



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

15 Station Road
Stone
ST15 8JP

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

9 March 2021

Dear Councillor,

A VIRTUAL meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held on **TUESDAY 16 MARCH 2021** at 7:05pm or on the rising of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee, if later.

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>

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

Councillors: P Leason (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 15 December 2020, Minute No's ENV20/038 – ENV20/044 (attached)

5. **Dog Fouling**

To consider the issue of dog fouling in the town and the provision of dog bins.

6. **Crown Meadow Improvements**

To receive the report of the Chairman.

7. **Working Groups**

To consider the membership of the working groups.

8. **Reports of Working Groups**

- Plastic Free Community/Single Use Plastics Working Group

A report of the Working Group is attached

- Environmental Issues Working Group

A proposed Action Plan and a draft letter to local schools are attached

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 on the Town Council's notice boards and website.

NOTE: Due to the pending by-election for the Stonefield and Christchurch Ward, the Town Council's Public Participation Scheme is currently suspended.

Stone Town Council – Environment 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 P. Leason in the Chair and
Councillors: M. Green, T. Kelt, R. Kenney, J. Powell and R. Townsend

By Chairman's invitation: Councillors: I. Fordham and Mrs J. Hood

ABSENT: Councillors: T. Adamson, K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess and M. Hatton

ENV20/038 Apologies

Councillors: T. Adamson, K. Argyle and Mrs A. Burgess

ENV20/039 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

ENV20/040 Representations from Members of the Public

None

ENV20/041 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on the 13 October 2020 (Minute Numbers ENV20/031 – ENV20/037), were approved as a correct record.

ENV20/042 Budget 2021-22 – 2023-24

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 19 January 2021 for services under its control.

The Sub-Committee considered the need for future expenditure on Crown Meadow and agreed that many of the proposals from last year had been carried forward because of constraints on the works that could be undertaken due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Chairman confirmed that he was awaiting a report on the need to remove and possibly relocate inappropriate species of trees on Crown Meadow and no specific provision had been made for this expenditure in the budget, though

unallocated sums previously agreed still remain unspent.

The Sub-Committee considered budgetary provision for the promotion of Crown Meadow and explored the possibility of doing this through A Little Bit of Stone, the Stone & Eccleshall Gazette, a promotional video, social media/website and enhancements to signage/information boards on the nature reserve. It was agreed that the Town Council should avoid the use of paper publicity (such as information leaflets).

RECOMMENDED: That the budget figures included in the Clerk's report are accepted, with the addition of an additional Climate Change budget of £3,000 for an external energy audit, web page development and public engagement work. This request is based on the assumption that the current year's unspent budgets of £2,750 for single use plastics and environmental issues engagement work will be rolled over into 2021-22.

ENV20/043 Reports of Working Groups

a) Plastic Free Community/Single Use Plastics Working Group

The Chairman invited Councillor Townsend to provide a verbal report on the work of the Single Use Plastics Working Group.

The written report of the Working Group* had been issued with the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor Townsend advised the Sub-Committee that the Single Use Plastics Working Group had met on several occasions and had made progress in defining its purpose and objectives. Several proposals for action had been put forward in the report which included:

- Liaising with Stafford Borough Council on its Climate Strategy and Green Recovery Plan. The Plan represents a comprehensive strategy for the whole Borough including Stone.
- Undertaking a Single Use Plastics audit on all Town Council activities to identify ways of reducing its use and recycling.
- Liaising with Stone businesses to discourage single use plastic use and to formulate an integrated single policy throughout the town.
- Supporting and promoting recycling initiatives and the reduction in single use plastics.
- Liaising and supporting students at schools with environmental activities relating to single use plastics and recycling.

A report was given on a young man who is undertaking a recycling

survey across Aston Lodge as part of his A-Level studies. He has circulated a survey with 690 respondents so far and the results will be shared in due course.

Councillor Townsend advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group had agreed it would not get directly involved with litter picking but would suggest Stone Town Council act as co-ordinator for litter picking services. It was suggested the item be discussed at a future Environmental Sub-Committee meeting.

Councillor Townsend advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group had proposed a review of the terms of reference for single use plastics so that all related activities are guided and supported.

The Sub-Committee expressed concern about the form of words in the proposed letter to schools (Appendix B of the Climate Working Group Progress Report) which it was agreed should be amended in part.

Councillor Townsend informed the Sub-Committee that the Single Use Plastics and Climate Working Groups would be kept separate for membership and budgetary purposes but the issues considered in each would be closely aligned. The appendices cover both working groups to streamline the process.

RECOMMENDED: That the proposals stated in the Working Group report are moved forward.

b) Environmental Issues Working Group

The Chairman invited Councillor Kelt to provide a verbal report on the work of the Environmental Issues Working Group.

The written report of the Working Group* had been issued with the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor Kelt confirmed that he would be concentrating on points one to six of the report which is where the budgetary requirements come from.

Energy Audit and Action Plan (Point 1)

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that the items considered in both working groups were similar and the Climate Group had recommended undertaking an external energy audit. The Working Group would like the Town Clerk to investigate bringing in an external resource after liaison with the building owners of 15 Station Road, the Frank Jordan Centre and Stone Station.

Merger of Climate Working Group and Single Use Plastics Group (Point 2)

Councillor Kelt confirmed that this item had been considered above.

Terms of Reference (Point 3)

Councillor Kelt said the Working Group recommended the Town Council considers producing an Environmental Policy which will go in the handbook.

County and Borough Council Plans (Point 4)

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group recommends the Town Council fully understand the County and Borough Councils plans for climate emergency so that its activities are not duplicated.

How the Approach is made (Point 5)

The advice of the Town Clerk and County and Borough Councillors would be taken on how the County and Borough Councils should be approached.

The Younger Generation (Point 6)

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group would like to establish whether there is already work being undertaken in schools on the subject of environmental issues. A letter from the Town Council would be a starting point for making the approach.

Councillor Kelt offered to liaise with Councillor Mrs Hood and anyone else who would like to give their opinion on the content of the letter.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised that the Town Council does not contact schools before the spring/summer because of the tremendous strain they are under following the loss of teaching time caused by the pandemic. Making contact now would be adding to their pressure.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the letter would be refined and a timescale for its issue determined at the next Sub-Committee.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that the working group would be involved in points 7 (Research) and 8 (Finance) at a later date as they were not current priorities. The Working group does however need to look at Point 9 (Publicity). Points 10 (Plan of Public Engagement) and 11 (to Identify existing Community Action Groups) cannot be dealt with at the present time.

Councillor Townsend was invited to speak about Crown Meadow. He said the nature reserve is a flagship environmental asset and the Town Council should be doing more to integrate it into its plans and to increase its publicity.

The Town Clerk confirmed that individual members of political groups could become members of Council working groups and related bodies, but political groups themselves could not appoint representatives.

RECOMMENDED: That the proposals above are approved.

The Chairman commended both working groups for their hard work.

ENV20/044 **Crown Meadow Improvements**

The Chairman provided an update on the proposed improvements to Crown Meadow. Councillor Leason said the maintenance work had progressed as well as was possible given the weather and Covid-19 restrictions.

He said the grounds maintenance contactor was looking to work on the scrapes in the springtime.

Councillor Townsend asked the Chairman for a list of the outstanding grounds maintenance jobs at Crown Meadow and it was agreed that a report would be given at the next meeting.

Chairman

Report of the Single Use Plastics Working Group. Submitted for the Environment Sub Committee meeting to be held on March 16th 2021

The outline proposals of the Single-Use Plastics Working Group were approved at recent meetings of the Environment Sub Committee and subsequently the General Purposes Committee.

The working group is now working with the Town Clerk to develop a proposal for a Policy Document relating to plastics across all activities by STC. The document will be presented for consideration by STC.

The working group is planning to invite the relevant officer(s) at SBC to attend a meeting to discuss the 'plastics' element of SBC's Climate Strategy and Green Recovery Strategy. The aim is to find the areas of common ground so that STC can adopt and implement some of the Borough's strategies to be efficient and to avoid any duplication of effort. Outcomes will be reported to the Environment Sub Committee for consideration.

The working group will begin planning a public statement about the launch of the STC campaign regarding single use plastics, and the use and recycling of plastics. The aim is to have this statement prepared for discussion and approval at the next sub-committee meeting. Councillors will be kept informed and consulted.

