

Stone Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 1 October 2024

PRESENT: Councillor P. Leason in the Chair and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt,
B. Kenney, R. Kenney, J. Metters and C. Thornicroft

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

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, A. Mottershead, J. Powell, N. Powell and
R. Townsend

Prayers

Before the meeting began, Licensed Lay Reader, Councillor Mrs Lin Davies, led prayers.

C25/046 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Mottershead, N. Powell and R. Townsend

C25/047 Declarations of Interest

None received.

C25/048 Requests for Dispensations

None received.

C25/049 Representations from Members of the Public

None

C25/050 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 6 August 2024 (Minute Numbers C25/036 – C25/045), be 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.

C25/051 Committee Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) The draft minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 6 August 2024 (Minute Numbers GP25/039 – GP25/053), were noted.
- b) The draft minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 6 August 2024 (Minute Numbers PC25/019 – PC25/024), were noted.

C25/052 Allotment Awards

The Town Mayor invited Allotments Judge, Mr David Moreton, to come forward to share his and fellow judge, Miss Hannah Rigden's observations following their visit to the Town Council's allotment sites on Friday 26 July 2024.

The Town Mayor thanked them for taking on the allotment judging role which proved every year to be a very difficult task. Councillor Leason had accompanied the judges on the day and had witnessed firsthand the immaculate plots and wide variety of quality produce being grown.

David firstly thanked the Town Council for inviting him and Hannah to judge the allotment competition. He said they had felt privileged to be asked and had enjoyed spending a summer's afternoon looking over the gardens.

He paid tribute to their predecessor, Martin Robinson, who had been a hugely knowledgeable, discerning and fair judge. A very hard act to follow.

David advised the Town Council that it had felt almost intrusive to be making comments on individuals' hard work with gardens being very personal spaces, reflecting peoples' character, skills, tastes, time and priorities. He said it was clear to see what the plots meant to people, generating pride in what had been grown, health benefits of being outdoors and mental wellbeing from working with plants, or just being amongst them.

David pointed out that 2024 had been a difficult year for gardening. The wet start to the year and then the cold nights into the early summer meant slow growth and pest problems. Nevertheless, the lusciousness of the beans, brassicas courgettes, fruit and flowers were something to be envious of.

He and Hannah found traditional allotments with immaculate vegetables, tidy beds and exuberant flowers. They also found people who had held their plots for just a short time and were starting to make their mark. They were aware of the strong sense of community present.

David informed the Town Council that he and Hannah believed the allotments they had chosen were the best on the day, combining quality, diversity, kindness

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to nature & the environment, and clearly demonstrating the enjoyment of the allotmenteer.

The Town Mayor accompanied by David, awarded prizes to the following allotment winners and congratulated each on their achievements:

Best Kept Allotment Winner at Newcastle Road – Mr & Mrs Hollinshead
'This was a standout allotment fulfilling all elements; vegetables, flowers, herbs, fruit, recycling and a place to sit and enjoy it. A real 'garden' feel'.

Best Kept Allotment Winner at Mount Road – Mr & Mrs Simpson
'This allotment had a good mix of vegetables, fruit and flowers, a patch of wildflowers and a place to sit. The overall feel was a great balance of friendly, productive, informal and kind to the environment'.

Best Kept Allotment Highly Commended at Newcastle Road – Mr Downing
'A beautifully kept allotment with quality vegetables, brassicas, sweetcorn and sweet peas. Clearly much loved'.

Best Kept Allotment Highly Commended at Mount Road – Miss Rushton
'An allotment full of personality, vegetables, flowers, use of recycled materials. It is obviously much loved'.

The Town Mayor expressed the Town Council's thanks once again to David and Hannah and congratulated the competition winners for their achievements.

C25/053 Conclusion of Audit 2023-24

RESOLVED:

The Town Council noted the External Auditor's Report* and Certificate* for the year ending 31 March 2024.

C25/054 Civic Announcements

The Civic Announcements, which had previously been circulated, were noted.

C25/055 Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements

The Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's reports of engagements, which had previously been circulated, were noted.

The Town Mayor drew the Council's attention to the recent flooding in Bagnacavallo and that a letter had been sent to the Mayor of Bagnacavallo expressing his and the Town Council's condolences and good wishes.

The Town Mayor informed the Town Council about the engagements he had recently attended. This included the Florence Brass Band Concert and Burma Star

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Commemoration in Stone Field Park on Sunday 18 August, and the Summer Street Party on Saturday 31 August 2024 with the Silver Medal Olympians from Stone attending as guests of honour.

The Town Mayor had attended the BBC Radio Stoke 'Make a Difference Awards' on Friday 6 September 2024 where he had been humbled to hear about the services given by individuals to their local communities.

The Town Mayor had attended two Battle of Britain events, one hosted by the RAF Tactical Supply Wing at Beacon Barracks on Thursday 12 September, and the other hosted by the Mayor of Stafford Borough Council on Sunday 15 September 2024, which were both enjoyable and moving experiences.

The Deputy Town Mayor had no report on this occasion.

The meeting was temporarily suspended and then reconvened after the public and private sessions of the General Purposes Committee, and the Planning Consultative Committee meetings had taken place.

C25/056 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.

C25/057 Confidential Minutes

The Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 6 August 2024, Minute Numbers GP25/039 and GP25/053 were noted.

TOWN MAYOR

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