

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 4 February 2020

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson, I. Fordham, M. Green,
M. Hatton, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, P. Leason, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

ABSENT: Councillors: T. Adamson, K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, J. Hickling and J. Powell

GP20/167 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: T. Adamson, K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess,
J. Hickling and J. Powell

GP20/168 Declarations of Interests

None

GP20/169 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP20/170 To receive the report of the County Councillors

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that the gulley emptying programme was moving along very well. Work on the Lichfield Road is complete but there has been an issue on two estates off the Eccleshall Road. Vehicles associated with the Smart motorway have not been subject to wheel washing which is causing mud to be redistributed and gullies to refill again very quickly.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP20/171 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP20/172 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 21 January (Minute Numbers GP20/150 – GP20/166), be approved as a correct record.

GP20/173 Minutes of Sub-Committees

There were no minutes for consideration.

* 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.

GP20/174 Meeting Schedule for 2020-21

The Committee considered a proposed programme of meetings and events for the period May 2020 to April 2021.

The Chairman proposed (with the support of the Chairman of the Planning Committee), that the frequency of meetings of the Town Council's Planning Committee are reduced to once monthly and held on the same evening as the General Purposes Committee. The meetings should no longer be held alongside meetings of the Sub-Committees.

The Committee acknowledged that planning consultations would be considered under delegated powers where the final date for submission of comments to Stafford Borough Council precedes the next meeting of the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a) To approve the schedule of meeting and events dates, with amendment made to the frequency of Planning Committee meetings which will be held alongside meetings of the General Purposes Committee (usually once monthly).
- b) That where the final date for submissions to Stafford Borough Council precedes the next meeting of the Planning Committee, they should be considered under existing delegated powers.
- c) That the revised arrangements in respect of the Planning Committee commence immediately and their effectiveness assessed after a period of six months.

GP20/175 Grant Aid to Local Organisations

To consider the following requests for a grant:

HOSPITAL RADIO STAFFORD

The committee considered the grant application received from Hospital Radio Stafford requesting £500 to replace aged broadcasting equipment including the computer hardware and software required to maintain the quality of day to day output for their listeners.

The application was not supported.

DOUGLAS MACMILLAN HOSPICE

The Committee considered the grant application received from Douglas MacMillan Hospice requesting £360 to pay for a local expert choir master to deliver quality music and singing sessions through a choir. It is widely recognised that music plays an important part in the lives of an increasing number of patients with dementia.

The application was not supported.

STONE & DISTRICT SWIMMING CLUB

The Committee considered the grant application received from Stone & District Swimming Club requesting £500 to assist three volunteer teachers in gaining their Swim England Level 2 qualifications.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone & District Swimming Club.

GP20/176 Railway Stakeholders Conference

The Committee received information on the London Northwestern Railway Annual Stakeholder Conference on 22 January 2020 which had been attended by Councillor T. Kelt.

Councillor Kelt said the meeting had been very interesting and London Northwestern Railway had accepted responsibility for the poor services that had resulted from the rescheduling of the train timetable, introduced in May 2019.

The main change had been to replace the direct service from the Potteries Loop to London via Lichfield with a service to London via Birmingham. The new route was an hour longer as it is a longer route and stops at more stations. The problems encountered included trains running late, trains being cancelled, trains for Stone and Stoke being diverted onto the direct Stafford to Crewe line and trains passing through Stone without stopping.

A number of reasons were offered for these issues which included the new schedules having no resilience as dwell time at stopping points were too short, two platforms at Euston were lost to HS2, the rolling stock was insufficient and there had been various problems with staff levels and staff training.

Councillor Kelt advised that the timetables were changed in December 2019 resulting in a 29% improvement in services running on time and a 50% reduction in delays and cancellations. The company is looking to amend the timetable again from May 2020 in order to bring greater improvements along with staff recruitment and training.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is asked to forward a letter to Network Rail expressing the Town Council's objection to the orange lamp posts at Stone Railway Station which are not considered to be in keeping with the conservation area.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk in consultation with Councillor Kelt and the Committee Chairman, prepares a letter to London Northwestern Railway highlighting the concerns about the train services through Stone and surrounding area.

GP20/177 Stafford Borough Parishes Forum

The Committee considered an invitation from Stafford Borough Council to attend a Parishes Forum (to introduce and outline Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020 to 2040 Issues and Options Consultation) and determine the Town Council representatives who will attend.

A copy of the email invitation had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

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RESOLVED: That Councillors: Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, R. Kenney and R. Townsend are nominated to represent the Town Council at the Stafford Borough Parishes Forum.

GP20/178 **Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation**

The Committee considered a Stafford Borough Council consultation inviting views on PSPOs to tackle issues in the county town including 'chuggers', anti-social behaviour and cyclists riding on the pedestrianised high street.

A copy of an email from Stafford Borough Council and a report on the consultation proposals had been circulated with the electronic copy of the agenda.

The Committee noted that in Paragraph 5.5 of the report there had not been any Community Protection Warning letters or fixed penalty notices issued regarding street drinking related anti social behaviour in Stone.

The Committee also noted that the statistics relating to anti social behaviour and alcohol related violence in table 5.6 of the report are for the Stafford and Stone areas combined.

RESOLVED: That before providing the Town Council's response to the Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation, the Town Clerk requests the following information:

- The meaning of 'intimidation', as referenced in paragraph 3.2 of the Cabinet report dated 7th November.
- To request a separation of the statistics (shown as a combined figure for Stafford and Stone in the table in Paragraph 5.6) for anti social behavior occurrences in Stone only.

RESOLVED: That after receiving clarification on the points above, the Town Council submits as part of its consultation response, a proposal that the area for the PSPO covering Stone town centre be extended to include:

- Old Trent Road (from Crown Street to Trent Road) over Workhouse Lane Bridge
- Mill Street
- Adies Alley

GP20/179 **Ex Servicemen's Bowls Match**

The Ex Servicemen's Bowls Club has suggested the bowls match with Town Councillors takes place on Monday 15 June 2020 at 6:00pm.

RESOLVED: To note the date for the Ex-Servicemen's Bowls Match and to provide the buffet as in previous years.

GP20/180 **Non-Cheque Payments**

RESOLVED: To note the list* of non-cheque payments made by the Council during the period 1 December to 31 December 2019.

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GP20/181 **Update from Working Groups:**

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the proposals from Stafford Borough to consider the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan proposals at its March Cabinet meeting with a view to a referendum in May 2020.

The Clerk also informed the Committee that Stafford Borough had proposed some minor working changes. Urban Vision had advised the Town Council to accept these changes. As a result, the Clerk is intending to agree to the changes under delegated powers.

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place.

Traffic Management in Stone Working Group

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that a meeting of the Traffic Management in Stone Working Group was planned to take place in the next week.

VE Day 2020 Commemoration Working Group

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that a meeting was planned to take place within the next week to discuss the VE Day 2020 arrangements.

GP20/182 **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 he would be attending a meeting of Stone ATC tomorrow.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that no meeting of Age Concern Stone & District had taken place.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor T. Kelt advised that a meeting of the Access Group would be taking place on 17th February.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Kenney advised that there has been concern about the risks to cows grazing on the plot contracting Tuberculosis.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

It was reported that a meeting would be held on 24th February.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Green advised that no meeting of the Executive Committee had taken place.

The meeting was adjourned to enable the Planning Committee meeting and confidential items on the Council Meeting agenda to take place.

The General Purposes Committee was then reconvened for the confidential items on the agenda.

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GP20/183 **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.

GP20/184 **Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 21 January 2020 (Minute Numbers GP20/150 and GP20/166), be approved as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN