

Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 7 January 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs J. Hood in the Chair and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, I. Fordham, M. Green, J. Powell and C. Thornicroft

By Chairman's invitation: K. Argyle, T. Kelt and R. Townsend

ABSENT: Councillors: T. Adamson, R. Kenney and P. Leason

TTP20/029 Apologies

Councillors: T. Adamson, R. Kenney and P. Leason

TTP20/030 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

None received

TTP20/031 Representations from Members of the Public

None

TTP20/032 Minutes of Previous Meeting

That the minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on the 15 October 2019 (Minute Numbers TTP20/021 – TTP20/028), be approved as a correct record.

TTP20/033 Calendar of Events

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that it is hoped the calendar of events would be completed by the end of March/beginning of April 2020. The events schedule would be displayed on the notice boards in the town.

Christmas Lights Switch On

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that the Stone Christmas Lights Switch On event (on 21 November 2019) had been a huge success; the whole town had joined in and the community spirit was overwhelming. The choir had been bigger than any other year; the fun fair had been present and street vendors stayed in their positions outside the boundary of the town. There had

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been a few problems but these had been quickly resolved. The stage had been set up early and the sound systems had been excellently managed.

Councillor Mrs Hood asked that a letter be issued thanking everyone who had been involved in the event.

Christmas Lights at Walton

The Chairman expressed her disappointment that the Christmas lights at both Walton roundabout and Walton shops (on the Eccleshall Road) had not been illuminated on the evening of the Christmas Lights Switch On, with the defect only being identified on the afternoon of the event. It had taken a number of days for the problem to be resolved. Councillor Mrs Hood said the lights were valued by Walton residents and the roundabout lights in particular were a significant landmark – communicating the message to motorists on the A34 that Christmas had arrived in Stone.

The Sub-Committee raised questions about the testing of the lights prior to the event and Councillor Mrs Hood said she had expressed her dissatisfaction to the contractor. She advised Councillors that she would be ensuring that the situation did not happen again in the future.

Bunting /additional

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that the multi coloured bunting had been taken down from the town and washed. She asked whether Members would like to see red, white and blue bunting in Market Square for the Victory in Europe and Victory in Japan commemorations later in the year. It was agreed that red, white and blue bunting would be purchased (within the current financial year's budget).

Music Festival

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that preparations for the Music Festival were on going and a number of bands were under consideration for the programme. Further reports will be given as arrangements progress.

TTP20/034 Traffic Management in the High Street

The Sub-Committee considered the dangers of traffic in the High Street for tourists and shoppers and the appropriateness of times of access.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the High Street should be a safe place for people to browse and for children to move around freely. There have been a number of near misses between pedestrians and motor vehicles, as well as incidents with cyclists travelling through the town at speed. The situation has however continued without resolution.

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The Sub-Committee expressed specific concerns about the management of traffic in the High Street:

- Ambulances should have a clear access into the town centre. Sometimes cars are parked across its entrance (in front of the bollards when in position)
- The signage at the top of the High Street is not clear
- Members of the public and some shopkeepers appear to be unfamiliar with requirements in respect of access and parking
- No monitoring or enforcement action appears to be being taken by responsible agencies
- Motorists are continuing to use the High Street as a short cut to avoid traffic congestion on Christchurch Way
- Action points have not been considered by Staffordshire County Council (following a Traffic Management in the High Street Working Group meeting) in relation to sequence changes to the traffic lights at the bottom of the High Street

The Sub-Committee asked the Town Clerk to write to Clear Streets to request that officers monitor the High Street and enforce traffic management in the town centre.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk writes to Clear Streets Partnership to ask the service to exercise traffic management control in the High Street.

RECOMMENDED: That traffic management issues in the town centre are taken up by the Traffic Management in Stone Working Group.

TTP20/035 **Budget 2020-21 to 2022-23**

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

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Christmas Lights forecast for 2019-20 had been increased by £3,000 since its consideration by the General Purposes Committee on 3 December 2019. This was to accommodate improvements to the lights at the Walton shops and roundabout.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget figures included in the Clerks report are accepted.

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TTP20/036 **Reports from Working Groups**

To receive reports from Working Groups:

Town Centre Appearance and Environment Working Group

Councillor Fordham informed the Sub-Committee that the Town Centre Appearance and Environment Working Group was continuing to monitor the appearance of the town centre and had identified some planning matters that required enforcement.

The Sub-Committee agreed that action was necessary on tackling plastic cable ties and Sellotape (which causes damage to paintwork).

Town Centre Events and Attractions Working Group

Councillor Mrs Hood confirmed that the Town Centre Events and Attractions Working Group were moving along and doing a good job, as referenced earlier in the meeting.

Town Centre Partnership

Councillor Fordham advised the Sub-Committee that the Stone Traders Group was now well established and operating independently with its primary purpose achieved. He suggested that the Town Council's future contact with the Group be made by the Town Clerk to its Chairman (rather than the Town Centre Partnership).

It was agreed that the Town Centre partnership be disbanded.

Chairman

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