



**Town Clerk**  
Les Trigg

15 Station Road  
STONE  
ST15 8JP

**Tel: 01785 619740**  
**Email: [clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk)**

26 January 2021

Dear Councillor,

A **VIRTUAL** meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** will be held on **TUESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2021** at **7:00pm** for consideration of the matters itemised in the following agenda.

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>

Les Trigg  
Town Clerk

#### Agenda

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**
3. **Representations from Members of the Public**
4. **To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 1 December 2020, Minute Numbers C20/145 – C20/153 (attached)**
5. **To receive the draft minutes and decisions of the under mentioned Committees:**
  - a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020, Minute

Numbers GP20/295 – GP20/311 (attached)

- b) Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020, Minute Numbers P20/127 – P20/132 (attached)
- c) Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 5 January 2021, Minute Numbers P20/133 – P20/138 (attached)
- d) General Purposes Committee meeting held on 19 January 2021, Minute Numbers GP20/312 – GP20/327 (attached)

6. **To Consider the Council's Budget for 2021-22 and to set the Council Tax for the Year**  
To Consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached).

7. **Local Government Transparency Code 2015**  
**Openness of Public Bodies Regulations 2014**

Information for Quarter ending 31 December 2020 (attached)

8. **To receive the forthcoming Civic Announcements**

There are no civic announcements.

9. **To receive the Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements**  
(attached)

10. **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.**

11. **To receive the draft confidential minutes and decisions of the undermentioned Committees:**

- a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020, Minute Numbers GP20/295 and GP20/311 (attached).

Members of the public are welcome to attend the virtual Meeting as observers.

# Stone Town Council

## Minutes of the meeting held virtually on Tuesday 1 December 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 M. Green in the Chair and  
Councillors: T. Adamson, A. Best, Mrs A. Burgess, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies,  
I. Fordham, J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, R. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Powell,  
C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

**ABSENT:** Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs K. Dawson and M. Hatton

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Before the meeting began Reverend Prebendary Cardinal led prayers

**C20/145**    **Apologies**

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

**C20/146**    **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received

**C20/147**    **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**C20/148**    **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on the 3 November 2020 (Minute Numbers C20/137 – C20/144), be approved as a correct record.

**C20/149**    **Committee Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) The minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 27 October 2020 (Minute Numbers GP20/275 – GP20/278), were noted.
- b) The minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 3

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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.

November 2020 (Minute Numbers GP20/279 – GP20/294), were noted.

- c) The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on the 3 November 2020 (Minute Numbers P20/121 – P20/126), were noted.

**C20/150     Conclusion of Audit 2019-20**

RESOLVED:

The Sub-Committee noted the External Auditor's Report\* and Certificate\* for the year ending 31 March 2020.

**C20/151     Six Month Attendance Rule**

The Town Council considered a written communication from Councillor K. Argyle in respect of Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Town Clerk informed the Council that the legislation requires that all Councillors attend at least one meeting in every six month period or they automatically cease to become a councillor.

The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Argyle had requested the Council waive the need for him to attend a meeting in a six month period as he was at risk of not being able to meet the requirement. Councillor Argyle informed the Council that he does not possess the technology to access the meetings by video link and does not feel that a telephone link would enable him to participate adequately.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Argyle's reasons for not attending virtual meetings of the Town Council are accepted and that the requirements of Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 are waived.

**C20/152     Civic Announcements**

There were no Civic Announcements due to the Coronavirus pandemic and Government requirements on social distancing.

**C20/153     Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements**

The Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Announcements, which had previously been circulated, were noted.

The Town Mayor reported on the short Remembrance Sunday services that had taken place in Stone on 8 November 2020. He thanked the Royal British Legion and Town Council office staff for their contribution to the occasion.

Councillor Green said he was very pleased that organisations had been able to lay

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their wreaths before and after the services. The war memorial in Stone with its collection of wreaths looked second to none.

The Town Mayor looks forward to next year when the town will hopefully be able to gather around the war memorial in the traditional manner to respect the sacrifices made by townspeople involved in war and conflict.

**TOWN MAYOR**

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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 Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held virtually, on Tuesday 1 December 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: T. Adamson, A. Best, Mrs A. Burgess, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies,  
I. Fordham, M. Green, J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, P. Leason, J. Powell,  
C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

**ABSENT:** Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs K. Dawson and M. Hatton

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**GP20/295     Apologies**

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

**GP20/296     Declarations of Interests**

None

**GP20/297     Requests for Dispensations**

None

**GP20/298     To receive the report of the County Councillors**

**County Councillor Mrs J. Hood**

Staffordshire SEND Strategy 2020-2025

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that the first draft of Staffordshire County Council's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy was now available to read. The consultation, which runs from 26 November 2020 to 24 January 2021, considers how commissioning groups can work with others to improve the delivery of these services to children and better meet their needs. She asked that Members contribute to its content if they can.

Care Home Development at Tilling Drive

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that she was continuing to monitor the preparations for the construction of a care home in Tilling Drive and a newly formed residents group was doing the same.

