



**Town Clerk**

Les Trigg

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15 Station Road  
Stone  
ST15 8JP

7 October 2020

Dear Councillor,

A VIRTUAL meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held on **TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2020 at 7:00pm.**

The Agenda is set out below, and I trust you will be able to attend.

The meeting will be streamed live on YouTube and members of the public are welcome to observe.

View Meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXHYe7pCvT-mVBouN3IUTWQ>

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Councillors: P Leason (Chair), T. Adamson (Vice Chair), K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, M. Hatton, T. Kelt, J. Powell and R. Townsend

**AGENDA**

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations Received**
3. **Representations from Members of the Public**

To consider representations from members of the public on items to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Sub-Committee held on 17 December 2019, Minute No's ENV20/024 – ENV20/030 (attached)

5. **Highways Grounds Maintenance**

To consider Staffordshire County Council's response to an enquiry made about uncultivated areas of land in Stone and recommend a course of action by the Town Council.

6. **Reports of Working Groups**

- Plastic Free Community/Single Use Plastics Working Group
- Environmental Issues Working Group (report attached)

7. **Crown Meadow Improvements**

To receive the report of the Chairman.

Will any Councillors who wish to speak at this meeting, but are not members of the Sub-Committee, please inform the Chairman before the start of the meeting

Members of the public are welcome to attend the Environment Sub-Committee Meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of this scheme are displayed in the Council's notice boards and website.

# 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

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**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**

## **CLIMATE WORKING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

In February 2020, the Environment Sub Committee was allocated a budget of £2000 for principally for the purpose of raising public awareness on the Climate Emergency, which Stone Town Council declared in 2019.

Since then, the COVID pandemic struck, the country was put under lockdown and schools and businesses were closed so follow up activity was not possible. The Working Group (WG) is now active and developing a plan that will move the issue forward. The plan will need flexibility in it to deal with the pandemic and whatever new measures are brought in that restrict the public.

The Climate Emergency is a complex issue affecting the nation and the world. The WG advocates staying focussed on the local issues that we can affect. This paper defines the steps that the WG believes are necessary to move the project forward and is intended as a progress report and a statement of direction to the Environment Sub-Committee. An action plan including costs will be developed by the WG for a future Environment Sub-Committee meeting, for recommendation to the General Purposes Committee. Where actions are identified below, these are the WG's assessment of who would be responsible for undertaking them should they be supported by the Council when the action plan is considered.

1. Put our own house in order:
  - 1.1 An internal energy audit and action plan. This will need to be costed as it will require a qualified auditor. One option would be to use Mark Hatton (MH) but if this is not feasible, it will have to go to tender. Action: STC.
  - 1.2 Communicate the audit outcome to the owners of the buildings that STC operates from to apply the recommendations that are outside the control of the Council. Action: STC
  - 1.3 Merge the Climate Emergency WG with the Single Use Plastics WG. Combine the budgets. The public will respond better to a single narrative. Action: WG.
2. Incorporate Climate and energy efficiency items into the Terms of Reference that govern all STC activities. Action STC.
3. Review copies of minutes of SBC and SCC meetings to date to gain an understanding of their plans for the climate emergency so that the town, borough and county can work in the same direction and not duplicate activities. Action WG. Where appropriate the three tiers may liaise for better working. Action: STC.
4. As the climate emergency will affect the younger generation most, we propose a council supported project in which we ask our local schools to feedback on pupil ideas for a greener Stone. This exact nature needs to be decided. Various options include: artwork, poems, short stories or other creative ideas. These entries could be displayed in the library, Frank Jordan Centre, website or other suitable venues around the town. Action STC.

5. Research: Review other websites regarding of interest (on climate emergency etc.). Look at other council websites. Action WG.
6. Investigate possible sources of finance (grants). Action WG, STCO.
7. Publicity: Consult with the Town Clerk (TC) regarding future marketing and public engagement to develop a media strategy for the campaign. Options envisaged include a Stone Climate Action website to provide a starting point for community groups and social network page to provide a means to feedback ideas. We believe this needs to be independent of the STC website to avoid the restrictions governing this site and so will involve both a development and operating cost. Action WG, STC.
8. Develop an agreed plan of public engagement. Public meetings are currently not an option but we can consider a digital platform for an invited group of interested community members. We should use the next three to six months to get our house in order. Potentially we will be able to have public meetings in 2021. We need to decide if these are meetings open to all comers or only to residents from certain sectors of business etc. Action WG.
9. Research, identify and reach out to existing local community action groups (CAGs) regarding climate, environment and plastics. Action WG, STC.
10. Assist CAGs to develop their own action plans to achieve objectives within their power and to influence other decisions outside their remit. Action STC.

We believe that the project going forward must be managed and run by the community with STC facilitation but that it needs additional STC support at the outset to allow CAGs to get off the ground. For this reason the actions will need STC and community input over and above what is provided by the WG and that this STC input will reduce over time as the community takes control.