed in the Council's notice boards and website.

Please access the Council Chamber from the rear of the building.

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 2 July 2024

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Best, J. Davies, L. Davies, J. Hood, B. Kenney, J. Metters,
A. Mottershead, and R. Townsend

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, K. Dawson, I. Fordham, T. Kelt, P. Leason, J. Powell,
N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

GP25/023 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: K. Dawson, I. Fordham, T. Kelt,
P. Leason, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Where a reason for absence is given, this reason was approved for the purposes of
Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

GP25/024 Declarations of Interest

Councillor J. Davies declared a personal interest in agenda item 9d (Minute
Reference: GP25/031) Grants to Local Organisations: Stone Scout & Guide Band.

Councillor A. Best declared a personal interest in agenda item 9a (Minute
Reference: GP25/031) Grants to Local Organisations: Christ Church C of E First
School PTFA.

GP25/025 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP25/026 To receive the report of the County Councillors

Due to this meeting taking place in the pre-election period for the UK
Parliamentary elections, no reports were presented by County Councillors.

GP25/027 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

Due to this meeting taking place in the pre-election period for the UK
Parliamentary elections, no reports were presented by Borough Councillors.

GP25/028 Representations from Members of the Public

Due to this meeting taking place in the pre-election period for the UK
Parliamentary elections, the Town Council's Scheme of Public Participation had
been suspended.

* 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.

GP25/029 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 21 May 2024 (Minute Numbers GP25/001 – GP25/022), be approved as a correct record.

GP25/030 Minutes of Sub-Committees

There were no sub-committee minutes.

GP25/031 Grants to Local Organisations

The Committee considered requests for grant aid from local organisations.

The following organisation met the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy:

- a. **Organisation: Christ Church C of E First School PTFA**
Amount Requested: £500
Reason: To cover the costs of insulating the school's 'Happiness Hub' (a small wooden building on the playground, used as a base to support the children's wellbeing and mental health) to mitigate temperature control issues.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Christ Church C of E First School PTFA.

The following organisation did not meet the criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated and a proposer and seconder did not come forward to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant:

- b. **Organisation: Pension Reinvention**
Amount Requested: £1,500
Reason: To fund the expansion of financial literacy programs within the Stone Community to include: the launch of additional drop-in clinics offering free financial advice, organise interactive workshops and talks for children and adults, distribute educational books to primary schools in Stone.
 - i. Applicant requests more than £500

The following organisation did not meet the criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated, but a proposer and seconder came forward to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant:

- c. **Organisation: Stone Community Speed Watch Group**
Amount Requested: £388.56
Reason: To support the costs involved in installing CSW signs on every road into Stone to warn drivers that Speed Watch volunteers may be present and that speed limits should be adhered to.
 - i. No accounts available due to nature of organisation

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £388.56 to Stone Community Speed Watch Group.

The following organisation did not meet the criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated, but a proposer and seconder came forward to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant:

- d. **Organisation: Stone Scout & Guide Band**
Amount Requested: £500
Reason: To cover the costs of essential ongoing maintenance of the Band's instruments.
- i. More than 12 months expenditure in reserves

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Stone Scout & Guide Band

The following organisation did not meet the criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated and a proposer and seconder did not come forward to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant:

- e. **Organisation: Diamond Families**
Amount Requested: £500
Reason: To purchase supplies for the children to create an allotment area and greenhouse to support their learning about the health benefits that come from sustainability and recycling.
- i. Annual turnover greater than £100,000
 - ii. Not Stone based and grant request does not predominantly benefit Stone residents

GP25/032 Working Group Co-ordinators

The Committee considered the appointment of co-ordinators to the existing working groups.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that when the terms of reference were readopted at the last meeting it had proposed that there should be a nominated lead for each working group. The role of the nominated lead would be to call meetings and to report back on the working groups' activities to the respective parent committee.

RESOLVED: That the following co-ordinators are appointed to existing work groups:

- Engagement with Young People Working Group
Parent Committee: General Purposes Committee
Membership: J. Battrick, A. Best, K. Dawson, J. Metters and J. Powell
Co-ordinator: Councillor K. Dawson
- Environmental Working Group
Parent Committee: Environment Sub-Committee
Membership: All Members of the Environment Sub-Committee
Co-ordinator: Councillor R. Townsend
- Remembrance Plaques Working Group
Parent Committee: Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee
Membership: J. Davies, L. Davies and P. Leason
Co-ordinator: Councillor L. Davies

* 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.

- Market Strategy Working Group
Parent Committee: Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee
Membership: J. Davies, J. Hood, R. Kenney, A. Mottershead, C. Thornicroft and J. Cook (Co-opted Member)
Co-ordinator: Councillor J. Hood

GP25/033 Heritage Centre

The Committee considered an update on Stone Heritage Centre.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the first official activity of the Heritage Centre had taken place during Stone Festival Week (Monday 10 to Saturday 15 June 2024) when Stafford Photographic Society had held its photographic exhibition in the main exhibition hall. As a token of appreciation, the Society had very kindly donated the Town Mayor's choice of framed photograph towards a future charity fundraising auction or raffle.

He advised the Committee that the Town Council had received enquiries about hiring the room at the back of the building for meetings, but this was not possible due to the potential impact on the Council's partial exemption status for VAT.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the Heritage Centre Manager had been working on awareness and had spoken to local schools and invited teachers (and in some cases classes of children) to visit the Centre to view the facility. He had also held discussions with people who had Stone artifacts with a view to arranging loan agreements with them.

