

# Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 14 January 2025

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

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

By Chairman's Invitation: A. Best and J. Hood

**ABSENT:** Councillors: B. Kenney, J. Powell and N. Powell

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**ENV25/027 Apologies**

Councillors: B. Kenney, J. Powell and N. Powell

**ENV25/028 Declarations of Interest and Declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**

None made.

**ENV25/029 Request for Dispensations**

None received.

**ENV25/030 Representations from Members of the Public**

None received.

**ENV25/031 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 5 November 2024 (Minute Numbers ENV25/019 – ENV25/026), were approved as a correct record.

**ENV25/032 Environmental Sub-Committee Works Update**

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

He said the works update was regularly reviewed with plenty of communication between himself, the Deputy Town Clerk and Grounds Maintenance Contractor.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that most projects had fallen behind schedule due to inclement weather, machinery/motor vehicle breakdowns and ill-health. The Grounds Maintenance Contractor had however committed to a completion date of 31 March 2025 for all outstanding works.

**ENV25/033 Crown Meadow**

The Chairman referred the Sub-Committee to his written reports\* (circulated to Members with the agenda) which included three detailed proposals for the following works:

- i) Willow Trees  
To cut back the standard Willow trees/shrubs located around scrape One (believed to be responsible for the large number of Willow saplings that were setting) so they produced less seeds to blow on to Scrape One.

A new budget item of £300 would be needed for this purpose.

- ii) Footpaths  
To raise the height of the diagonal path (that provided the most direct route across Crown Meadow) to a level that was higher than the grass to prevent it from holding water.

It was proposed that the budget for the planting of the shelved hedgerow project totalling £1,560, would be diverted to this project with an additional contingency of £1,000 (depending on the extent of the work needed and cost of materials).

The Chairman assured the Sub-Committee that the material used would be a good quality aggregate mix, the same as that used on the riverside path which didn't wash away.

The work would also include reinstatement of the drainage from Scrape Two to Scotch Brook.

The suggestion was made to replace the two Cherry trees in the amphitheatre.

- iii) Himalayan Balsam  
A plan (drawn up following professional advice) for the select group of volunteers to work on pulling up/curtailing the spread of Himalayan Balsam on Crown Meadow.

This action would assist in preventing the plant from dominating and the negative impact on diversity and wildlife. The work would

need to be undertaken at the correct time which was between April and June 2025.

**ENV25/034 Budget 2025-26 – 2027-28**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk\* (issued with the agenda for the meeting) which considered the level of budget that the Sub-Committee may wish to recommend to the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2025 for the services under its control.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the standstill budget (initially considered by the General Purposes Committee on 10 December 2024) and the amounts included for each service. It also considered other areas of growth or savings when setting the budget for 2025-26 and future years.

The Sub-Committee considered whether it wished to recommend to the General Purposes Committee additional sums for inclusion in the Environmental Initiatives budget.

The Chairman confirmed that an unspent sum of £1,190 (relating to an energy audit during the previous year) will be carried forward to 2025-26 and proposed that this sum be increased to £2,000 to enable the Council to address any environmental initiatives that arise during the coming year.

The Sub-Committee supported all budget proposals and their recommendation to the General Purposes Committee.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the standstill budget set out in the Clerks Report for the years 2025-26 and 2027-28 is accepted, after making the adjustments set out below, arising from consideration of reports presented at this meeting:

- The £1,560 in the current year's budget for Hedgerows is used instead for improvements to the paths at Crown Meadow in 2025-26 with a contingency of an additional £1,000.
- £300 is added in the current year for cutting back Willow trees.
- An Environmental Initiatives budget of £810 for 2025-26 is added to the anticipated carried forward sum of £1,190.

**ENV25/035 Reports of Working Groups**

Environmental Working Group

The Chairman invited Councillor Kelt to address the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that a meeting of the Stafford Borough Sustainability Panel had taken place in December 2024 and the main items of discussion were the Sustainability Strategy (currently under development), Council Score Cards and School Enrichment Programme (which would be rolled out across the Borough).

The next meeting will take place in February 2025.

**Chairman**