She confirmed that no heavy machinery is allowed anywhere near the Tilling Drive site during school start and finish times.

The Chief Executive of Stafford Borough Council has been very helpful in liaising with L & T Care, and herself. She will have the opportunity to approach the Directors when problems arise in order to quickly achieve a solution.

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#### Drug dealing in Stone

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that following Stone Independent Councillors' work with Chief Inspector Parsons a closure order had been issued at an address in Kent Grove under S.80 of the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The action will prevent further drug dealing from taking place at the address.

#### Oak Tree in Tilling Drive

Councillor Mrs Hood reported that after a two year time period trying to identify who was responsible for a tree at the far end of Tilling Drive, Stafford & Rural Homes had decided to prune it and residents in the nearby flats are now able to enjoy daylight to their homes.

#### **County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

### **GP20/299      To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

#### **Borough Councillor I. Fordham**

Councillor Fordham advised the Committee that the Borough Council's fees and charges for 2021 had been approved which included a £36 annual charge for the collection of garden waste. He commented that all of the Borough Councillors representing Stone had voted against introduction of this charge.

The Borough Council has also approved its Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy which will provide an important support for Stone Town Council's own Green Strategy, emerging through the Environment Sub-Committee.

Councillor Fordham advised the Committee that in the new year the Borough Council will be carrying out a review of its constitution. As part of the review he will be proposing that town and parish councils are given an automatic right to address Planning Committee on items that have been called in.

Reviews indicate that more than 80% of English town and parish councils already have this right which is considered to be a basic right of local democracy, and supports the Localism Agenda.

### **GP20/300      Representations from Members of the Public**

None

### **GP20/301      Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 27 October 2020 (Minute No's GP20/275 – GP20/278), be approved as a correct record.
- b) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020 (Minute No's GP20/279 – GP20/294), be approved as a correct record.

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**GP20/302     Minutes of Sub-Committees**

There were no sub-committee minutes for consideration.

**GP20/303     Budget 2021-22 to 2023-24 Overview**

The Committee received the report\* of the Town Clerk setting out the prospects for the Council's 2021-22 to 2023-24 budget. The report considered the overall position of the Council, the context in which the budget needs to be set and the standstill budget, which is the starting point for determination of the precept for 2021-22.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the biggest challenge this year had been with the impact and uncertainty of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. All the figures for the standstill budget had been prepared on the basis of a return to the Government's Tier 2 rules from December 2020, with a return to normal life in April 2021. A contingency (as a total figure) had been provided in the General Purposes Committee budget to allow for those targets not being met.

RESOLVED: To note the standstill budget position for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 and the issues related to setting the precept.

RESOLVED: That each sub-committee considers its financial needs for the next three years and reports back to the General Purposes Committee on 19 January 2021 with its budget proposals.

**GP20/304     Requests for Grants from Local Organisations**

**Stone Scout & Guide Band**

The Committee considered the grant application from Stone Scout & Guide Band requesting £310 towards the cost of insuring the Band instruments. The Covid-19 pandemic had prevented parading and an opportunity to earn income to meet its ongoing costs.

RESOLVED: To award £310 to Stone Scout & Guide Band.

**GP20/305     Corporate Business Plan**

The Committee considered the Town Council's response to Stafford Borough Council's Corporate Business Plan consultation. The plan is a strategic document outlining aspirations for economic growth, community wellbeing and financial sustainability over the next three years and beyond.

An email from the Borough Council's Chief Executive and an electronic version of the Draft Corporate Business Plan 2021 – 2024 had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Council noted the consultation and concluded that no collective response would be submitted to the Borough Council.

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**GP20/306      Christmas Lights Switch-On 2020**

The Committee considered the virtual Christmas Lights Switch-On 2020 held in Stone this year after it had not been possible to host a traditional Switch-On event in the High Street.

The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs Hood, Chairman of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee, to address the Committee.

Councillor Mrs Hood said it had taken the two alumni Digital Marketing students at Staffordshire University a big effort to produce the video which they had done at no cost.

The filming of the town had been recorded at 5am on a Monday morning when Councillor Jonathan Powell, Councillor Mrs Hood, the two students and Mr Camacho from The Mill Restaurant (who did the drone work) met with the Christmas Lights contractor. Father Christmas and Dolly Daydream had been filmed during daylight hours, outside The Mill.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that to date, the video had received over 18,000 viewings from all over the world. She thanked the Stone in Bloom volunteers who wrapped all the trees in lights and Councillor Rob Kenney who had climbed the ladder (at least 100 times) to switch on each set of Christmas tree lights, which look beautiful.

Councillor Mrs Hood said that one of the points highlighted from the virtual event had been the number of people who had commented that this was the first time they had been able to see the lights switched on because they are unable to get out of their homes.

She said the town looks beautiful and they have a film that will last forever which is all down to the students, Father Christmas, Dolly Daydream and the team that joined in.

