

# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held virtually, on Tuesday 6 October 2020

**NOTE: Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) and Government Guidelines on public gatherings, the meeting was held virtually on Zoom. Members of the public were invited to observe the meeting streamed live on YouTube.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and  
Councillors: J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham, M. Green, J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood,  
T. Kelt, J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

**ABSENT:** Councillors: T. Adamson, K. Argyle, A. Best, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs K. Dawson,  
M. Hatton and P. Leason

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### **GP20/260**    **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs K. Dawson and  
P. Leason

### **GP20/261**    **Declarations of Interests**

Councillor J. Davies declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number  
GP20/267) - Requests for grants from local organisations: 2352 (Stone) Squadron  
ATC

Councillor R. Kenney declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number  
GP20/267) - Requests for grants from local organisations: Crown Wharf Theatre

Councillor R. Kenney declared a personal interest in item 10 (Minute Number  
GP20/269) - Town Centre Christmas Trees

Councillor Mrs J. Hood declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number  
GP20/267) - Requests for grants from local organisations: Crown Wharf Theatre

Councillor Mrs J. Hood declared a personal interest in item 10 (Minute Number  
GP20/269) - Town Centre Christmas Trees

Councillor I. Fordham declared a personal interest in item 10 (Minute Number  
GP20/269) - Town Centre Christmas Trees

Councillor M. Green declared a personal interest in item 8 (Minute Number  
GP20/267) - Requests for grants from local organisations: Stone Lions Club

Councillor M. Green declared a personal interest in item 10 (Minute Number  
GP20/269) - Town Centre Christmas Trees

### **GP20/262**    **Requests for Dispensations**

None

**GP20/263**     **To receive the report of the County Councillors**

**County Councillor Mrs J. Hood**

Nitrous Oxide

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that at the last full County Council meeting a question had been raised about the County's strategy to help tackle the misuse of nitrous oxide in communities across Staffordshire. She said that there was a problem in all areas of Stone.

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that there was an increase in crime in Stone and CCTV coverage of properties being broken into suggests that many burglars are drug fuelled.

Councillor Mrs Hood said that she would be writing to Sir Bill Cash, MP, and will be working with County Councillor J. Price in arranging to work with the Criminal Justice Service and the Staffordshire Constabulary. She expressed her opinion that Police officers in Stone and Staffordshire are stretched and under resourced to deal with this issue.

Free Parking in Stone

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that she had spent most of Saturday in the High Street talking to traders, visitors and residents who were thrilled that parking was free on Saturdays and would continue to be, on the run up to Christmas. The B & M and Crown Hotel car park is not free and arrangements need to be made to ensure this is very clear. She was disappointed that many people are still paying for their parking and hopes that Stone Town Council will speak to Stafford Borough Council to sort the problem out.

Councillor Mrs Hood thanked Stone Town Council for funding the free town parking which will encourage more visitors and spending power to Staffordshire and Stone, where traders are working hard to keep everyone safe and provide a great experience for all.

Farmers Market

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that on Thursday she and Councillor Kenney were able to meet with the Borough Council and arrange for the Farmer's Market to come back into the High Street.

**County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

**GP20/264**     **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**GP20/265**     **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 22 September 2020 (Minute No's GP20/247 – GP20/259), be approved as a correct record.

**GP20/266**     **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

RESOLVED:

- a) Management Sub-Committee held on 22 September 2020 (Minute Numbers MAN20/036 – MAN20/040), that the draft minutes be noted.

**GP20/267**     **Requests for Grants from Local Organisations**

**2352 (Stone) Squadron Air Training Corps**

The Committee considered the grant application from 2352 (Stone) Squadron Air Training Corps requesting £500 towards the cost of purchasing air rifles for cadet Weapon Training.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to 2352 (Stone) Squadron Air Training Corps.

**Crown Wharf Theatre**

This application had been withdrawn by Crown Wharf Theatre prior to the meeting.

**Douglas Macmillan Hospice**

The Committee considered the grant application from Douglas Macmillan Hospice requesting £200 to provide specialist nursing care to patients, either at home or in the In Patient Unit.

RESOLVED: To decline the award of a grant to Douglas Macmillan Hospice.

**Kibblestone District Scout Council**

The Committee considered the grant application from Kibblestone District Scout Council requesting £500 towards the costs of maintaining and running Kibblestone International Scout Camp.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Kibblestone District Scout Council.

