



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

15 Station Road
Stone
ST15 8JP

29 October 2024

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2024 at 7:15pm**, or on the rising of the Planning Consultative Committee, if later.

The agenda is set out below and I trust you will be able to attend.

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

Councillors: R. Townsend (Chairman), T. Kelt (Vice Chairman), J. Battrick, A. Burgess, B. Kenney, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft.

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Requests for Dispensations**
4. **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.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Sub-Committee held on 17 September 2024, Minute No's ENV25/011 – ENV25/018 (attached)

6. **Environment Sub-Committee Works Update**

To receive an update on the work being undertaken by the Council's Grounds Maintenance contractor (update attached) and to consider any variations required.

7. **Crown Meadow**

- i) To receive a verbal update from the Chairman.
- ii) To consider 2025-26 projects

8. **Reports of Working Group**

- Environmental Working Group (Co-ordinator: Councillor R. Townsend)

Will any Councillors who wish to speak at this meeting, but are not members of the Sub-Committee, please inform the Chairman before the start of the meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the Environment Sub-Committee Meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of this scheme are displayed on the Town Council's noticeboards and website.

The Council Chamber is accessed from the rear of the building.

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 17 September 2024

PRESENT: Councillor T. Kelt in the Chair and
Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, P. Leason and C. Thornicroft

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

By Chairman's Invitation:

ABSENT: Councillors: B. Kenney, R. Kenney, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell and
R. Townsend

ENV25/011 Apologies

Councillors: B. Kenney, R. Kenney, J. Metters and R. Townsend

ENV25/012 Declarations of Interest

None

ENV25/013 Request for Dispensations

None

ENV25/014 Representations from Members of the Public

None

ENV25/015 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 16 July 2024 (Minute Numbers ENV25/001 – ENV25/010), were approved as a correct record.

ENV25/016 Environmental Sub-Committee Works Update

The Chairman drew the Sub-Committee's attention to the Grounds Maintenance Works Update document which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

He referenced the most recent comments on the Update which highlighted that progress was being made in completing the outstanding works, although at a slower pace than was hoped.

The proposal for an alternative project to replace the cancelled 'Crown Meadow hedgerow' works will be put forward to the next meeting.

ENV25/017 Crown Meadow Update

- i) The Chairman referred the Sub-Committee to the report of the Biodiversity & Ecology Officer at Stafford Borough Council regarding Crown Meadow and other surrounding Meadows. A copy of the report (entitled: Stone Meadows Local Nature Reserves and the River Trent Floodplain) had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The report identified four areas where nature recovery work was on-going and these included Goodall Meadow, Southern Meadow, land south of Westbridge Park and Crown Meadow. All sites except Crown Meadow are managed by Stafford Borough Council with the support of Stone Town.

The report ends with a conclusion and next steps identifying the importance of sharing information on the nature recovery work and raising its profile with Town Councillors.

The Chairman invited comments from the Sub-Committee and the suggestion was made that funding opportunities be explored for Crown Meadow as Goodall Meadow and Southern Meadow had benefited from some large grant awards. The Town Clerk advised the Committee that funding opportunities were always explored to establish appropriateness for use.

ENV25/018 Reports of Working Groups

Environmental Working Group

The Chairman reported on the various environmental works that were currently going on. He drew the Sub-Committees attention to the following items:

Town Council Website

The addition of new information to the Town Council's website on Crown Meadow includes impressive photographs taken by semi-professional photographer, Dave Emley. Three new pages – 'About', 'Flora and Trees' and 'Fauna' have been created and are listed from the 'What We Do' and 'Crown Meadow' menu and sub menu.

Removal of Himalayan Balsam on Crown Meadow

The Chairman suggested there were four options for managing Himalayan Balsam on Crown Meadow and Councillor N. Powell would share the findings of her research at a future meeting.

Safety Signs on Crown Meadow

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Council's Health and Safety consultants had recommended the installation of signage on Crown Meadow to warn members of the public about the dangers and risks of the riverbank.

The Sub-Committee agreed that appropriate signage should be installed as soon as possible at the entrance points to Crown Meadow.

Installation of Life Buoys

The Sub-Committee raised the question about whether the Town Council should install life buoys on Crown Meadow.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that she had sought advice from the Council's Health and Safety consultants and insurers who suggested that whilst life buoys can be installed, they would not be of great benefit because the site was vast and there would be a need to install many of them which was not recommended.

The Sub-Committee agreed that it was more important to have safety warning signs installed as soon as possible.

Stafford Borough Community Panel

The Chairman reported on a meeting of the Community Panel in September 2024 where the following topics had been discussed:

Council Score Cards – Stafford Borough Council had agreed to adopt the Council Score Card system as a valid way of assessing and addressing occurring environmental issues. The Borough Council will be assigning officers to areas and the Community Panel will also assign a representative to join the Borough Council to oversee work going ahead.

Cannock Chase Education Programme – Two officers had spoken to the Panel and the initiative was very impressive. The programme will be expanded to schools including those in Stone, probably early next year.

Midlands Climate Expo – This event will be taking place at Uttoxeter Racecourse on 20 September 2024 and Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall will be the key speaker.

Mowing regime and Bee Friendly Status – The mowing regime in the Borough is in the process of being finalised. It requires extra funding and is linked to the Bee Friendly Town Project supported by the Council. Stafford has successfully achieved Bee Friendly Status, and the Chairman understood that an application was soon to be made for Stone.

Major Recovery Strategy – This Borough wide strategy has been developed by the Biodiversity & Ecology Officer and all town and parish councils along with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust will be actively involved. A number of other environmental strategies are also being developed.

Local Energy Production – This is a subset of the Panel who are looking at working with the big solar co-op to install solar panels at scale on large roofs that they will lease from the owners.