Councillor Mrs Hood said the video had been a huge success and on behalf of Stone Town Council she thanked everyone involved in the production and in particular the students, Amber Mottershead and Olivia Bethell.

Councillor Leason asked that the Town Council's grateful thanks and congratulations to Councillor Mrs Hood are recorded in recognition of her work on the project in assisting with the delivery of a fantastic Christmas Lights Switch-On 2020.

**GP20/307      Non-Cheque Payments**

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

**GP20/308      Update from Working Groups:**

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Councillor Mrs Hood confirmed that there was nothing to report.

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### **Stone Area Parish Liaison Group**

The Chairman of the Liaison Group, Councillor Davies, advised the Committee that the next meeting of the Liaison Group would take place in January 2021 and the notes to the previous meeting had been enclosed with the agenda.

### **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 two meetings of the Promotion of Stone Working Group had taken place.

The first meeting was held on 19 November 2020 and the following items were discussed:

- The Second Lockdown – trader representatives were very upset that small independent shops had been closed for a second time. They believed there was no rationale behind the decision as statistics had showed that there was a much higher risk of transferring the virus in schools, colleges and supermarkets. There was also concerns about mental health issues amongst small business owners with no assistance on offer from the Government.
- Cars in the High Street – which are causing issues at certain times.
- Click and Collect – retailers have been trying to set up online services to enable them to continue to trade.
- Pubs – there is much concern from Stone based pubs and fear that some may not reopen.
- Strategy – to look at short, medium and long term strategy
- Solutions – signage to promote Stone from roadways and canals, encouraging businesses to take on empty premises, promoting click & collect, compiling a 2021 events calendar.
- Steps agreed – the display of ‘free Saturday car parking’ posters promoting free parking in Stone shops. Susan Hughes has done a very good job of circulating the information on Facebook. There has been a promotion of shops showing Christmas themed windows, published last week by A Little Bit of Stone.

At the second meeting of the Working Group the following items were discussed:

- Promotion during the term leading up to Christmas. Hospitality sector is very low indeed. There is a risk they won’t be open for the rest of the year.
- Promote the reopening of shops in a Covid-19 safe manner.
- Promote free parking with the Farmers’ Market being a kickstart
- Saturday is small business day

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- Jon Cook has promoted as much as he can through A Little Bit of Stone – positive messages about hospitality businesses in Stone. Messages that people are thinking of them.
- The next meeting will be on 10 December 2020

**GP20/309 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.

**Stafford & Stone Access Group**

Councillor T. Kelt advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place and that the next meeting would be in January 2021.

**Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Kelt confirmed that the Plot are collecting all outstanding signatories from the Trustees for the Nat West Transfer which he believed had gone ahead.

**Stone Community Hub Liaison Group**

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

**SPCA Executive Committee**

Councillor Green advised the Committee that the next meeting of the Executive Committee would be the AGM on 7 December 2020.

**The meeting was temporarily suspended at this point, before reconvening, after the open session of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting had taken place.**

**GP20/310 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.

**GP20/311 Internal Audit 2020-21 Onwards**

The Committee considered the confidential report\* of the Town Clerk which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting. The report considered the Council's internal audit arrangements for the current financial year and onwards.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council retain the current scope of internal audit work.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is authorised to re-appoint the current internal auditor, Sandie Morris, for a further period of three years.

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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: That the Town Council's internal audit provision is reviewed again for the 2023-24 financial year.

**CHAIRMAN**

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# Stone Town Council – Planning Consultative Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held virtually on Tuesday 1 December 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 J. Davies in the Chair, and  
Councillors: T. Adamson, A. Best, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham,  
M. Green, J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, R. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Powell,  
C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

**ABSENT:** Councillors: K. Argyle, M. Hatton, and Mrs K. Dawson

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**P20/127      Apologies**

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

**P20/128      Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Councillor Mrs Hood confirmed that, as a member of Stafford Borough Council's Planning Committee, she would not comment on the planning applications listed and abstained from voting on all items.

**P20/129      Representations from Members of the Public**

None received

**P20/130      Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020 (Minute Numbers P20/121 – P20/126), be approved as a correct record.

**P20/131      Planning Applications**

**Application Number** – 20/33008/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr D. Wells

**Location** – Coppice Farm, Longton Road, Stone

**Development** – Single storey side extension to left side of original House.

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 20/33327/FUL

**Applicant** – Mr Y. M. Cohen

**Location** – Rear of 17 – 21 High Street, Stone

**Development** – Construction of three one bedroom dwellings (one block)

**Observations:** The Town Council has no objections to the proposed development in principle, but wishes to highlight the following reservations/observations:

- The use of uPVC windows are considered inappropriate within the conservation area. The dormer style windows are also not traditional conservation windows.
- The design and appearance of the dwellings should be as closely aligned as possible to the heritage assets and historic environment of the town.
- The type and colour of the brickwork should match the surrounding older buildings, in preference to the newer building located opposite.
- The cobbles in the adjoining alleyway should be retained to add character to the development.
- Stafford Borough Council should apply the appropriate checks/standards to ensure the ecological aspects of the design specification are as efficient and sustainable as possible.

