

Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held virtually on Tuesday 15 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 Mrs J. Hood in the Chair and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, I. Fordham, M. Green, R. Kenney, P. Leason,
J. Powell and C. Thornicroft

By Chairman's invitation: Councillor Mrs L. Davies

ABSENT: Councillor T. Adamson

TTP20/047 **Apologies**

Councillor T. Adamson

TTP20/048 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation**

None received

TTP20/049 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

TTP20/050 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on the 17 March 2020 (Minute Numbers TTP20/037 – TTP20/046), were approved as a correct record.

TTP20/051 **Christmas Illuminations**

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Hood invited Sub-Committee Members to express their views on the Christmas lights provision 2020, including Christmas trees and lights at Walton.

Councillor Kenney, said he thought the lights were an improvement on previous years, particularly the new display at the bottom of the High Street. He assured the Sub-Committee and members of the public that all anchor points for the Christmas lights were regularly tested and had last been tested in May 2020. The cause of the 'Seasons Greetings' lights falling down in the High Street (on Sunday 13 December 2020) was under investigation.

* 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.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Green, thanked Staffordshire University alumni students, Amber Mottershead and Olivia Bethell, for creating the wonderful Christmas Lights Switch-On video and asked that a letter of appreciation be forwarded to them on behalf of the Town Council.

Councillor Leason advised the Sub-Committee that he had received lots of positive comments and compliments about the Christmas lights display. He asked that the Town Council's grateful thanks to Councillor Mrs Hood, Councillor J. Powell and Mr Camacho of The Mill, be recorded in recognition of the work they had done on the Christmas Lights Switch-On project.

Councillor Leason also informed the Committee that a young boy had articulated to him how pleased he was that the Town Council decorate the Plane tree at Christmas as an alternative to putting down a mature cut Christmas tree in the town.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Hood, thanked Father Christmas and Dolly Daydream for their entertaining performances in the virtual Christmas Lights Switch-On video.

Councillor Davies thanked Councillor Kenney for his extensive ladder climbing, which was necessary to turn on the lights to the many wall mounted Christmas trees in town.

The Chairman gave thanks to everyone all round. She said the virtual Christmas Lights Switch-On had brought to the Town Council's attention that there are many people in Stone and throughout the world who would love to be in the High Street for the traditional event, but for various reasons could not be. The virtual event was splendid for them and gave them an insight into how the Town Council switches on the lights.

TTP20/052 Calendar of Events 2021

The Chairman invited the Sub-Committee to consider the arrangements for Stone town events in 2021 when it was hoped the Covid-19 pandemic would be over.

A Post Covid-19 Event

The Sub-Committee made strong recommendations for a post Covid-19 community event and it was agreed that the occasion should be arranged with care and sensitively. It should not be treated as a celebration of victory as many individuals and businesses had suffered immensely through the period of the pandemic.

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75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day

The Sub-Committee considered proposed arrangements for a celebration/marketing of the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE75+1) in 2021, after it had not been possible to mark the occasion during 2020.

The Chairman invited Councillor J. Davies to speak.

Councillor Davies suggested to the Sub-Committee that when Covid-19 was over the Town Council should revisit previous VE Day Anniversary plans and select some for bringing into the 75+1 event. He said that as part of this process a new project could be included to place memorial plaques on the former homes of men killed in WW2. This was an idea inspired by Denis Skelland in Stafford who had been running such a project to install 'Poppy Plaques' at the former homes of men killed in WW1.

Councillor Davies suggested that ceramic plaques inspired by the 'blue plaques' installed by English Heritage and others could be produced by Oak Tree Farm as part of a continuing project. The plaques could be smaller, bear the inscription 'Stone Town Council' and include at least the names of the individuals concerned. He believed there would be considerable interest in the Town and the unveiling of each plaque should be a formal civic event with schools invited to get involved.

Councillor Davies suggested that the initiative come under the oversight of the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee which could form a working group to develop the concept.

The Town Clerk reminded the Sub-Committee that any members appointed to the Group, who are not already Town Councillors, would need to be approved by the General Purposes Committee followed by individuals signing the appropriate paperwork.

A copy of Councillor Davies' outline 'to do' list* has been appended to the minutes.

RECOMMENDED: That the Sub-Committee appoints a Stone Remembrance Plaques Working Group consisting of Town Councillors, Historical Society and Royal British Legion representatives to develop the concept of a ceramic memorial plaque project in conjunction with Oak Tree Farm.

RECOMMENDED: That the Councillor members of the working group would be Councillors: J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, Mrs J. Hood and P. Leason.

TTP20/053 Calendar of Events 2022

The Sub-Committee considered a community celebration during the additional Bank Holiday and four day holiday weekend in honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

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It was agreed that the occasion should be marked with a celebration as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was a wonderful achievement.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the item is listed for consideration at its next meeting.

TTP20/054 **Budget 2021-22 – 2023-24**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk* (issued with the agenda for the meeting) which considered the level of budget that the Sub-Committee may wish to recommend to the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 19 January 2021 for the services under its control.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the forecast for accommodating improvements to the Christmas lighting display at Walton shops and roundabout had been included in the figures.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget figures included in the Clerks report are accepted with an amendment to the forecast value for Town Council events which was increased from £11,750 to £15,000, thereby adding £3,250 to the Town Promotion budget line.

RECOMMENDED: That additional budgetary provision of £250 per annum is made for the Stone Remembrance Plaques Project.

TTP20/055 **Reports from Working Groups**

To receive reports from Working Groups:

Town Centre Appearance and Environment Working Group

Councillor Fordham confirmed that there had been no meeting of the Working Group due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He said it should be noted that members of the Group continue to liaise with the office, individual councillors and Streetscene Department to ensure the town centre is appropriately cleansed. There has been more than a usual level of activity as a result of graffiti in town which residents had assisted in cleaning up.

Town Centre Events and Attractions Working Group

Councillor Kenney advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group had not met due to cancellation of all events. The situation with Covid-19 and the organisation of events would be appropriately monitored in the New Year.

The meeting was temporarily suspended, and then reconvened, after the open session of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting had taken place.

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TTP20/056 **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.

TTP20/057 **Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 17 March 2020, Minute Numbers TTP20/037 and TTP20/046, be approved as a correct record.

Chairman

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