

Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in St Michael’s Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre on Tuesday 17 October 2017

PRESENT: Councillor I Fordham in the Chair and
Councillors: P. Leason, Mrs J. Piggott, M. Williamson and Mrs C. Collier.

Co-opted Member: Mr J. Heal

By Chairman’s invitation: Councillors M. Green, Mrs E. Mowatt and A. Osgathorpe

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs J. Hood and Mrs K. Green

TTP18/016 **Apologies**

Councillors: Mrs J. Hood and Mrs K. Green

TTP18/017 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation**

None received

TTP18/018 **Representations from Members of the Public**

Mr Adam Jones addressed the Sub-Committee in respect of the item at Minute Number TTP18/019.

Mr Jones advised that, although not representing the traders of Stone, he has spoken to a large number of them and there is a big ‘thumbs up’ for the Town Centre Development Strategy with no negative comments having been made. He thanked the Town Council for the progress that has been noted since the first meeting in March 2017. The town is noticeably cleaner and tidier, there is no scaffolding and new shops have opened.

Mr Jones said that traders are looking at forming a working group to generate more good ideas and he would like to have representation from the Town Council.

TTP18/019 **Stone Town Centre Development Strategy**

The Sub-Committee received a progress report from the Chairman and working groups since approval of the Development Strategy in July 2017.

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Town Centre Appearance and Environment Working Group

Councillor Fordham advised that the appearance of the town centre has improved as a result of the following work, undertaken as part of Phase One of the Development Strategy:

- The working relationship with Stafford Borough Council's Streetscene service has been strengthened. The team are cleansing the town centre regularly and responding quickly to issues that arise
- Town centre signs and name plaques have been cleaned by the Community Payback Team
- The Frank Jordan Centre and Town Council surrounds and car park areas have been cleansed
- Old posters and notices have been removed from lamp posts and street furniture by other volunteers
- Weedkilling has been undertaken by volunteers
- Contact has been made with the Borough Council to ask for support in ensuring scaffolding remains on buildings only for as long as is necessary
- That work by utility companies is carried out quickly
- Investigations have revealed that six yellow 'new development' signs around the town have been found to be unauthorised or out of date. A further five are to be removed as soon as possible
- Working with Stafford Borough Council's Enforcement team to ask that unauthorised bill posting is prevented

Town Centre Events and Attractions Working Group

Councillor Kenney provided an update on the work of this group. The Christmas Lights Switch on would be held on Thursday 16 November 2017 and a Traders Christmas Evening (for late night shopping) would be held on 6 December 2017. Twenty-four marquees have been earmarked and Florence Brass Band will be playing carols. Next year's Music Festival is being organised currently and alternatives to the Craft Market are also being considered.

Town Centre Partnership

Stone businesses have been asked by letter to form a group that will generate productive dialogue.

Fingerposts

There are eight in the town centre all of which require refurbishment. Stafford has recently updated its fingerposts which have provided an upgraded feel to the town.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Clerk in consultation with Stafford Borough Council, pursue refurbishment of the Stone fingerposts before the Spring of 2018, and within existing budgets, if required.

Notice Board

It was agreed that most noticeboards in Stone require refurbishment.

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RECOMMENDED: That the Town Clerk be asked to arranged refurbishment of the Town Council noticeboards within the existing budget.

TTP18/020 **Bins on Stafford Street Car Park**

The Sub-Committee were given a photograph showing a line of commercial bins used by a town centre business. The scene, which is the first view of the town to visitors arriving, shows waste bins that appear inadequate (often overflowing) and unsightly. Stafford Borough Council is in negotiation with the business owner to provide formal use of the car park.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Clerk ask Stafford Borough Council to ensure that the waste facilities are adequate in size and emptied at an appropriate frequency. A request should also be made for the area to be screened from sight.

TTP18/021 **Seating on High Street**

The Sub-Committee considered a suggestion that a bench be moved from the top end of the High Street to a position opposite Market Square. This would provide a rest for those who cannot make it to the top.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Clerk be asked to consider the feasibility of repositioning a bench to a suitable position opposite Market Square and, if feasible, to liaise with the Highways Department at Staffordshire County Council.

TTP18/022 **Update from Working Group**

Commemoration to Mark 100 years since the end of World War 1 in 2018

It was reported that this item is an on-going exercise.

The Sub-Committee were also informed that next year will also mark the centenary of the Royal Air Force.

TTP18/023 **Train Service - To Receive Updates**

Jon Heal provided an update on train services in Stone.

From 10 December 2017 Abellio will take over the franchise and routes currently operated by London Midland. This company manages services for Dutch state railway.

Mr Heal has met with Abellio representatives and in particular the Chief Time Tabler, who will be a new contact for direct forwarding of future issues and concerns.

There are no real changes to services until December 2018 when a complete change of timetable will take place. The train calling at Stone will be different (a new Crewe – Stoke – Stone – Birmingham service that also continues to London).

The current service goes direct from Crewe to Stafford, but the Department for Transport has stipulated a correction for Stoke passengers with a maximum

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journey time not much longer than now. Stone will enjoy the best service since the station was built.

A presentation by Abellio has stated that the car park at Stone Station has 100 spaces. Mr Heal suggested that this be queried, as he doubts a site visit has been undertaken. The land is not adopted by the Highways Department and the operator would have to negotiate with Network Rail, as the owner. He suggested asking what they are planning.

Cross country trains are putting funding into community rail. There is money available for community work at stations and the Scouts are encouraged to get involved with their local station and to gain a Scout badge.

Mr Heal stated that he was pleased the Town Council made a response to the Parliamentary Bill consultation on phase 2a particularly in respect of the railhead.

There will be another issue and a second consultation. There is no funding yet for Crewe station – without which Stoke on Trent area will be left out completely.

TTP18/024 **Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute**

The Sub-Committee had previously considered a letter from the Chairman of the National Association of Local Councils advising that 1000 beacons will be lit across the UK at 7pm on 11 November 2018 as a national commemoration in remembrance of the end of World War 1, and the many millions who were killed and wounded. Stone Town Council has been asked to take part in the event.

Councillor Leason advised that the beacon at the top of the tower of St Michael and St Wulfad's Church would be made available for use by the Town Council. The Council will need to have it checked and take responsibility for getting a gas supply to it.

Town Mayor

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