

# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 21 January 2020

**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and  
Councillors: T. Adamson, K. Argyle, A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson, I. Fordham,  
M. Green, T. Kelt, P. Leason, J. Powell, C. Thornicroft

**ABSENT:** Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs L. Davies, M. Hatton, J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood and  
R. Townsend

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### **GP20/150    Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs L. Davies,  
M. Hatton, J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood and R. Townsend

### **GP20/151    Declarations of Interests**

None

### **GP20/152    Requests for Dispensations**

None

### **GP20/153    To receive the report of the County Councillors**

#### **County Councillor Mrs J. Hood**

Councillor Mrs Hood was not in attendance at the meeting.

#### **County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

### **GP20/154    Representations from Members of the Public**

None

### **GP20/155    Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 3 December (Minute Numbers GP20/132 – GP20/149), be approved as a correct record.

### **GP20/156    Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Environment Sub-Committee held on 17 December 2019 (Minute Numbers ENV20/024 – ENV20/030), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers ENV20/028 and ENV20/029 be adopted. The recommendations

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\* 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.

contained in Minute Number ENV20/030 were considered under Minute Number GP20/157, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.

- b) Management Sub-Committee held on 17 December 2019 (Minute Numbers MAN20/022 – MAN20/027), that the draft minutes be noted. The recommendations contained in Minute Number MAN20/026 were considered under Minute Number GP20/157, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.
- c) Tourism Sub-Committee held on 7 January 2020 (Minute Numbers TTP20/029 – TTP20/036), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP20/034 be adopted. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP20/035 were considered under Minute Number GP20/157, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.
- d) Estates Sub-Committee held on 7 January 2020 (Minute Numbers EST20/016 – EST20/023), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers EST20/020 and EST20/021 be adopted. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number EST20/023 were considered under Minute Number GP20/157, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.

**GP20/157     2020-21 Budget for Recommendation to the Council**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk\* (which had been circulated with the agenda) examining the budget and precept level for the financial year 2020-21 for recommendation to the Council.

An additional financial summary\* containing recommendations from all Sub-Committees budget proposals to the Committee for 2020-21, indicative budgets for 2021-22 and 2022-23 and the potential impact on Council Tax, was issued at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Council:

- a) The base budget set out in the Clerk's report supplemented by the items below:

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
	£	£	£	£
<b>From Sub-Committees:</b>				
Community Centre Wi-Fi	3,000	540	540	540
Environmental Issues		2,000		
Single Use Plastics		750		
Path Across Amphitheatre		1,425		
Reinstating Meadow Paths		1,110		
Improvements to Meadow		1,400	1,300	1,300
War Memorial Refurb		5,000		
<b>From GP Committee:</b>				
Grants	-7,100	-2,100	-2,400	-2,700
Building Maintenance	-10,000			
Christmas Lighting		3,000		

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- b) A Council Tax increase of 1.1% for 2020-21 to £50.65 for a Band D property with further indicative increases of 1.1% in each of the following two years.
- c) To set a precept on Stafford Borough Council for 2020-21 of £310,649 plus Local Council Tax Support Grant of £18,399.

The Town Clerk and Chairman of the General Purposes Committee were thanked for their work on the budget recommendations.

**GP20/158 RDPE Growth Programme**

The Committee considered whether to authorise the Town Clerk to submit an expression of interest for a grant for Stone Heritage Centre under the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Programme.

A copy of the programme handbook had been attached to the electronic version of the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is asked to submit an expression of interest on behalf of the Town Council for a grant for Stone Heritage Centre under the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Programme.

**GP20/159 Car Parking in Stone**

The Committee considered issues relating to car parking in Stone.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that he had written to Stafford Borough Council with observations on the Borough Council's proposal to introduce evening and weekend car park charges in Stone and that a copy of the comments had been made available to all Councillors.

The Committee was informed (by Councillor Leason) that the item had been raised at the Borough Council's Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee last week. The report showed that there had been no objections to the increases in Stafford, but a number of objections had been received to the Stone increases. In addition the likely annual profit would be £1,253,000 (Borough wide). He asked the reasons there was considered a need to increase the charges and was told it was to raise much needed revenue, particularly as government grants had decreased, and that spending was planned on resurfacing car parks, and in the longer term the provision of a multi storey car park in Stafford.

The Committee discussed the negative implications on traders in the High Street who are in need of support rather than increased car park charges. Members expressed the view that the charge would represent a second tax, and that Stone was being used to supplement Stafford Borough Council's budget deficit.

The Committee concluded that it would await a response from the Borough Council.

**GP20/160**     **Open Spaces Society**

The Committee considered a letter from the Open Spaces Society appealing for a donation to its 'Legal Fund' which supports Society members in fighting legal cases in defence of commons, green spaces and rights of way.

A copy of the letter from the Open Spaces Society\* had been attached to the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the request for a donation from the Open Spaces Society is declined.

**GP20/161**     **Governance & Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England**

The Committee reviewed the designated signatories for the Town Council's bank reconciliation process, following the parish elections in May 2019. Currently just three (out of a total of six) signatories continue to hold office as members of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies and P. Leason are appointed as signatories, to join the existing members authorised to sign the Town Council's Bank Reconciliations.

**GP20/162**     **Non-Cheque Payments**

RESOLVED: To note the list\* of non-cheque payments made by the Council during the period 1 November to 30 November 2019.

**GP20/163**     **Update from Working Groups:**

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan was with Stafford Borough Council and was working through the system. The Borough Council's target date for arranging a referendum is May 2020 when the Police and Crime Commissioner elections will take place.

**Stone Area Parish Liaison Group**

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that a useful and helpful meeting of Stone Area Parish Liaison Group took place last week. The meeting was well attended by representatives of neighbouring parishes and a number of common issues were discussed including car parking, HS2 and Neighbourhood Planning.

**Traffic Management in Stone Working Group**

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that the next meeting of the working group would be held in two weeks.

**VE Day 2020 Commemoration Working Group**

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that a meeting had been arranged with the Marketing and Events Assistant on Friday to discuss the VE Day 2020 arrangements.

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**GP20/164**     **To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings of local organisations and outside bodies as a representative of the Town Council**

**Stone ATC**

Councillor Davies advised that a recent meeting of Stone ATC had been cancelled and he was awaiting a new date.

**Age Concern Stone & District**

Councillor Thornicroft informed the Committee about the methods through which funds had been generated by Age Concern which included a Tombola, cheques received from Stone Festival and donations from satisfied clients. A successful quiz night is planned for March and another Tombola event in June.

The Charity is looking to recruit new volunteers, both in the office and to support the hospital driving scheme.

**Stafford & Stone Access Group**

Councillor T. Kelt advised that a meeting of the Access Group had been deferred to next week. He said that since the last meeting, the Traders Group had submitted a survey for the town and the results are awaited.

**Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Kenney advised that no meeting had taken place.

**Stone Community Hub Liaison Group**

Councillor Powell advised that no meeting had taken place.

**SPCA Executive Committee**

Councillor Green advised that he had attended a meeting of the Executive Committee last week. The topics under consideration included the poor condition of the road in Staffordshire (potholes) and the desire to introduce a 20mph speed limit on the roads serving all schools in the County.

**GP20/165**     **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.

**GP20/166**     **Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 3 December 2019 (Minute Numbers GP20/132 and GP20/149), be approved as a correct record.

**CHAIRMAN**