

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 17 December 2019

PRESENT: Councillor T. Adamson in the Chair and
Councillors: K. Argyle, M. Hatton, T. Kelt, J. Powell and R. Townsend

By Chairman's invitation: Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham,
Mrs J. Hood and C. Thornicroft

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs A Burgess, M. Green (Mayoral duty), R. Kenney and P. Leason

ENV20/024 Apologies

Councillors: M. Green (Mayoral duty), R. Kenney and P. Leason

ENV20/025 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

ENV20/026 Representations from Members of the Public

None

ENV20/027 Minutes of Previous Meeting

That the minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on the 15 October 2019 (Minute Numbers ENV20/018 – ENV20/023), be approved as a correct record.

ENV20/028 Reports of Working Groups

a) Plastic Free Community/Single Use Plastics Working Group

The Chairman invited Councillor Townsend to provide a brief verbal summary of the work of the Plastic Free Community Working Group. A written report* of the Working Group had been issued with the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor Townsend advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group had met (once) to develop preliminary proposals on actions that will support a reduction in the use of single use plastics, both within the Town Council (organisationally by means of an internal audit) and more widely in the community. The Group is seeking to reach out to traders organisations, special interest groups and others including the growing

hospitality trade in the town. It also plans to lobby organisations which might be in a position to influence issues such as recycling facilities and bins etc.

Councillor Townsend advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group had suggested that a contingency sum of £750 (for 2020-21) would support the necessary actions identified by the audit, as well as covering the costs of appropriate marketing.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that if the proposal was approved this sum would be earmarked within the budget, but it would be necessary to prepare specific proposals and obtain the authority of the General Purposes Committee in order to spend the money.

Councillor Davies said the Local Government Association had produced a booklet entitled 'A Councillor's Workbook on Climate Change' which, although targeted at principal councils, may be helpful to all.

RECOMMENDED: That a contingency sum of £750 be included within the budget for 2020-21 to support the Town Council's work on reducing single use plastics in the town.

b) Environmental Issues Working Group

The Chairman invited Councillor Kelt to provide a verbal overview of the work of the Environmental Issues Working Group. A written report* of the Working Group had been issued with the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that meetings of the Environmental Issues Working Group had resulted in the identification of the following actions:

- To undertake an Environmental Audit on Stone Town Council
- To Initiate public engagement
- Engagement with Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council to promote good communication, mutual support and directional alignment
- To investigate the external funding opportunities that are available to environmental groups

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group had determined that a budget of £2,000 for 2020-21 (with a further review thereafter) would enable movement on public engagement and marketing (meetings, workshops, publicity etc).

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that if the proposal was approved this sum would be earmarked within the budget, but it would be necessary to prepare specific proposals and obtain the authority of the General Purposes Committee in order to spend the money.

RECOMMENDED: That a contingency sum of £2,000 be included within the budget for 2020-21 to aid the Town Council's work on Environmental Issues.

ENV20/029 **Crown Meadow Improvements**

The Chairman provided a verbal summary of a report produced by Councillor Leason on proposed improvements to Crown Meadow. The report* had been issued with the agenda for the meeting.

The Chairman advised that the report followed a meeting between the grounds maintenance contractor, the Borough Council's Biodiversity Officer and some Sub-Committee members (on 25 September 2019) where a list of actions/jobs had been proposed and the grounds maintenance contractor asked to provide a quotation.

The costings for various works in the report (opening of the bottom scrape, hedge planting, removal of Willow and Silver Birch, and relocating four trees to new hedge area) totalled £4,060.

A discussion took place about the proposals and the reasons for recommendation of the removal of trees. It was agreed that additional information was needed on the rationale.

RECOMMENDED: That a total contingency sum of £4,000 be included within the budget for 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, spread over the three year period, to support improvements to Crown Meadow (subject to a detailed scheme and approval of the General Purposes Committee).

ENV20/030 **Budget 2020-21 to 2022-23**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk* which considered the level of budget that the Sub-Committee may wish to recommend to the General Purposes Committee meeting on 21 January 2020 for services under its control.

A vote took place on possible budget changes within the report with items 8a and 8b supported and items 8c and 8d not supported.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget figures included in the Clerk's report are accepted, with the addition of the following:

- The provision of an 80 metre path across the Amphitheatre with a ramp, rather than steps, to the road. The estimated cost is £1,425.
- Widening of Crown Meadow paths by removing growth over the existing paths and patching the stones where needed. The Estimated cost is £1,110.

- Reducing single use plastics in the town. A contingency sum of £750 be included within the budget for 2020-21 (Minute ENV20/028(a) above).
- Environmental issues engagement work. A contingency sum of £2,000 be included in the budget for 2020-21 (Minute ENV20/028(b) above).
- Improvements to Crown Meadow. A total contingency sum of £4000 spread over the three years 2020-21 to 2022-23 (Minute ENV20/029 above).

Chairman