**Application Number** – 20/33328/FUL

**Applicant** – Marks and Spencer PLC

**Location** – Marks and Spencer Food Hall, Stafford Road, Stone

**Development** – The temporary siting of 2 x 6m storage containers between 1 November and 3 January annually

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 20/33352/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr J. Spooner

**Location** – 52 Meadow Way, Stone

**Development** – Proposed side extension to form new kitchen, wet room and bedroom together with external and internal alterations

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 20/33271/FUL

**Applicant** – Mr D. McMullen

**Location** – 1 - 2 Ford Close, Stone

**Development** – Subdivision of dwelling into two dwellings (retrospective)

**Observations:** No objections

**P20/132**

To note the following items considered under delegated powers where no objections were forwarded to Stafford Borough Council due to no Member asking for the item to be considered by a special meeting of the Committee.

None

**CHAIRMAN**

# Stone Town Council – Planning Consultative Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held virtually on Tuesday 5 January 2021

**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 J. Davies in the Chair, and  
Councillors: A. Best, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham, M. Green, M. Hatton, T. Kelt,  
R. Kenney and P. Leason

**ABSENT:** Councillors: T. Adamson, K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs K. Dawson, J. Hickling,  
Mrs J. Hood, J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

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**P20/133      Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs K. Dawson, J. Hickling,  
Mrs J. Hood, J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

**P20/134      Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received

**P20/135      Representations from Members of the Public**

None received

**P20/136      Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020 (Minute Numbers P20/127 – P20/132), be approved as a correct record.

**P20/137      Planning Applications**

**Application Number** – 20/33460/COU

**Applicant** – Miss E. Spencer

**Location** – 8 Redwood Avenue, Stone

**Development** – Change of use from garage to beauty room, including raising height of existing flat roof

**Observations:** The Town Council has no comments to make other than to endorse the advice provided by the Highways Authority.

**Application Number** – 20/33461/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr A. Thompson-Perry

**Location** – 36 St Chads Close, Stone

**Development** – Alterations and extensions

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 20/33421/HOU

**Applicant** – Chantel Flynn

**Location** – 23 Uttoxeter Road, Stone

**Development** – Demolition of single storey side building, new 2 storey rear and side extension with replacement front porch

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 20/33385/ADV

**Applicant** – Mr J. Munday

**Location** – Alloyed Limited, Stone Business Park, Brooms Road, Stone

**Development** – Advertisement to be displayed on the building

**Observations:** No objections

**P20/138**

**To note the following items considered under delegated powers where no objections were forwarded to Stafford Borough Council due to no Member asking for the item to be considered by a special meeting of the Committee.**

**Application Number** – 20/33403/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr R. Hyde

**Location** – 40 Mount Road, Stone

**Development** – Demolition of existing conservatory and proposed extension to form open plan kitchen, dining and sitting area with internal alterations

**Observations:** No objections

**CHAIRMAN**

# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held virtually, on Tuesday 19 January 2021

**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, Mrs A. Burgess, J. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson, M. Green,  
Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, P. Leason, J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

**ABSENT:** Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham, M. Hatton and J. Hickling

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**GP20/312     Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham and J. Hickling

**GP20/313     Declarations of Interests**

None

**GP20/314     Requests for Dispensations**

None

**GP20/315     To receive the report of the County Councillors**

**County Councillor Mrs J. Hood**

Splitter Island

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that the planned meeting with County Highways officers to discuss the splitter island had needed to be cancelled due to sickness. The meeting has been rearranged to take place on 2 February 2021 and she will keep Town Councillors updated on the outcome.

Covid-19 Vaccination Program

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that she had visited the County Showground today where the Covid-19 vaccinations are taking place. Her observations were that the program was running like clockwork and people were being treated with the upmost respect. She said that it had been very easy to park and to negotiate the vaccination point with so many very kind volunteers offering their support and promoting a relaxed atmosphere. She said we all owe our sincere thanks to them.

Vandalism in Town

Councillor Mrs Hood said that in her role as County Councillor she had met with Chief Inspector Giles Parsons twice over the last few weeks. He had answered her questions about local policing, openly and honestly. She said that Stone had been going through a bad time with what appears to be three individuals vandalising the town. This has included damage to phone shops.

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Councillor Mrs Hood said that it was clear the Police were on top of their game. They know who the culprits are and have arrested them countless times. The Police however have to work within the constraints of the law and asked that residents support officers who are doing all they can. Residents are offering their support by passing on CCTV footage and intelligence.

**County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

**GP20/316     To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

No Borough Councillor report was made on this occasion.

**GP20/317     Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**GP20/318     Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020 (Minute No's GP20/295 – GP20/311), be approved as a correct record.