The Heritage Centre Manager was looking to get a table at an upcoming Northern Staffordshire Community Partnership event at Stone Station to share information about the Heritage Centre and offer to show people around the facility. The Town Clerk showed the Committee a draft poster which had been designed for this purpose.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that CCTV and broadband was now up and running and orders had been placed for fixtures and fittings. The display cabinets were due to arrive in mid-August 2024.

Very good progress had been made in working towards meeting the grant conditions requiring 500 people to have gone through the doors by the end of the year. More than 200 people had viewed the Photographic Exhibition alone.

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that following on from the D-Day 80 commemorations in June, there would be a display in the Heritage Centre until the end of August about the six men of Stone who died during Operation Overlord.

GP25/034 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 31 May 2024.

GP25/035 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

The Town Clerk had given an update on the Heritage Centre earlier in the meeting.

* 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.

Engagement with Young People

Councillor Dawson was not available to give an update on the work of the working group.

GP25/036 To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings of local organisations and outside bodies as a representative of the Town Council

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that a useful meeting of the Liaison Group had taken place on 29 May when the Development Control Manager from Stafford Borough Council had joined attendees to share information about planning enforcement and the planning process in general.

Councillor Davies said the meetings were proving very useful educationally and consideration would be given to extending invitations to more speakers. He reinforced the point that Town Councillors were very welcome to attend.

Stone ATC

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that the Annual General Meeting had taken place on 11 June 2024 when a new Civilian Welfare Committee had been appointed. A lot of the retired officers had stayed on the Committee which was good news. He reported that the Squadron was doing very well; it was at maximum numbers in respect of cadet membership and had lots of plans for the upcoming year.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that a meeting was planned for the near future.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt was not available to give a report.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

There was no report on the most recent meeting held.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that no meeting of the Hub Liaison Group had taken place.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Kelt was not available to provide a report.

Stone Traders Group Directors' Meeting

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place.

West Midlands Railway and other rail matters

Councillor Kelt was not available to provide a report.

The meeting was suspended and reconvened after the Planning Consultative Committee and the Confidential section of the Town Council meeting had taken place.

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GP25/037 **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 items of business.

GP25/038 **Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 21 May 2024, Minute Numbers GP25/001, GP25/020, GP25/021 and GP25/022 be approved.

CHAIRMAN

Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 16 July 2024

PRESENT: Councillor J. Hood in the Chair and
Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, P. Leason and J. Powell

Co-opted Member: J. Cook

Officers: L. Trigg, R. Edwards and T. Williams

By Chairman's invitation: None

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Best, A. Burgess, B. Kenney, R. Kenney and A. Mottershead

TTP25/001 Apologies

Councillors: A. Best, B. Kenney, R. Kenney and A. Mottershead

TTP25/002 Declarations of Interest

None

TTP25/003 Requests for Dispensations

None

TTP25/004 Representations from Members of the Public

None

TTP25/005 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on 19 March 2024 (Minute Numbers TTP24/037– TTP24/046), were approved as a correct record.

* 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.

TTP25/006 Calendar of Events

The Sub-Committee considered the Town Council's Calendar of Events for 2024-25 and gave updates on events that had taken place:

2024 – Events that have taken place

- The Town Council's 50th Anniversary (Monday 1 April 2024)
Councillor Davies had previously advised the Sub-Committee that the 50th Anniversary of Stone Town Council would be marked with a theme/display at the Heritage Centre.

The Town Mayor informed the Sub-Committee that the 50th Anniversary of the Borough Council had been marked with a photograph of all (living) past Mayors of Stafford and he suggested that it would be nice do the same in Stone.

The Sub-Committee agreed that Mr Robinson should be asked to take a photograph of Stone Mayors (in the Heritage Centre), for the future display in the Heritage Centre.

- St George's Day Re-Enactment (Saturday 20 April 2024)
The Chairman reported that the St George's Day Re-enactment had been a successful and fun event for families. She suggested that a booking be made to secure the team for next year.

The Chairman asked that a note be made (for next year) of a blind spot near to the Knights' tent, positioned by the Crown Hotel, which had resulted in some children not being able to see the entertainment arena clearly.

- Floating Market (25, 26, 27 May 2024)
The Chairman confirmed that the Floating Market event came to Stone during the late May Bank Holiday weekend and provided a different kind of event in the town.
- 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings (Thursday 6 June 2024)
Councillor J. Davies advised the Sub-Committee that both commemorative events on Thursday 6th and Sunday 9th June had gone well and were positioned just right to align with the larger scale D-Day Landing Anniversary events held nationally and in Stafford. He said the town was very lucky to secure the services of Ven Ray Pentland, Past Chaplain-in-Chief of the Royal Air Force, to officiate on the Thursday, and the Sunday commemoration was appreciated by the families whose loved ones had been killed in Operation Overlord.

The Town Mayor asked that the Town Council's thanks to Councillor Davies be recorded for his work in preparing for the D-Day 80 commemorations in Stone.

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- Puppet Tree Jamboree (29 June 2024)
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that she was full of praise for the Puppet Tree Jamboree which was a very popular and well attended family event that brought lots of joy as well as additional footfall to the town.

The Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Metters, attended the occasion and delivered a remarkable opening of the show.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the organiser, Mr Leech, had sent a very nice letter thanking the Council for supporting the event.

2024 – Upcoming/Agreed

- Classic Car Event (27 July 2024)
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Classic Car event was organised by Mr Creswell with little input from the Town Council other than to support the stewarding. The issue of clear instructions to Town Council volunteer stewards for the July event, will in due course be welcomed.
- Florence Brass Band Concert & Burma Star Commemoration (18 August 2024)
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the arrangements for the event were progressing well. The Marketing and Events Organiser had resolved an issue with the order for cream teas for the day.

Circus Skills Event (Monday 19 to Wednesday 21 August 2024)

This event will be something different for the children with lots of circus activities planned.

The Chairman invited suggestions for a catchy name for this event, to be passed to the Marketing & Events Organiser.

- Music Festival (31 August 2024)
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the arrangements for the event were in place and a Queen tribute band would be performing on the day.

Further details will be issued in due course and volunteer stewards are invited to come forward.

- Remembrance Commemorations (10 and 11 November 2024)
The traditional format for the Remembrance events would be adopted again this year.

The Town Mayor confirmed that a new Poppy Co-ordinator had now been appointed for Stone and poppies should be freely available to purchase.

- Vegan Market (Saturday 16 November 2024)
The Chairman confirmed that a vegan market will be taking place on Saturday 16 November 2024, hopefully attracting new people into the town.

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- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 21 November 2024)
The Chairman, Town Clerk and Marketing & Events Organiser recently met with a representative of Christmas Plus to discuss the Christmas lighting displays. It was suggested that the Plane tree lights could be used for other celebrations in addition to Christmas (they only require the flick of a switch).

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that a quotation had been received for a Remembrance display of two soldiers and a large poppy which was in the process of being considered.

He reminded the Sub-Committee that the Council will be having a completely new Christmas lighting display this year.

The Chairman invited Councillors to volunteer to be stewards.

- Texas Flag Raising, marking the anniversary of Texas joining the Union on 29 December 1845 (Sunday 29 December 2024)
Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that the Texas Flag Raising event in December will be small scale, with the March Flag Raising occasion being the bigger of the two.
- Any other suggested new events for 2024 and 2025
The Chairman invited new ideas for events and Councillor Townsend informed the Sub-Committee that he had recently visited North Berwick in the Northeast of England where shops had taken part in a town heritage event. They had displayed in their windows information about the previous owners/occupiers businesses in their building, as far back in time as they could go. This idea was in collaboration with their own Heritage Centre, the idea of which could be considered in Stone.

TTP25/007 Friendship Agreement with Bagnacavallo

The Sub-Committee considered the future of the Friendship Agreement with Bagnacavallo in Northern Italy.

The Town Clerk informed the Sub-Committee that he had written to the Twinning Committee Chairman, Mr Guiseppe Termine, on behalf of the Town Council to seek clarification on the status of the activities of the 'Friends of Bagnacavallo' group (Stone Twinning Committee) under the Friendship Agreement.

The Town Clerk referred the Sub-Committee to his emails and the responses from Mr Termine which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting. He asked the Sub-Committee how it would like to proceed.

Mr Termine had confirmed in his response that Friends of Bagnacavallo remained active and were in touch with Amici di Neresheim Signora Gabriella Foschini. He said that he would be visiting Bagnacavallo in September for the San Michel Festival.

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The Town Mayor informed the Sub-Committee that as this year was the 20th anniversary of Stone's Friendship Agreement with Bagnacavallo he had been invited to attend the Festa di San Michele from the 26 to 29 September 2024. This year was also the 30th anniversary of the Italian town's links with Neresheim.

After previously reaffirming its commitment to the Friendship Agreement between Stone and Bagnacavallo, the Sub-Committee agreed that the Town Council should set up a working group (after the festival had taken place in September) to produce a policy that standardised a framework for the future development of international relationships between Stone and other towns and related public bodies.

RECOMMENDED: That the General Purposes Committee is asked to set up a Friendship Agreement Working Group to develop a twinning/friendship policy between Stone and other towns, nations and public bodies.

TTP25/008 Reports from Working Groups

The Chairman invited co-ordinators from each Working Group to address the Sub-Committee:

Remembrance Plaques Working Group

Councillor L. Davies advised the Sub-Committee that she was continuing to experiment with clay, with the design of the plaques, their size and to research the number that were likely to be needed. She said that it was important to do the necessary research first to avoid committing money that could otherwise be wasted.

Councillor J. Davies said that the Working Group intended producing a design that could be taken forward and worked in with the launch of the Heritage Centre. The working group will be writing to the occupiers of the houses where the soldiers lived, and he acknowledged that some occupiers may not want the plaques installed on their homes.

Market Strategy Working Group

The Chairman reported that no meeting of the Market Strategy Working Group had taken place.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that he would be submitting a report to the General Purposes Committee raising some issues about the income from the town's markets and suggesting referral to the Market Strategy Working Group for further consideration.

Chairman

* 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.

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 16 July 2024

PRESENT: Councillor R. Townsend in the Chair and
Councillors: J. Battrick, P. Leason, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Officers: L. Trigg, R. Edwards and T. Williams

By Chairman's Invitation: J. Hood

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, T. Kelt, B. Kenney, R. Kenney and J. Metters

ENV25/001 Apologies

Councillors: T. Kelt, B. Kenney, R. Kenney and J. Metters

ENV25/002 Declarations of Interest

None

ENV25/003 Request for Dispensations

None

ENV25/004 Representations from Members of the Public

None

ENV25/005 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 19 March 2024 (Minute Numbers ENV24/037 – ENV24/044), were approved as a correct record.