The working group has now developed some of the outline proposals into proposals for the Environment Sub Committee to discuss and approve, as follows:

Proposal 1.

The working group proposes that the Stone Town Council office should be asked to undertake an internal audit of its own use of plastics with the aim of reducing or removing the use of plastics wherever it is reasonable to do so, and to recycle those plastics that are used where appropriate facilities are available. This work should be completed by 31st December 2021.

The project covers items such as pens, ink cartridges, water cups, water bottles and packaging and should be applied across all the properties managed by STC. Information may be available from Stafford Borough Council to support this work and avoid duplication.

A progress report should be provided to each meeting of the Environment Sub Committee until the objectives of the proposal have been met.

Proposal 2.

The working group is recommending that the Town Council opens communications with Roots of Stafford and Manor Hill First School, both of whom offer public recycling points for plastics (and other materials) that are not accepted in the blue bins. The aim will be to determine whether STC can support, encourage and help expand this aspect of recycling.

Report prepared by Cllr Townsend. 3rd March 2021

**CLIMATE WORKING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT and WORKING
DOCUMENT, 16TH MARCH 2021.**

Following on from the previous progress report, these are the outcomes of subsequent meetings of the working group. Actions down to point 9 are in progress.

1. Internal energy audit and action plan

Action: CWG has requested LT to commission energy usage audits of the buildings we operate from.

Action: CWG has requested LT to write to building owners asking them to provide a full energy audit of the buildings that STC operates from.

2. Incorporate environmental considerations into the Terms of Reference that govern all STC activities.

Action: CWG has drafted policy proposals which LT will use to create a policy document and assess potential costs.

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: CWG have read and identified areas of common ground. This and the following action will feed into this plan.

4. Liaise with SBC and SCC on areas for collaboration.

Action: Councillor Kenney has offered to identify the appropriate officers at SBC. CWG will contact those names to meet and discuss.

5. Liaise with schools re current and future collaborative action.

Action: A letter has been drafted and format agreed. CWG will pass the letter to the office to be sent out after Easter. The draft accompanies this progress report.

6. Review other council websites on climate emergency.

Action: CWG have identified various websites of interest. This is ongoing.

7. Research and identify existing local community action groups (CAGs) regarding climate, environment and plastics.

Action: RT to ask specific council members for their knowledge of existing groups.

8. Crown Meadows

Action: CWG have requested an update from Councillor Leason on the current plans for Crown Meadows work to be reviewed for compatibility with the climate working group objectives.

9. Working group composition:

Action: CWG will request a minimum of 2 more members to cover non-attendance.

10. Investigate possible sources of finance (grants).

Action: STCO could review all grant opportunities to filter out ones appropriate to environmental activities. Many grants are not available to local councils for various reasons.

Action: STC could invite outside organisations to apply for STC grants to support targeted environmental activities.

Action: STC could approach local businesses to become environmental champions and possibly for financial support.

11. Publicity: Consult with the LT 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 CWG, LT.

Action: Review this alongside the developing overall strategy.

12. 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 whilst also developing a strategy for public engagement.

Action: CWG to develop a plan for how public engagement can work and what the objectives are. Present this plan to ESC.

Dear

Stone Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 in response to the global movement which has been gathering pace since 2016. As a small town in a small country our opportunity to have a global impact is limited. However, as the United Kingdom is a major energy user and carbon dioxide producer, if all the towns, boroughs and counties in the country act together, it will reduce our adverse impact on the climate and it will influence other countries to show that we are doing our bit and encourage them to do theirs.

In this period of restrictions due to COVID 19 it is difficult to initiate any action and we certainly do not want to increase your already substantial workload. However, Stone Town Council are interested in whether there are any groups in the schools who are already active or are considering becoming active in this area, recognising that it is this age group who have shown in recent years that they are fully aware of the threat to their future. When the current restrictions are lifted, we intend to contact existing community groups or to encourage the formation of new groups and to assist them, if we can within our remit, to achieve their objectives.

There are other areas of environmental improvement that the council is looking at where the schools and pupil groups may already be active or considering future involvement, like plastic pollution, waste disposal, protecting green spaces and bio-diversity. Can you please let us know if, to your knowledge, there are any such groups in your school or whether you would be interested in having a dialogue with us, when the pandemic is out of the way?

Yours

Stone Town Council