**GP20/319     Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 15 December 2020, (Minute Numbers TTP20/047 – TTP20/057), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP20/052 be adopted. The recommendations contained in Minute Number TTP20/054 were considered under Minute Number GP20/320, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 15 December 2020, (Minute Numbers ENV20/038 – ENV20/044), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number ENV20/043 be adopted. The recommendations contained in Minute Number ENV20/042 were considered under Minute Number GP20/320, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.
- c) Estates Sub-Committee held on 5 January 2021, (Minute Numbers EST20/030 – EST20/040), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers EST20/034 and EST20/035 be adopted. The recommendations contained in Minute Number EST20/037 were considered under Minute Number GP20/320, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.
- d) Management Sub-Committee held on 5 January 2021, (Minute Numbers MAN20/041 – MAN20/052), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers MAN20/045, MAN20/046, MAN20/047 and MAN20/048 be adopted. The recommendations contained in Minute Numbers MAN20/049 and

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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.

MAN20/052 were considered under Minute Number GP20/320, as part of the Council's budget recommendations.

**GP20/320     2021-22 Budget Recommendation to the Council**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk\* (which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting) examining the budget and precept level for the financial year 2021-22 for recommendation to the Council.

Councillor Mrs Hood asked that the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee's recommendation for £3,250 to go into the budget for a community celebration in honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 be withdrawn due to the pressures the ongoing pandemic is causing. The Committee agreed that the 2021-22 budget for Town Council events should not be increased by £3,250 (Reference: Minute Number TTP20/054).

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Council that:

1. The Town Council budget for 2021-22 to 2023-24 should be as set out in the Clerk's report supplemented by the following additions:
  - a. Inclusion of the Estates Sub-Committee recommendation from minute EST20/037 to make provision for installation of a new dog bin in Priory Road at a cost of £100 in 2021-22 for installation and £250 annually for its regular emptying.
  - b. Inclusion of the Environment Sub-Committee recommendation from minute ENV20/042 to provide an additional Climate Change budget of £3,000 in 2021-22 for an external energy audit, web page development and public engagement work. This will add to any unspent balances from the current year's budget which will be rolled over.
  - c. Inclusion of the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee's recommendation from minute TTP20/054 for additional budgetary provision of £250 per annum for the Stone Remembrance Plaques Project.
  - d. Inclusion of the Management Sub-Committee recommendation from minute MAN20/052 of an additional £500 per annum towards a replacement telephone system.
  - e. The provision of a £5,000 budget in 2021-22 for Town Promotion to support the work of the Promotion of Stone Working Group.
  - f. In view of the potential uncertainty of the current situation, and how long it may continue, the provision a general contingency of £10,000 in 2021-22 to meet costs which may arise during the year but are not specifically included in the approved budget. Use of this budget will require specific approval by the General Purposes Committee and any amount remaining unused will be returned to the Council's reserves for use in future years.

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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.

2. A precept of £319,818 is requested from Stafford Borough Council, exclusive of Local Council Tax Support Grant (£340,327 inclusive).
3. The Council Tax for 2021-22 is set at £51.61 for a Band D property, an increase of 96 pence per annum (1.9%) over the current year, with indicative increases of 1.9% in each of the following two years.

The Town Council and Town Clerk were congratulated and thanked for their work on the budget recommendations which had resulted in a recommended Council Tax increase of just 96 pence per annum for a Band D property.

**GP20/321     Annual Review of Risk Management**

The Committee received the report\* of the Town Clerk, and considered the annual review of the Council's Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Risk Register.

The Town Clerk confirmed that there were very few changes required as a result of the review except for additions relating to the risks presented by Covid-19.

RESOLVED: To accept the Annual Review of Risk Management.

**GP20/322     Stafford Borough Council Election Costs**

The Committee considered a letter from the Returning Officer at Stafford Borough Council which had been sent to the Town Council in response to the Town Clerk's request for a breakdown of the 2019 election costs for the Stonefield & Christchurch town ward.

A copy of the letter had been issued with the agenda for the meeting.

The Committee had raised questions about the value of the invoice for the Stonefield & Christchurch ward (totalling £8,497.13), at its meeting on 3 November 2020. See Minute Number GP20/291.

The Committee noted the information received from the Returning Officer.

**GP20/323     Non-Cheque Payments**

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

**GP20/324     Update from Working Groups:**

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Councillor Mrs Hood confirmed that there was no change to the progress of the Draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan and there had been no meeting.

**Stone Area Parish Liaison Group**

The Chairman of the Liaison Group, Councillor Davies, advised the Committee that the next meeting of the Group would take place tomorrow (20 January 2021) and Chief Inspector Parsons would be in attendance.

**Traffic Management in Stone Working Group**

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

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**Promotion of Stone Working Group**

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

**GP20/325 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.

**Stafford & Stone Access Group**

Councillor T. Kelt advised the Committee that a meeting had been held on 18 January 2021 and the next meeting would be held in April.

**Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Mrs Hood confirmed that no meeting had taken place.

**Stone Community Hub Liaison Group**

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

**SPCA Executive Committee**

Councillor Green advised the Committee that he had attended the AGM and the meeting of the Executive Committee on 7 December 2020. He said the normal monthly meeting which had been scheduled to follow was not quorate.

**GP20/326 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.

**GP20/327 Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020 (Minute Numbers GP20/295 and GP20/311), be approved as a correct record.

**CHAIRMAN**

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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.

### Introduction

1. This report considers the setting of the Town Council's Budget for 2021-22, with indicative figures for the following two years.

### Background

2. At a series of meetings during December 2020 and January 2021, the General Purposes Committee and its Sub-Committees considered their potential budgets for 2021-22 to 2023-24. As a result of this consideration, the General Purposes Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 recommended a budget for approval by the Council.
3. The budget proposed by the General Purposes Committee is set out at Appendix A. It can be summarised as follows:

<b>Actual</b>		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>2019-20</b>		<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
6,136	Estates	81,600	56,400	48,550	63,050	63,550
17,814	Environment	27,895	24,450	24,200	21,600	21,900
32,327	Tourism & Town Promotion	34,200	30,200	43,350	39,050	39,850
225,564	Management	208,595	204,395	216,700	215,800	258,200
1,838	Neighbourhood Plan	7,900	-	7,900	-	-
-	General Purposes	180,000	129,000	76,700	-	-
			-			
114,227	Earmarked Reserves	-148,775	140,875	-7,900	-	-
<b>397,906</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>391,415</b>	<b>303,570</b>	<b>409,500</b>	<b>339,500</b>	<b>383,500</b>
	Planned Contribution to (from) Balances			-69,173	14,956	-14,656
	Precept Required (incl LCTSG)			<b>340,327</b>	<b>354,456</b>	<b>368,844</b>
	Band D Council Tax Equivalent			51.61	52.59	53.59

4. The Council is not required to accept the above budget, and is free to set the Council Tax at whatever level it thinks appropriate. The rest of this report does, however, assume the acceptance of the proposed budget, and a number of the comments made below may need to be reconsidered if the budget changes.

## **Robustness of Budget**

5. In setting its budget and precept, the Council must determine:
- The estimated expenditure for the year.
  - Such allowances as it considers appropriate for contingencies.
  - Such financial reserves as the Council considers appropriate to raise in the year.
  - Such reserves as are sufficient to meet any revenue account deficit from any earlier year.
6. These issues have been considered as part of the budget setting process so far, and have resulted in the proposed budget under consideration today.
7. The Clerk's role, as Responsible Financial Officer, is to advise members on the robustness of their plans, and in particular the adequacy of their reserves to meet possible future issues.
8. Excluding the reserves earmarked for the Neighbourhood Plan and rollovers, the Council held balances of £212,470 at the beginning of 2020-21. These are forecast to increase to around £237,947 by the end of the current year as follows:

	£
Opening Balances – 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	212,470
Planned Contribution to 2020-21 Budget from Balances	-44,638
Budget Adjustments (net) <sup>1</sup>	-17,730
Forecast Underspending 2020-21	+87,845
	+25,277
Forecast Balances – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	<u>237,947</u>

9. As can be seen from the table in paragraph 3 above, the three-year budget proposed by the General Purposes Committee would result in movements in these balances as follows:

	<b>Budgeted Contribution to (from) Balances £</b>	<b>Estimated General Fund Balance £</b>	<b>Number of Months Net Expenditure</b>
31 March 2021	-	237,947	-
31 March 2022	-69,473	168,774	5.04
31 March 2023	14,956	183,730	6.30
31 March 2024	-14,656	169,074	5.16

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: This represents the supplementary estimate approved within the year largely for the impact of the pandemic on the Council's services. All other adjustments were balanced by contributions from the Rollover Reserve.

10. I would recommend that a Council the size of Stone Town Council should hold general reserves equivalent to around six to nine months' net expenditure. It can be seen from the above table that this is not forecast to be achieved in 2021-22 or 2023-23, though reserves do achieve this level in March 2023.
11. Holding reserves equivalent to only 5.04 months spending at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 does not appear to represent an unacceptable risk given that the reserves are expected to regenerate during 2022-23, and there is ample time to review the 2023-24 position.
12. On this basis, I am able to advise the Council that reserves should be adequate to ensure that the Council's current plans can be reasonably sustained into the future. This will, however, need to be monitored throughout the year and examined very closely when the 2022-23 budget is considered next January/February.