ENV25/006 Environmental Sub-Committee Works Update

The Chairman drew the Sub-Committees attention to the Works Update document which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

He informed the Sub-Committee about a progress meeting (held in May 2024) with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor and Deputy Town Clerk.

He said the Grounds Maintenance Contractor has been seriously hampered by the wet weather and poor ground conditions which had resulted in him needing to schedule new dates for the completion of project work. The dates were acceptable and contained within the Town Council's financial year for the spending of budgets.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the main projects were currently:

Hedgerow Planting

To be discussed under a later agenda item.

Renovation of Car Park

The Grounds Maintenance Contractor was hoping to start work very soon now that the ground had started to dry a little.

Excavation of Scrape 2

This is a rollover job from last year. The scrape isn't meeting its purpose as it is overwhelmed with Willow.

ENV25/007 Crown Meadow Update

- i) The Chairman referred the Sub-Committee to his report on Hedgerows and Amphitheatre Trees which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

He said that the hedgerow planted nearly two years ago was failing to thrive because of the waterlogged and saturated ground conditions with 50% of the hedge not expected to survive.

There was a budget and a plan to plant another 80 metres of hedgerow along the fence line to the Anglers car park. However, this ground had also been waterlogged for a six-month period and the Chairman suggested the project be postponed because it would be careless to plant saplings (worth £1,500) on ground that had already proven unsuitable for hedgerow.

Alongside the poor condition of the hedgerow there was evidence of some trees being stressed or dying (due to age and disease), mainly Cherry trees (Amphitheatre) but also Silver Birch (Crown Meadow).

The Chairman proposed reviewing the situation with the hedgerow and dying trees with a view to putting forward an alternative proposal for managing and improving the natural environment of Crown Meadow. To do this he suggested holding on to the budget of £1,580 which was agreed.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council does not pursue the hedgerow project and brings back to the Sub-Committee a further report on alternative proposals for use of the saved money.

ii) Verbal update from the Chairman

Himalayan Balsam

The Chairman referenced a document he had recently issued to the working group about Himalayan Balsam, canvassing opinion on what to do about the problem. Crown Meadow was getting severely affected by the pesky plant in several locations and it was now encroaching on Scrape 2.

The suggestion was made that information be produced for the tourist information board to inform people how it sets seed and to refrain from pulling it up. It was also suggested that a publicity article be put on Facebook but only when a real expert had given accurate advice.

The Sub-Committee agreed there was a need to call upon professional advice (from the Biodiversity & Ecology Officer and Staffordshire Wildlife and the like) on how to safely remove the Himalayan Balsam without spreading it. One advantage of the plant was that it was late flowering and good for bees. Councillors J. & N. Powell offered to seek advice from the professionals.

Vegetation on Riverbank

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the section of ground between the pathway and riverbank had not been mowed recently because sections of the riverbank were unstable and there was no clear and defined riverbank edge making it too dangerous to work on. The Grounds Maintenance Contractor had strimmed a section that was most likely to be walked by the public to access the river. The concern about negligence liability for failing to maintain the area was explored and putting up signs at the entrance considered one solution. The Sub-Committee agreed that the Town Clerk should consult a health and safety consultant for advice and report back to the General Purposes Committee.

Bench overlooking Crown Meadow

The Sub-Committee discussed whether an isolated bench on the Meadow, often used for drug and alcohol consumption, should be relocated to a more open position. After a consideration and the point being made that it was also enjoyed for legitimate use it was decided not to arrange its relocation.

ENV25/008 Reports of Working Groups

Environmental Working Group

The Chairman reported on the Bee Friendly Seminar held at the Frank Jordan Centre that had been attended by Councillor Kelt (who had provided him with a report).

Councillor Kelt found the set of presentations and mini workshop interesting. It covered the importance of pollinators, their requirements and threats; along with work Stafford Borough were doing to provide good habitats for wildlife and the role of Streetscene with mowing and maintaining verges. He made a number of contacts with the people leading the programme that could be followed up at Cannock Chase District Council, the Borough Council and with local enthusiasts.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that Councillor Kelt had taken another look at the Borough Council press release on Bee Friendly Status. Its achievements had included Stone Meadows in Barlaston, and Stone and Eccleshall were said to be applying for Bee Friendly Status next year.

Councillor Kelt had spoken with the lead on the project, Cabinet Member for the Environment (Stafford Borough Council), who advised that the best way to communicate on these matters was through the Stafford Panel (of which Councillor Kelt was already a member). Mention was made of a major event next year, but no further information was available.

The Chairman said the Sub-Committee may be able to adopt some of these points to assist the progression towards Bee Friendly Status.

ENV25/009 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.

ENV25/010 Allotment Competition

The Sub-Committee considered the appointment of a new Allotment Competition judge with the first judging task taking place on 26 July 2024.

RECOMMENDED: That David Moreton (former General Manager of Oak Tree Farm Rural Project) and Hannah Rigden (Senior Historic Environmental Officer for Natural England) be appointed – as experienced and well qualified horticulturalists – to take on the role of Allotment Judges to the Town Council.