Chairman

Stone Town Council - Environment

Dept	Job Description	Details	Current Status	Approved Budget	Est Date
Allotments	Asbestos Removal	Remove and dispose of asbestos. Asbestos survey confirmed issues as low risk and requires monitoring.	MP has removed asbestos pile from plot 2A and stacked in a layby on the site. MP will add to the pile as he gradually clears asbestos items from other plots. MP will inform us when finished, and we will then obtain a quote to have asbestos professionally removed by a specialist. Raised borders on plot 13 to be dug out and replaced with sleepers as budget allows - MP is liaising with the plot holder on this, as they need to agree to the work. 30.08.24 MP confirms that the plot holder is going to give up the plot soon, and then work can commence on the removal. 24.10.24 Plot holder has renewed for another year, investigation underway to resolve before next growing season.	1825	Work started March 24
Crown Meadow	Wooden footbridge.	Cleaning and re-treating wood.	MP to complete in time for Westbridge Park re-opening ceremony which is April 2024. MP confirms this will be completed in March. 4.5.24 MP confirms will be completed by 30.6.24. 27.8.24 MP intends to complete by end Sept. Bridge will be wood-painted rather than varnish as the wood no longer holds varnish and painting enables MP to more easily maintain and cover vandalism. 24.10.24 - Bridge has been powerwashed and sanded, MP aims to paint in the coming weeks dependant on the weather.	525	Nov-24
Crown Meadow	Scrape 1. Grasses cut back	Cut back grasses to encourage new growth and to allow other species to grow. Cut back a third of the area on a three year rotation. Strim and remove. Volunteers can assist if required.	Cut scheduled for 2023 not possible due to late flowering, floods and waterlogged ground. MP will new attempt in Autumn 2024 and before 31/12/24. 27.8.24 Reviewed with MP. Cut & collection will take place before 31.12.24. 24.10.24 - MP confirmed cut will take place anytime soon, weather dependent.	1000	Oct -Dec 2024
Crown Meadow	Scrape 1 willow saplings	Removal of invasive willow saplings. The saplings need to be uprooted using a digger and disposed of or offered to Bill Waller/SBC for replanting at another site	Some saplings were successfully removed in Dec 23 by MP with digger aided by Staffs Wildlife Trust volunteers. MP scheduled Mar 24 but was unable due to flooding. Flooded and saturated ground has made this impossible so far in 2024. Subject to conditions, MP aims to do this later in 2024 the year. Possible collaboration with Staffs Wildlife again. 27.8.24. MP confirmed willows will be removed by 31.12.24 and probable collaboration with Staffs Wildlife and Bill Waller again. 24.10.24 - Update, MP confirmed that this will be undertaken imminently.	500	Sept -Dec 2024

Grounds Maint	Walton Roundabout pruning and re-planting	Cut back/prune existing shrubs & ivy to promote new growth. Insert new shrubs where required.	Has been rolled over from 2022/23. MP has now done some cutting back in Spring 2024. Remaining budget will be used for further cut back and planting new shrubs later in 2024. 27.8.24. MP confirmed cutback and selective replant will be completed by 31.12.24. 24.10.24 - Pruning has taken place, some shrubs planted, this will be revisited over the coming months.	600	Sept to Dec 2024
Grounds Maint	Town borders pruning and re-planting	Cut back/prune existing shrubs & trees to promote new growth. Insert new shrubs where required.	Time sensitive. Has been rolled over from 2022/23. MP has now done some cutting back in Spring 2024. Remaining budget will be used for further cut back and planting new shrubs later in 2024. 27.8.24. MP confirmed the plan to cut back, remove and replant where required and particularly on Stafford & Lichfield St borders. 24.10.24 - MP confirmed that work has commenced and is ongoing.	600	Sept -Dec 24
Grounds Maint	Re-install Lock Gate	Replace damage lock gate on Walton Roundabout	Canals Trust to source lockgate or MP to manufacture. Agreed that MP will make if Canals trust does not supply soon. 27.8.24. MP is committed to reinstating lock gate. No date given.	400	Before Dec 2024
Environmental Initiatives	New hedgerow	Mixed native species sourced by MP. To follow the fence line from the corner of the fence to Angler's Car Park.	Planned for Winter 2023 but persistent flooding & saturated ground has prevented. STC has now agreed to cancel this project due to the risk of the new hedgerow being affected by persistent flooding and wet ground. Env Sub Comm will propose an alternative project on Crown Meadows for the fund.	1400	
Environmental Initiatives	Balance of carry over			1190	
Crown Meadow	Repairs and Improvements to Angler's Carpark	Reposition and replace the fence and resite the display board to increase the width of the entrance. Excavate the embankment, remove growth on Amphitheatre side. Resurface car park with crushed concrete and limestone.	MP will complete this project when he has a two day window in his diary and the conditions underfoot are dry. 27.8.24. MP is planning this for October 24. Scope of the project was reconfirmed. 24.10.24 - MP confirmed that this will be his project over the winter.	3100	Dec 2024

<p>Crown Meadow Volunteers</p>	<p>Restoration of Scrape 2</p>	<p>Excavating the area of Scrape 2 specifically to remove willow saplings, other overly dominant plants and some of the silt. Reinstate required plants</p>	<p>The scrape will need to be relatively dry in order for MP to commence work. MP to advise council office when work is scheduled so that notices can be published about what is happening. Timing is sensitive to protect plant, insect and animal species. 27.8.24. MP confirmed that late Summer/early Autum is the best time so work should take place soon. 24.10.24 - The wet weather has not made this possible, MP confirmed that this will be completed when the scrape dries out.</p>	<p>2800</p>	<p>Aut 24</p>
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