### **Council Tax Leaflet**

13. The Council also needs to determine the wording to be used on the Council Tax leaflet.
14. The wording for 2020-21 was:

*"Stone Town Council provides services for the people and town of Stone.*

*These services include the provision of community facilities, such as the Frank Jordan and Stone Station community centres, allotment sites at Newcastle Road and Mount Road, Station Road Conveniences, and the Crown Meadow Nature Reserve and amphitheatre.*

*The 2020-21 budget includes additional funding to enable the improvement of Christmas Lights in Walton, extra environmental work at the Crown Meadow and investment in the Council's commitment to tackle climate change. This is in addition to the development and operation of a new Heritage Centre within the exciting redevelopment at Crown Wharf.*

*Investing in and working to promote a vibrant town and encourage visitors is a key Town Council priority. In order to support this, the Council organises regular events such as the Town Market and monthly Craft Market together with town centre events such as the Music Festival, Stone by the Sea, the Classic Car event and the St Georges Day celebration. Christmas lights are provided in the High Street and at Walton, with the Council's annual switch-on event being one of highlights of the town year. The High Street environment is enhanced by the Council's provision of hanging baskets along the High Street, and newly refurbished noticeboards and fingerposts throughout the town.*

*The Council provides bus shelters, benches and dog bins throughout the area and takes responsibility for the upkeep of many local amenities and planted*

*areas. It also provides grants to help charitable and community organisations such as the Stone Community Hub, supports various festivals, and the office supplies daily support and advice to local residents.*

*By considering the impact of every planning application, the Council seeks to develop and conserve the town, and is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan that will help to shape and protect the future of Stone for years to come.*

*At its monthly meetings the Council welcomes questions from the public and sets aside time to listen and respond. Assistance with public questions will gladly be given by the Council's staff."*

15. Members are asked to consider the wording for the 2021-22 leaflet.

#### **Recommendations**

16. That the Council determines its budget and Council Tax for 2021-22, indicative budgets for 2022-23 and 2023-24, and the wording of the Council Tax leaflet.

# Stone Town Council

## Proposed Budget 2021-22 to 2023-24

Actual 2019-20		Budget 2020-21	Forecast 2020-21	Budget 2021-22	Budget 2022-23	Budget 2023-24
£		£	£	£	£	£
2,343	Frank Jordan Centre	11,715	9,300	4,900	5,000	5,300
9,795	Stone Station	16,860	16,600	12,900	10,500	10,600
-	Stone Heritage Centre	20,000	-	20,000	40,400	40,800
-10,402	Town Market	-2,700	-2,300	-10,300	-10,700	-11,100
100	Car Parking	5,000	5,000	-	-	-
2,748	Bus Shelters & Street Furniture	9,025	5,800	8,400	5,300	5,400
585	Street Lighting	600	800	800	800	800
539	Dog & Litter Bins	700	800	1,150	1,050	1,050
120	Joules Clock	300	300	300	300	300
308	Town Electricity Supply	400	400	400	400	400
-	Building Maintenance	19,700	19,700	10,000	10,000	10,000
15,979	Grounds Maintenance	17,800	17,400	17,700	18,100	18,400
2,893	Crown Meadow Improvements	5,935	6,000	3,400	3,400	3,400
-1,058	Allotments	1,410	-1,700	100	100	100
-	Environmental Initiatives	2,750	2,750	3,000	-	-
14,900	Christmas Lights	26,600	21,200	23,100	18,400	18,800
360	Advertising	-	-	-	-	-
17,281	Tourism & Town Promotion	7,600	9,000	20,250	20,650	21,050
-214	Community Bus	-	-	-	-	-
5,635	Grants	10,365	10,365	8,200	8,300	8,500
149,018	Salaries & Employment Costs	158,300	162,700	162,300	165,500	168,800
4,915	Accommodation	4,500	5,000	5,100	5,200	5,300
6,632	Insurances	6,700	6,200	6,400	6,500	6,700
34,701	Administration	20,230	20,230	26,100	26,600	35,100
1,086	Audit & Legal Fees	2,000	1,200	2,000	2,000	2,000
26,636	Town Council Elections	-	-	-	-	30,000
2,460	Allowances - Mayor & Deputy Mayor	3,300	2,800	3,300	3,400	3,500
1,199	Regalia & Presentations	500	200	500	500	500
1,540	Civic Dinner & Hospitality	1,700	300	1,700	1,700	1,700
2,069	Remembrance Sunday & War Memorials	7,000	1,300	7,000	2,000	2,000
2,085	Miscellaneous	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
-950	Interest	-500	-400	-400	-400	-400
1,838	Neighbourhood Plan	7,900	-	7,900	-	-
-	Stone Heritage Centre (Capital)	180,000	125,000	55,000	-	-
-	Coronavirus Contingency	-	4,000	6,700	-	-
-	Town Promotion	-	-	5,000	-	-
-	General Contingency	-	-	10,000	-	-
-11,461	Concurrent Functions Allowance	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500
-1,838	Neighbourhood Plan Reserve	-7,900	-	-7,900	-	-
116,065	Rollover Reserve	-140,875	-140,875	-	-	-
<b>397,906</b>		<b>391,415</b>	<b>303,570</b>	<b>409,500</b>	<b>339,500</b>	<b>383,500</b>
	Planned Contribution to (from) Balances			-69,173	14,956	-14,656
	Precept Required (incl LCTSG)			<b>340,327</b>	<b>354,456</b>	<b>368,844</b>
	Band D Council Tax Equivalent			51.61	52.59	53.59