Mr Moreton will act as Lead Judge.

Chairman

Stone Town Council – Mayor’s Charity Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 16 July 2024

PRESENT: Councillor P. Leason in the Chair and
Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, J. Powell and R. Townsend

Officers: L. Trigg, R. Edwards and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillor: I. Fordham, T. Kelt, R. Kenney and J. Metters

MC25/001 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: T. Kelt, R. Kenney and J. Metters

MC25/002 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None

MC25/003 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

MC25/004 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the Mayor’s Charity Sub-Committee meeting held on 20 June 2023, Minute Numbers MC24/001 – MC24/006 were approved as a correct record.

MC25/005 **Mayor 2023-24 – Report of final amounts donated to the Mayor’s Charities**

The Town Mayor invited the Past Town Mayor to address the Sub-Committee.

The Town Mayor 2023-24 reported that during his Mayoral year a sum of £2,100 had been raised, to be equally allocated between the Past Town Mayor’s chosen charities which were Age Concern Stone & District and Oak Tree Farm Rural Project.

The Past Town Mayor, Councillor J. Davies, was congratulated on raising a good sum of money.

RESOLVED: That the total sum collected on behalf of the Mayor’s Charities for the year 2023-24 be apportioned equally between Age Concern Stone & District and Oak Tree Farm Rural Project.

MC25/006 **Mayor 2024-25 – To confirm the charities for the year**

The Town Mayor, Councillor Philip Leason, proposed that his chosen Mayor’s charities for the year 2024-25 would be:

- Stone Community First Responders (as his main charity) with a contributions also made to:

- Stone Stroke Club, and
- Stone Alzheimers Club

RESOLVED: To support the Mayor's choice of proposed charities.

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Committee of the Council's current financial position compared with its budget for the year, and to recommend action in any areas of concern.

Background

2. The Council's budget was approved in February 2024. Good financial management requires the Council to:
 - a. Keep the amount of the budget that it requires under review,
 - b. Monitor spending and income against budget projections, and,
 - c. Take appropriate action to ensure that the Council's financial stability is maintained.
3. This one of a series of regular reports which are presented to the General Purposes Committee on a broadly quarterly basis. The reports consider the Council's financial position at the end of the most recent month available at the time the report is written. On this occasion, the report considers the position as at the end of June 2024.
4. The report will first look at any adjustments proposed to the budget for 2024-25. It will then highlight any areas where net spending differs from that planned in the budget and focus on the income received from the Council's major income generating activities.

Adjustments to 2022-23 Budget

5. The meeting of the Council on 6th June 2023 considered the final accounts for 2023-24 and approved a number of unspent budgets to be rolled over into the current year. These rollovers have now been added to the approved budget of the Council.
6. Appendix A sets out the agreed budget adjustments and the consequent changes to the current approved budget.

Comparison of Budget with Actual Spending and Income

7. Appendix B sets out a comparison of the budget to date with spending up to the end of June 2024. The budget to date has been estimated with reference to spending patterns in previous years and other available information, but is a fairly broad estimate with a significant margin for error in most areas of the budget. Nevertheless, it is a good starting point for identification of potential problems.
8. Committee members should note that positive numbers in the table reflect expenditure or an adverse variance (overspend), whereas negative numbers represent income or a favourable variance (underspend).
9. Overall, at the end of June 2024, net spending was £109,399 compared with a budget up to that time of £119,512 – a net underspending to date of £10,113. Significant variations are identified below.
10. There were no significant adverse variances.
11. Significant favourable variances are:
 - a. Frank Jordan Centre (£2,790): This favourable variance is largely due to expenditure at the Centre to date being below that anticipated when the budget was prepared. Income is broadly on line with expectations at present, but is expected to increase significantly later in the year due to income from the Banking Hub.
 - b. Bus Shelters and Street Furniture (£1,404): The only item invoiced to date against this budget is for High Street bollards. Other invoices are expected relating to the period.
 - c. Grounds Maintenance (£1,146): This apparent underspending due to expected invoices not being submitted.
 - d. Crown Meadow Improvements (£2,934): No invoices have yet been received against this budget.
12. It can thus be seen at this stage that costs are generally under control, though actual net spending varies from the estimated approved budget to date in some areas.

Income from Major Income Generating Activities

13. Income from the Frank Jordan Centre, Stone Station and the Town Market together represents almost 10% of the Council's total income. Virtually all of the remaining income is fixed in advance of the year (Precept/Concurrent Functions Allowance), but this 10% can vary within the year in accordance with the Council's success with letting its community centres and market stalls.
14. With this in mind, Members need to closely monitor these income items to ensure that its budget remains in balance.

15. Attached at Appendix C are a set of graphs showing a comparison of income received to date with the level anticipated for each month. Whilst it must be remembered that the way the income has been profiled is still quite crude, the graphs are showing a position where income is slightly below target for the Frank Jordan Centre and slightly above for Stone Station, but significantly below target for the Town Market.
16. The Committee may want to consider referring the income situation at the Town Market to the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee for further analysis and recommendations.

Recommendations

17. The Committee is recommended to:
 - a. Note the approved adjustments to the Council's budget set out at Appendix A.
 - b. Note the Council's performance against budget at the end of June 2024.
 - c. Consider referring the income situation at the Town Market to the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee for further analysis and recommendations.
 - d. Consider any other action it wishes to take in the light of the information within this report.