**Stafford Samaritans**

The Committee considered the grant application from Stafford Samaritans requesting £200 to cover the costs of recruiting, training and retention of new volunteers.

RESOLVED: To award £200 to Stafford Samaritans.

**Stone Lions Club**

The Committee considered the grant application from Stone Lions Club requesting £500 for prostate screening which this year due to the Coronavirus pandemic has involved subsidising the purchase of Home Test Kits as an alternative to a Prostate Screening event.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone Lions Club.

**Stone Radio**

The Committee considered the grant application from Stone Radio requesting £220 to support a gap in its finances following the Covid-19 pandemic and inability to undertake traditional fundraising activities.

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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.

RESOLVED: To award £220 to Stone Radio.

**GP20/268 Budget Review**

The Committee considered the report\* of the Town Clerk which considers the Council's budget for the current year and the impact of any significant changes since the precept was approved in February 2020.

RESOLVED: That the Council's current financial position for 2020-21, outlined in the Town Clerk's report, is noted and kept under review.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is authorised to make the necessary adjustments to the approved budget to reflect the figures in the report.

**GP20/269 Town Centre Christmas Trees**

Councillor J. Davies took the chair for this item as the Chairman and Deputy Chairman had declared interests at the start of the meeting.

Councillor Davies reminded the Committee about the usual arrangements for decorating the High Street at Christmas and that this year would be different as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee agreed that it would like to see the town appropriately festooned with lights and considered a proposal to pay for the purchase of all Christmas trees to be installed in the High Street. Stone in Bloom would install them and provide the LED batteries.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council agrees to pay up to £1,500 to Stone in Bloom for the purchase (and installation) of 90 to 100 Christmas trees during the festive season 2020.

Councillor Kenney resumed his role in the Chair.

**GP20/270 Nominations for SPCA Executive Committee**

The Committee considered an invitation to nominate a representative to stand for election to Staffordshire Parish Councils Association's Executive. It was noted that the election would be taking place at the Association's AGM on the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> December.

RESOLVED: That no nomination be made as Councillor Green is already a representative (and a second representative would only be appointed from Stone if no nominations are received from other parishes in the Stafford Borough).

**GP20/271 Speed Limit Near Schools**

The Committee considered the need to request that a 20mph speed limit is imposed on roads serving schools in Stone.

Members expressed their concerns about the daily traffic and safety issues that occur at school start and finish times and agreed that although the problems are far reaching, a lower speed limit would be helpful.

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RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk writes to Staffordshire County Council asking the authority to consider introducing a 20 mph speed limit across schools in Stone (who don't already have the lower speed limit) at start and finish times.

**GP20/272     Non-Cheque Payments**

RESOLVED: To note the list\* of non-cheque payments made by the Council during the period 1 to 31 August 2020.

**GP20/273     Update from Working Groups:**

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Councillor Mrs Hood confirmed that there had been no meeting.

Councillor Kenney advised that the Town Council is waiting for the referendum to be arranged but it was not known if elections would be held in May 2021.

**Stone Area Parish Liaison Group**

The Chairman of the Liaison Group, Councillor Davies, advised that the next meeting would be held virtually next week. Items on the agenda included policing issues, how town and parish councils have dealt with the Covid-19 crisis and Stafford Borough Council's planning consultation process. A full report will be given to the Committee in November 2020.

**Traffic Management in Stone Working Group**

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

**Promotion of Stone Working Group**

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that a meeting would be held as soon as the paperwork for co-opted working group representatives had been received.

**GP20/274     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 the Committee that no meeting had taken place.

**Age Concern Stone & District**

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place but a meeting was scheduled for Monday 16 October.

**Stafford & Stone Access Group**

Councillor T. Kelt advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place but a meeting was planned for next week.

**Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Kenney confirmed that a meeting was scheduled for tomorrow.

**Stone Community Hub Liaison Group**

Councillor Mrs Hood confirmed that no meetings of the Hub Liaison Group had taken place.

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**SPCA Executive Committee**

Councillor Green advised the Committee that there had been no meeting of the Executive Committee.

Prior to the close of the meeting Town Councillors gave thanks and expressed their appreciation to Christine Parton who is retiring from her Assistant Town Clerk (Business and Finance) role after 23 years of dedicated and conscientious service.

**CHAIRMAN**