

Stone Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting held in St Michael's Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone, on Tuesday 8 July 2021

PRESENT: Councillor J. Powell in the Chair and
Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson,
J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, R. Kenney, P. Leason, C. Thornicroft, R. Townsend
and S. Walley

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Best, I. Fordham, M. Green and M. Hatton

Before the meeting began Councillor Mrs Lin Davies led prayers

C22/011 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: A. Best, I. Fordham and M. Green

C22/012 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

C22/013 Representations from Members of the Public

None

C22/014 Acceptance of Office

The Town Clerk confirmed that Councillor Walley's Acceptance of Office had been received and was in order, following his appointment (at the by-election) on 6 May 2021.

C22/015 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 4 May 2021 (Minute Numbers C22/001 – C22/010), be approved as a correct record.

* 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.

C22/016 Draft Committee Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) The minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 4 May 2021 (Minute Numbers GP22/001 – GP22/018), were noted.
- b) The minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee Meeting held on the 4 May 2021 (Minute Numbers PC22/001 – PC22/006), were noted.

C22/017 Internal Auditor's Report 2020-21

The Council considered the following documents which had been circulated with the agenda, prior to the meeting:

- a. Formal Internal Audit submission to the External Auditors*
- b. Report from Internal Auditor*

The Council is required to consider an Internal Audit Report before approving the accounts for submission to the External Auditors.

The Town Clerk informed the Council that although one or two minor suggestions for improvement had been made, he was pleased with the Internal Auditor's report which was positive and the audit had been successful.

RESOLVED: To note the Internal Auditor's report and submission to external Audit.

C22/018 Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

The Council considered the Annual Governance Statement* which must be approved prior to consideration of the Council's accounts.

The Town Clerk advised the Council that he was disappointed to have had to put ticks in the "No" column of the governance statement for the first time. The need had arisen due to this meeting being postponed from 29th June 2021 until today due to a Covid risk at the meeting venue on the original date.

He explained that as a consequence of this postponement the submission of the accounts and the start of the public rights period had been delayed beyond the dates specified in the Accounts and Audit Regulations. In addition, the Council's accounts for 2019-20 had been published two working days prior to the start of last year's public rights period, rather than the one day required by the Regulations.

The Town Clerk further informed the Council that he had sought advice from the External Auditor when the 29th June 2021 meeting was cancelled in order to try to minimise the impact of the delay. The Governance Statement included with today's agenda was completed in accordance with that advice, and includes a full explanation* of the reasons for the delay.

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RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Governance Statement and supporting explanations for submission to the External Auditor for the year 2020-21.

C22/019 **Council Accounts 2020-21**

The Council considered the Town Clerk's report* and the accounting statement* which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- a) To approve the Council's Accounts for 2020-21 as set out in the report of the Town Clerk, including the use of the rollover reserve to allow the transfer of budgets between financial years and its proposed use in 2021-22.
- b) To note the variances between the forecast outturn for 2020-21 and the actual outturn, and the reasons identified for the major variances.
- c) To approve the financial statement for submission to the Council's external auditors.

C22/020 **Local Government Transparency Code 2015**
Openness of Public Bodies Regulations 2014

The report of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015* and Openness of Public Bodies Regulations 2014 were noted for the quarter ending 31 March 2021.

Councillor Mrs Hood made reference to the discussion at the Environment Sub-Committee meeting (on 6 July 2021) about the non removal of Willow trees at Crown Meadow and expressed her disappointment that the Town Council appeared to have removed trees from the scrapes. She asked whether they had been relocated.

The Town Clerk advised Councillor Mrs Hood that his understanding was that the trees had been relocated but said that he would confirm this after making enquiries to the Grounds Maintenance Contractor.

Councillor Mrs Hood said that it was good to know that the Council was following the Borough Council Biodiversity Officer's guidance.

C22/021 **Civic Announcements**

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

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C22/022 Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements

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

The meeting was suspended at this point to enable the open session of the General Purposes Committee meeting to take place.

The Town Council was then reconvened for the confidential items on the agenda.

C22/023 To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next item of business is 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.

C22/024 Confidential Committee Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) The draft Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 4 May 2021 (Minute Numbers GP22/001 and GP22/018), were noted.

TOWN MAYOR

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