Stone Town Council

Budget Adjustments 2024-25

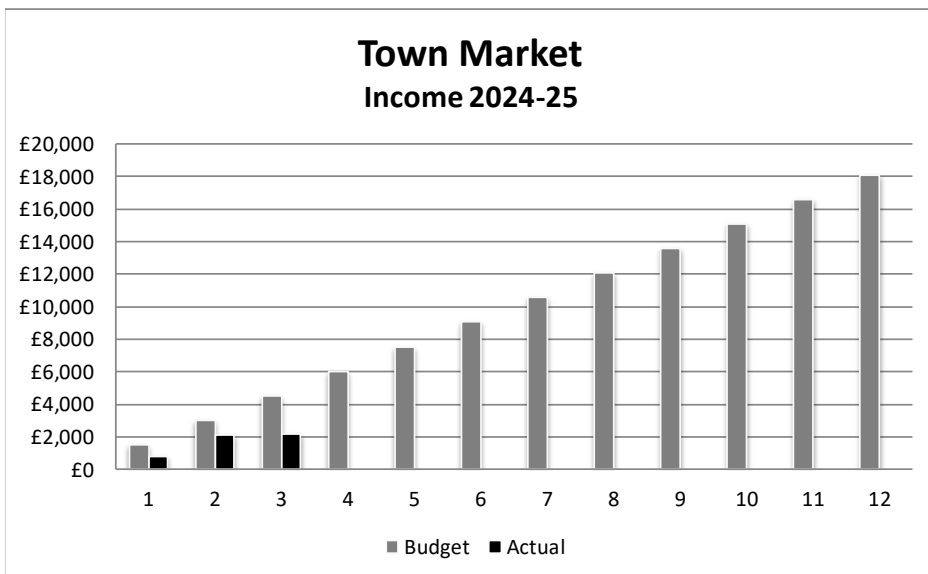
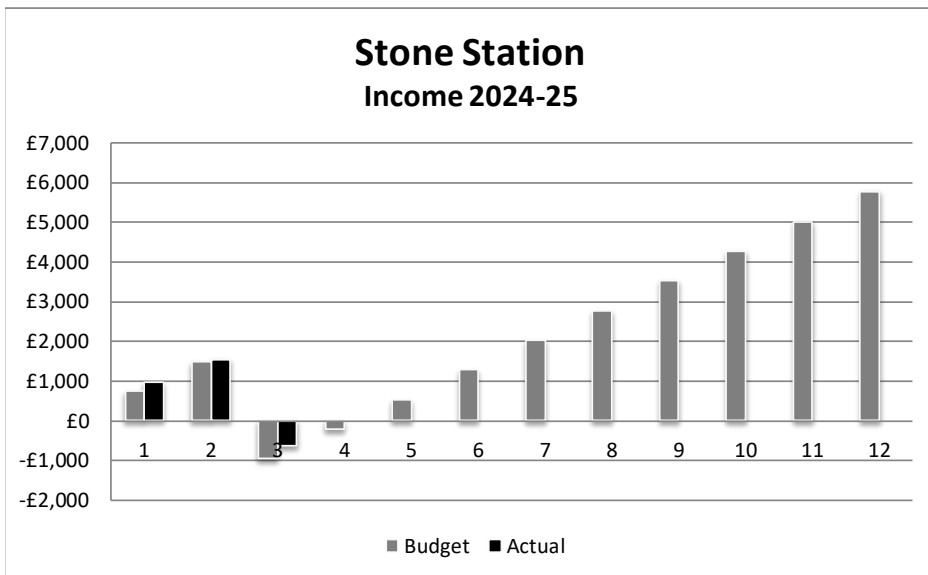
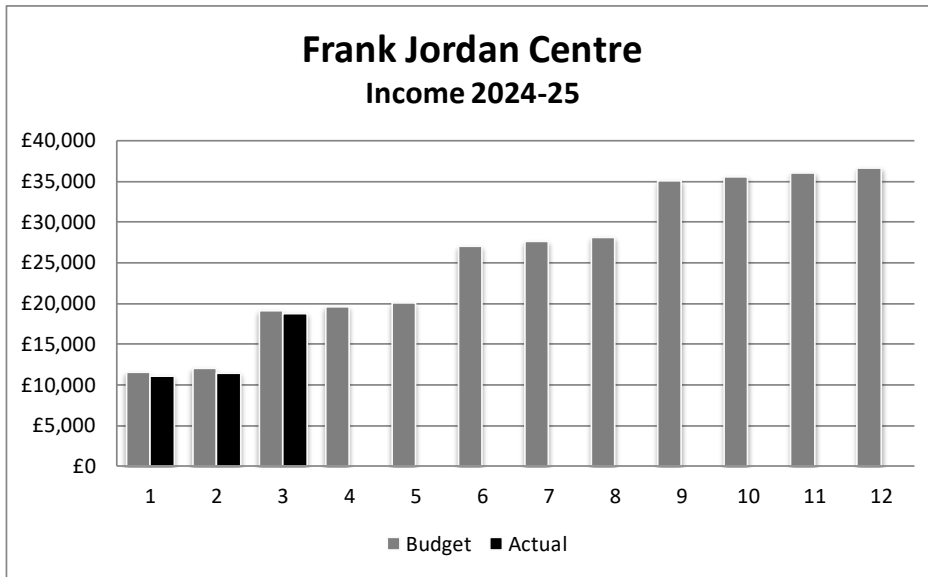
	Contribution to (from) Reserves £	Stone Station £	Bus Shelters & Street Furniture £	Building Mainten'ce £	Grounds Mainten'ce £	Crown Meadow Imp'ments £	Allotments £	Env'mentl Initiatives £	Stone Heritage Centre (Capital) £	Salaries & Emp'ment Costs £	Insurances £	Inflation Contingency £
General Purposes 21st May 2024												
Insurances (virement) Station (virement from Expenditure to Income)		0									4,000	-4,000
Council 4th June 2024												
Rollover re Stone Station	-30,000	30,000										
Rollover re Bus Shelters & Street Furniture	-2,500		2,500									
Rollover re Building Maintenance	-10,000			10,000								
Rollover re Grounds Maintenance	-1,600				1,600							
Rollover re Crown Meadow Improvements	-3,585					3,585						
Rollover re Allotments	-2,425						2,425					
Rollover re Environmental Initiatives	-1,190							1,190				
Rollover re Stone Heritage Centre (Capital)	-99,588								99,588			
Original Budget	-23,096	12,900	5,000	10,000	22,000	8,150	0	0	0	226,800	6,700	19,870
Current Budget	-173,984	42,900	7,500	20,000	23,600	11,735	2,425	1,190	99,588	226,800	10,700	15,870

