

# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held virtually, on Tuesday 3 November 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: A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham, Mrs K. Dawson, M. Green,  
Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

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

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**GP20/279**    **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: K. Argyle, J. Hickling and P. Leason

**GP20/280**    **Declarations of Interests**

None

**GP20/281**    **Requests for Dispensations**

None

**GP20/282**    **To receive the report of the County Councillors**

**County Councillor Mrs J. Hood**

Highways – Potholes

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that the County Highways Department had been out fixing potholes on local roads which included remedial work at Walton Roundabout.

Tilling Drive – New Development

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that L & T Care were making preparations to begin the care home build on Tilling Drive playing field and had delivered a portacabin which arrived on a large HGV that had parked in Tilling Drive.

Councillor Mrs Hood expressed concern that L & T Care may be planning to install the site entrance on Tilling Drive which is used daily by large numbers of families with young children attending a number of nearby schools and nurseries.

Councillor Mrs Hood said she was investigating the matter as she had understood the access would be on the A34 and no notice of any amendments to the plans had been received. She urged parents to exercise extreme caution, particularly in respect of children attending Walton Priory Middle School.

Councillor Mrs Hood said she had been given assurances that heavy construction vehicles would not be entering Tilling Drive at school start and finish times.

**County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

**GP20/283 Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**GP20/284 Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 6 October 2020 (Minute No's GP20/260 – GP20/274), be approved as a correct record.

**GP20/285 Minutes of Sub-Committees**

RESOLVED:

- a) Estates Sub-Committee held on 13 October 2020 (Minute Numbers EST20/024 – MAN20/029), that the draft minutes be noted.
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 13 October 2020 (Minute Numbers ENV20/031 – ENV20/037), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number ENV20/035 be adopted.

**GP20/286 Budget Monitoring Report – September 2020**

The report of the Town Clerk\* was noted.

**GP20/287 Appointment to Outside Bodies**

The Committee considered appointments as the Council's representatives on outside bodies.

**RESOLVED:** To make the following appointments of council representatives to the following bodies:

**Stone ATC** (Mayor plus 1 member)  
Councillors: M. Green and J. Davies

**Age Concern Stone & District** (2 members)  
Councillors: T. Adamson & C. Thornicroft

**Stafford & Stone Access Group** (1 member)  
Councillor T. Kelt

**Trustees of the Town Hall Charity** (all members)  
All members

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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.

**Stone Community Hub Group** (3 Members)  
Councillors: M. Hatton, Mrs J. Hood and J. Powell

**Stone Area Parish Liaison Group** (1 Member)  
J. Davies

NOTE: Current membership of the following bodies will continue until the stated dates, or until retirement by an individual member, even if the members cease to be members of the Council

**Stone Common Plot Trustees** (four year term is standard)  
Councillors: Mrs L. Davies, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt and R. Kenney to May 2023  
Councillor T. Adamson to 2023

**Richard Vernon Trust** (four year term)  
Councillors: J. Powell to 2023, J. Davies and Mrs L. Davies to 2023

**SPCA Executive Committee** (one Member for a two year term)  
Councillor M. Green (to December 2021)

**GP20/288**     **Premises Licence Review – Crown & Anchor**

The Committee considered the appointment of a representative to address Stafford Borough Council's Licensing Sub-Committee, required in support of the Town Council's application for a premises licence review (Minute Number GP20/255: General Purposes Committee meeting on 22 September 2020).

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs J. Hood is appointed to represent the Town Council (as the applicant), at the Crown & Anchor Premises Licence Review hearing.

**GP20/289**     **Appeal Hearing – Land off Sadler Avenue**

The Committee confirmed the appointment of a representative to speak at the above appeal on behalf of Stone Town Council, if required.

**GP20/290**     **Bank Mandate**

The Committee considered the following proposed resolution in order to update the Council's bank mandate to include the Deputy Town Clerk, rather than the Assistant Town Clerk (Business).

In respect of the proposed resolution, the authorised signatories are Councillors Andrew Best, Kerry Dawson, Jim Davies, Lin Davies, Mark Green and Jill Hood together with the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk, and the signing rules are as stated paragraph 5.10 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

*"That a banking relationship will be maintained with National Westminster Bank Plc (the **Bank**) in accordance with this mandate and that:*

- *the individuals identified as **Authorised Signatories** may, in accordance with the **Signing Rules**:*
  - *sign cheques and give instructions for Standing Orders, Direct Debits, electronic payments, banker's drafts and other*

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- *payments on the accounts even if it causes an account to be overdrawn or exceed any limit*
- *sign, accept or endorse bills of exchange.*
- *request and give counter-indemnities for the issue of letters of credit or Guarantees (including bonds, indemnities and undertakings)*
- **Authorised Signatories** identified in the **Signing Rules** for unlimited amounts may, in accordance with the **Signing Rules**:
  - *sign agreements for electronic products, including payment systems, and appoint or remove administrators and operators of those electronic products. The Business / Organisation authorises the administrators and operators to exercise the powers detailed in the terms of each electronic product. These powers may be extensive and include the power to make payments and access information on behalf of the Business / Organisation, and in the case of administrators, the power to appoint and remove other administrators (with the same powers) and operators*
- *any Authorised Signatory may give other instructions or requests for information to the Bank in relation to the accounts; opening accounts with the same **Signing Rules** and **Authorised Signatories**; closing accounts; or other banking services or products*
- *the Bank may accept instructions that do not have an original written signature provided the Bank is satisfied that the instruction is genuine and subject to any other agreement the Bank may require for those instructions*
- *The mandate will continue until the Customer completes a new mandate I passes a new Authority advising the changes in authority on the account(s)."*

RESOLVED: That the changes to the bank mandate are accepted.