# Stone Town Council

## Local Government Transparency Code 2015

Information for Period Ended 30th December 2020

### Expenditure Exceeding £250

Date	Reference	Supplier	Description	Amount	Month
05/10/2020	D/Dbt 016/20	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates - FJC	£434.00	Oct-20
07/10/2020	Elec 027/20	Jones & Shuffs	Materials for refurb of CC suite	£433.66	Oct-20
14/10/2020	Elec 027/20	Stafford Borough Council	Free Saturday Parking Oct to Dec	£5,000.00	Oct-20
14/10/2020	20/003	Miscellaneous	Grant Min No. GP20/267	£500.00	Oct-20
14/10/2020	20/005	Miscellaneous	Grant Min No. GP20/267	£500.00	Oct-20
14/10/2020	20/002	Miscellaneous	Grant Min No. GP20/267	£500.00	Oct-20
15/10/2020	Elec 029/20	MJ Plant	Grounds maint for Crown Meadow / amphitheatre / allotments	£1,509.00	Oct-20
15/10/2020	Elec 029/20	MJ Plant	Annual weed control at Crown Meadow and amphitheatre	£300.00	Oct-20
22/10/2020	Elec 030/20	E On	Highway Lighting Energy 2020/21	£397.10	Oct-20
26/10/2020	D/Dbt 016/20	Prism Solutions	Prism Service Fee - Nov 2020	£714.92	Oct-20
03/11/2020	D/Dbt 018/20	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates - FJC	£434.00	Nov-20
13/11/2020	ELEC 35/20	Christmas Plus	Dismantle bunting	£502.96	Nov-20
13/11/2020	ELEC 35/20	Current Electrical & Property Services	Hire / set up safty barriers Walton & Stone	£528.20	Nov-20
13/11/2020	ELEC 35/20	Christmas Plus	Zig Zag Hire Crown - Thai	£1,500.00	Nov-20
13/11/2020	ELEC 35/20	Current Electrical & Property Services	Marquees set up Oct 2020	£550.00	Nov-20
13/11/2020	ELEC 35/20	MJ Plant	Gd Maint - C Meadow, Amph, Mt Rd Allot Oct 2020	£1,509.00	Nov-20
24/11/2020	ELEC 37/20	Stafford Borough Council	Supply and water 105 hanging baskets in the High St	£5,250.00	Nov-20
25/11/2020	D/Dbt 019/20	Prism Solutions	Prism Support - Dec 2020	£714.92	Nov-20
27/11/2020	D/Dbt 019/20	Pozitive Energy	Gas 22/10/20 to 21/11/20	£329.54	Nov-20
03/12/2020	D/DBT 020/20	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates FJC	£434.00	Dec-20
07/12/2020	ELEC 40/20	Current Electrical & Property Services	Marquee set up - Nov 2020	£415.00	Dec-20
15/12/2020	ELEC41/20	MJ Plant	Maint of Town borders & Walton Roundabout	£4,004.00	Dec-20
18/12/2020	Elec 42/20	Stone in Bloom	Supply 100 christmas trees	£1,500.00	Dec-20
18/12/2020	Elec 42/20	Stafford Borough Council	Install / remove bollards on High St Oct - Dec 2020	£398.61	Dec-20
18/12/2020	Elec 42/20	Miscellaneous	Grant - min no GP30/304	£310.00	Dec-20
24/12/2020	Elec 43/20	Current Electrical & Property Services	Marquees - Dec 2020	£865.00	Dec-20
29/12/2020	D/DBT 020/20	The Arch Rent Collectors	Station Rent 25/12/20 to 24/03/21	£1,087.50	Dec-20

29/12/2020	D/DBT 020/20	Prism Solutions	Prism Support service - Dec 2020	£714.92	Dec-20
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NOTE: The table above excludes salary and related payments, payments from the Mayor's Charity, and transfers between the Council's bank accounts.

# Stone Town Council

## Local Government Transparency Code 2015

Information for Period Ended 30th December 2020

### Procurement Information

**1. Invitations to Tender for Contracts Exceeding £5,000**

None

**2. Contracted Agreements Exceeding £5,000**

None

# Stone Town Council

## Openness of Public Bodies Regulations 2014

Information for Period Ended 30th December 2020

Decisions that would otherwise have been taken by the Town Council or one of its Committees that have been delegated to an officer:

1. Under a specific express authorisation; or
2. Under a general authorisation to officers to take such decisions and, the effect of the decision is to:
  - a. grant a permission or licence;
  - b. affect the rights of an individual; or
  - c. award a contract or incur expenditure which, in either case, materially affects the Town Council's financial position.

None

## **TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT – December 2020**

### **Friday 11 December**

The only thing I have to report at present is that on 11th December I went along to Autumn House Care Home and St Mary's Nursing Home to deliver a hamper of Christmas Cheer for the residents and staff to enjoy on Christmas Day.

The hamper consisted of Sherry, Port, alcohol free wine and chocolates. It was very much appreciated by the staff when I dropped them off at the door.

## **DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT – December 2020**

There are no Deputy Town Mayor engagements to report on this occasion.