Stone Town Council

Budget Monitoring Statement 2024-25

Appendix B

	Revenue Account to End of Period 3					Jun-24
	Original Budget £	Current Budget £	Budget to Date £	Actual to Date £	Variance to Date £	Budget Remaining £
Major Income Generating Activities						
Frank Jordan Centre						
Income	-36,600	-36,600	-19,100	-18,726	374	-17,874
Expenditure	23,000	23,000	5,750	2,586	-3,164	20,414
Net	-13,600	-13,600	-13,350	-16,140	-2,790	2,540
Stone Station						
Income	-9,400	-5,760	960	618	-342	-6,378
Expenditure	22,300	48,660	14,000	13,680	-320	34,980
Net	12,900	42,900	14,960	14,298	-662	28,602
Town Market						
Income	-18,100	-18,100	-4,525	-2,152	2,373	-15,948
Expenditure	12,000	12,000	3,000	1,349	-1,651	10,651
Net	-6,100	-6,100	-1,525	-803	722	-5,297
Other Activities						
Stone Heritage Centre	45,000	45,000	600	1,100	500	43,900
Bus Shelters & Street Furniture	5,000	7,500	1,875	471	-1,404	7,029
Street Lighting	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
Dog & Litter Bins	900	900	225	216	-9	684
Joules Clock	0	0	0	0	0	0
Town Electricity Supply	600	600	150	91	-59	509
Building Maintenance	10,000	20,000	0	0	0	20,000
Grounds Maintenance	22,000	23,600	5,000	3,854	-1,146	19,746
Crown Meadow Improvements	8,150	11,735	2,934	0	-2,934	11,735
Allotments	0	2,425	1,056	395	-661	2,030
Environmental Initiatives	0	1,190	0	0	0	1,190
Christmas Lights	23,000	23,000	2,000	1,549	-451	21,451
Tourism & Town Promotion	29,500	29,500	6,000	6,100	100	23,400
Grants to Outside Bodies	4,000	4,000	0	0	0	4,000
Salaries & Employment Costs	226,800	226,800	56,700	55,344	-1,356	171,456
Accommodation	6,770	6,770	-5,150	-5,150	0	11,920
Insurances	6,700	10,700	10,800	10,916	116	-216
Administration	32,150	32,150	13,115	13,175	60	18,975
Audit & Legal Fees	1,500	1,500	-1,100	-959	141	2,459
Town Council Elections	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allowances - Mayor & Deputy Mayor	3,400	3,400	850	732	-118	2,668
Regalia & Presentations	200	200	50	0	-50	200
Civic Activities	2,500	2,500	0	235	235	2,265
Remembrance Sunday & War Memorials	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	2,000
Miscellaneous	1,000	1,000	250	80	-170	920
Interest	-3,300	-3,300	-825	-1,294	-469	-2,006
Neighbourhood Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stone Heritage Centre (Capital)	0	99,588	24,897	25,189	292	74,399
Market Square Improvements	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	10,000
Inflation Contingency	19,870	15,870	0	0	0	15,870
Total	451,940	602,828	119,512	109,399	-10,113	493,429
Precept & Financing	428,844	428,844	214,422	214,423	1	
Contribution from (to) Reserves	23,096	173,984	-94,910	-105,024	-10,114	



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Stone Town Council - Payments

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The table below lists payments made by the Council in the period identified, for the Committee's information.

The table includes payments by cheque, direct debit, PayPal, payment card, telephone banking and online banking. It excludes salary and related payments, payments from the Mayor's Charity, and transfers between the Council's bank accounts. All amounts exclude VAT.

Payment Date From : 01/06/2024

Payment Date To : 30/06/2024

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
03/06/2024	5171	Prism Solutions	Leased line rental - May 24	60.90
03/06/2024	5171	Prism Solutions	Leased line rental - May 24	59.90
04/06/2024	346428	Paul Castrey Expenses	HC - Bins	15.00
04/06/2024	49709	Panda Press (Stone) Ltd	Update 2024 Events Panels	157.00
04/06/2024	025678	R Mountfords	FJC Light Bulbs	10.83
04/06/2024	49716	Panda Press (Stone) Ltd	HC - Double sided banner	177.00
05/06/2024	7721298	British Gas	Elec Supply Ampitheatre 19 Apr to 18 May 24	13.02
05/06/2024	199629	Mr David Littlehales	FJC - Paint for the SM Suite	45.00
06/06/2024	V02231284251	EE	EE Mobiles - 29 May - 28 June	14.80
06/06/2024	V02231284251	EE	EE Mobiles - 29 May - 28 June	14.80
09/06/2024	7756433	British Gas	Elec Usage 61 High Street 21.04 to 21.05.24	22.83
10/06/2024	201615202457993	Pozitive Energy	Heritage Centre Gas - 01.05.24 to 31.05.24	71.82
10/06/2024	162915112	TV Licensing	TV licence Station Road 2024/25	169.50
10/06/2024	7755946	British Gas	Elec Usage - Feeder Pillar 1, 21 Apr to 21 May	18.91
11/06/2024	444008-029	Virgin Media Business	Telephone Rental & Calls - 22 May - 21 June 24	90.63
12/06/2024	BOE-095575	Rachel Edwards	Heritage Centre - Replace outdoor light	12.37
12/06/2024	126292	B Hygienic Ltd	HC - Toilet rolls, hand towels and baby change	360.32
12/06/2024	126332	B Hygienic Ltd	Heritage Centre Hygiene Contract to May 25	130.00

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Stone Town Council - Payments

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
12/06/2024	INV-10257	EDG Security Limited	SSTN - Repairs to Smoke Detector	45.50
12/06/2024	INV-10258	EDG Security Limited	Heritage Centre - Commissioning of Fire Detection and	868.00
12/06/2024	28	MJ Plant	June Grounds Maint - Apm, CM, MR Allotments, Abbey	1,732.00
12/06/2024	30	MJ Plant	MR Allotments - Fit new tap	67.84
12/06/2024	33	MJ Plant	Marquee Set up - May 2024	752.50
12/06/2024	32	MJ Plant	Marquee setup - Apr 24	552.50
12/06/2024	27	MJ Plant	Grounds maint - Amp, CM, MR, Abbey St	1,732.00
12/06/2024	29	MJ Plant	NCR Allotments - 2 x skip hire	580.00
12/06/2024	31	MJ Plant	Remove dead cherry tree at Crown Meadow	390.00
17/06/2024	SINV00642466	J G Fenn Ltd	FJC - cleaning materials	108.40
17/06/2024	163493228	JB Window Cleaner	Window Cleaning June 24	30.00
17/06/2024	163493228	JB Window Cleaner	Window Cleaning June 24	25.00
17/06/2024	163493228	JB Window Cleaner	Window Cleaning June 24	65.00
17/06/2024	713382024586354	Pozitive Energy	FJC Elec usage - 01/05 to 30/05/24	262.04
17/06/2024	S279277	W T Lynn Ltd	FJC - keys for the Walton Suite	23.30
17/06/2024	15588	All Print Equipment Ltd	Photocopier usage - May 24	17.16
17/06/2024	713392024586877	Pozitive Energy	SSTN Elec Usage - 01/05 to 31/05/24	484.50
18/06/2024	INV260920667	Zoom Video Comm Inc	ZOOM Subscription June 14 to Jul 13 2024	25.98
21/06/2024	49833	Panda Press (Stone) Ltd	HC - CCTV signs	15.00
21/06/2024	INV-1021	CE & PS Ltd	Repairs to the Christmas lights power boxes	5,155.00
21/06/2024	CD-243298727	Culligan	Water Cooler Rental + 5 refils - June 2024	41.76
21/06/2024	SINV00643103	J G Fenn Ltd	Grant HC - desks/chairs/filing cabinets	986.00
21/06/2024	76890010	Fasthosts Internet Ltd	2 year domain renewal - stonetowncouncil.org.uk	23.98
21/06/2024	4110168	Signs4Less	Prohibited Access	12.41
21/06/2024	4110168	Signs4Less	Fire exit signs	4.93

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Stone Town Council - Payments

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
24/06/2024	743014903/001/06	Virgin Media Business	Broadband Usage -6 June to 5 July	50.00
25/06/2024	5813476/CE/47906	The Arch Rent Collectors	SSTN Rent 24.06 to 28.09.24	1,184.25
25/06/2024	198947	Prism Solutions	Annual gateway licence to 29.06.25	358.52
25/06/2024	7070294874	Stafford Borough Council	Emptying bins Amphitheatre- Apr - Jun 24	54.31
25/06/2024	7070294875	Stafford Borough Council	Emptying bins T&M Canal & towpath Apr - Jun	161.68
25/06/2024	11463	CAM-TEC LTD	Grant HC - configure CCTV	60.00
25/06/2024	7070294876	Stafford Borough Council	Install/Remove Bollards - Apr-June 2024	471.12
25/06/2024	SI-3883	Access Displays Ltd	Grant HC - Display cases	11,420.00
25/06/2024	199320	Prism Solutions	Prism IT Managed Service - July 24	1,230.46
25/06/2024	200450	Prism Solutions	Grant HC - IT infrastructure installation	2,869.00
				<u>33,304.77</u>