RESOLVED: That the authorised signatories are: Councillors Andrew Best, Kerry Dawson, Jim Davies, Lin Davies, Mark Green and Jill Hood together with the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk, and the signing rules are as stated in paragraph 5.10 of the Council's Financial Regulations (GP20/123).

#### **GP20/291 Stafford Borough Council Election Costs**

The Committee considered the charges received from Stafford Borough Council for the 2019 Town Council elections in Stone.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the value of the invoice for the Stonefield & Christchurch Town Ward was £8,497.13 which was very similar in value to the charge levied by the Borough Council in 2016 after a by-election had occurred in the same ward. The costs for the by-election had been £8,493.96.

The Town Clerk explained that the two sets of costs were not expected to be the same in value because the 2019 election costs should have been shared with Stafford Borough Council who had held its borough council elections concurrently.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is asked to request from Stafford Borough Council a breakdown of the 2019 election costs for the Stonefield & Christchurch town ward.

**GP20/292     Non-Cheque Payments**

RESOLVED: To note the list\* of non-cheque payments made by the Council during the period 1 to 30 September 2020.

**GP20/293     Update from Working Groups:**

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Councillor Mrs Hood confirmed that there had been no meeting.

**Stone Area Parish Liaison Group**

The Chairman of the Liaison Group, Councillor Davies, advised the Committee that a very useful, constructive and productive meeting had been held in October particularly in respect of work to improve communications with the Borough Council on planning consultations and to realise the aspirations of the Local Plan.

**Traffic Management in Stone Working Group**

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

**Promotion of Stone Working Group**

Councillor Powell advised the Committee that the Promotion of Stone Working Group's first meeting had taken place on 22 October 2020. A very productive and positive meeting had taken place and the issues discussed included:

- Clarification on membership, format and how the Group would work.
- Aims and expectations of the Group – the promotion of Stone as a safe environment for business and enjoyment of retail and hospitality venues in town; the actions that would be taken in the future (to be seen by the local community as a positive thing); the focus on Stone as a whole which would be inclusive of all business types large and small.
- Challenges identified by business representatives and their members – there is a lot of bad press; lack of footfall in most retail business; correlation between national and local bad press/news reports and footfall; negative comments by social media users and groups towards Stone and its businesses.
- Moving forward – signage and notices of COVID-19 safety measures that are being adopted; promotion of a safe Stone environment; use of digital media for signposting; signage to promote Stone on roadways and canals; promotional film to showcase the town and its community; use of A Little Bit of Stone website; promotion of all businesses in Stone; a Christmas promotion.
- Next Steps – investigate funding opportunities for actions and publicity material; use of A Little Bit of Stone for promotional purposes; explore the creation of a video production; promotional item in the Stone & Eccleshall Gazette; create publicity, titles and action statements for the use of Stone promotions.

**GP20/294     To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings of local organisations and outside bodies as a representative of the Town Council**

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### **Stone ATC**

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place and no meetings were planned.

### **Age Concern Stone & District**

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that an Age Concern meeting had taken place on Monday 16 October in a Covid-19 secure environment.

Councillor Thornicroft reported that the charity's main source of income (tombola and hospital transport scheme) had disappeared during the pandemic. However, Mr Norman had reported his success in obtaining a substantial grant from Severn Trent Water through a scheme devised to help organisations replace lost revenue. In addition, some other smaller grants and donations had helped fund the costs of making the office COVID-19 safe. A small surplus was reported in the account which was excellent news.

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that Age concern had been working in conjunction with the Stone Helpline mainly in assisting people with Blue Badge and Attendance Allowance queries.

He said the office had reopened at the beginning of August on a two day week basis with two volunteers. The hospital transport scheme and coffee club are not currently operating but there was discussion about restarting the transport scheme in a COVID-19 secure way.

### **Stafford & Stone Access Group**

Councillor T. Kelt advised the Committee that the group had had both an AGM and an ordinary meeting since the last General Purposes Committee. The main issue to report is that the Access Group's website has been redesigned, updated and is now published.

Councillor Kelt said that the website lists all businesses and services in Stone, which is a precursor to doing the same in other areas within the borough. He will be approaching Councillors for suggestions on publicising the website and for ideas on additional content.

### **Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Kenney confirmed that no report was available on a meeting that had recently taken place.

### **Stone Community Hub Liaison Group**

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

### **SPCA Executive Committee**

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

**CHAIRMAN**