



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

15 Station Road
STONE
ST15 8JP

1 September 2021

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** will be held in **St Michael's Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2021 at 7:05pm** or on the rising of the Council Meeting, if later.

The agenda is set out below and I trust you will be able to attend.

Attendees are asked to wear face masks other than when taking part in the meeting.

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Requests for Dispensations Received**
4. **To receive a report from County Councillors representing Stone Town**
 - County Councillor Mrs J. Hood
 - County Councillor I. Parry
5. **To receive a report from Borough Councillors representing Stone Town**
6. **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.

7. Minutes of Previous Meetings

- a) To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 3 August 2021, Minute No's GP22/038 – GP22/055 (attached).

8. Minutes of Sub-Committees

- a) Estates Sub-Committee held on 27 July 2021, Minute Numbers EST22/001 – EST22/008 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes
 - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Number EST22/005 and EST22/008
- b) Management Sub-Committee held on 27 July 2021, Minute Numbers MAN22/001 – MAN22/010 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes
 - iii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Number MAN22/005

9. To consider the following requests for grants from local organisations:

- **Christ Church First School**

10. Review of Standing Orders

To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached to the electronic version of the agenda).

11. Review of Financial Regulations

To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached to the electronic version of the agenda).

12. Budget Monitoring Report – July 2021

To receive the report of the Town Clerk (attached).

13. Stone Heritage Centre – Project Governance

To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached).

14. Stone Heritage Centre Working Group – Appointment of Co-Opted Non-Councillor Member

To consider the appointment of Helen Frost as a co-opted non-Councillor member of the Stone Heritage Centre Working Group (or the Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group, subject to item 13 above).

15. Covid-19 Commemoration

To consider how the Town Council should commemorate the lives of local people affected by Covid-19.

16. **Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

To discuss the setting up, membership and terms of reference of a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Working Group.

17. **Christmas 2021**

To consider the purchase of illuminated Christmas trees to be installed in the High Street during the festive season in 2021. (NOTE: This was considered and recommended by the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting on 31st August 2021, at a cost of £2,500).

18. **Town Council Payments**

To receive a list of payments made by the Council during the period 1st to 31 July 2021 (attached).

19. **Update from Working Groups:**

- a) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- b) Stone Area Parish Liaison Group
- c) Heritage Centre Working Group

20. **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 – Town Mayor & J. Davies

Age Concern Stone & District – Cllrs J. Davies and C. Thornicroft

Stafford & Stone Access Group – Cllr T. Kelt

Stone Common Plot Trustees – Cllrs: Mrs L. Davies, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt and R. Kenney

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group – Cllrs: Mrs L. Davies, Mrs J. Hood & J. Powell

SPCA Executive Committee – Cllr M. Green

21. **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.

22. **Confidential Minutes**

To approve the confidential minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 3 August 2021, Minute Numbers GP22/038 and GP22/055.

23. **To consider the Confidential Minutes and recommendations of the undermentioned Committees**

- a) Estates Sub-Committee Meeting held on 27 July 2021, Minute Numbers EST22/001 and EST22/008 (attached)
 - i. To consider the Minutes

- ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Number EST22/008
- b) Management Sub-Committee Meeting held on 27 July 2021, Minute Numbers MAN22/001 and MAN22/010 (attached)
 - i. To consider the Minutes

Members of the public are welcome to attend the General Purposes Committee meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of the scheme are displayed in the Council's notice boards and website.

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in St Michael's Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone, on Tuesday 3 August 2021

- PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: K. Argyle, A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt,
J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and S. Walley
- ABSENT:** Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs K. Dawson, I. Fordham, M. Green, M. Hatton,
J. Hickling, P. Leason and R. Townsend
-

GP22/038 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs K. Dawson,
I. Fordham, M. Green, J. Hickling, P. Leason and R. Townsend.

GP22/039 Declarations of Interests

None

GP22/040 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP22/041 To receive the report of the County Councillors

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs Hood to address the Committee.

County Highways

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that the Highways Team from Amey had done a very good job on road resurfacing/patching repairs in the town, particularly with challenges caused by the weather. The team had been sensitive to the needs of commuters having undertaken the work during the night (which wasn't something they had to do).

Councillor Mrs Hood congratulated the Highways team on the quality of work and in almost meeting their target completion date.

Plane Tree

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that block paving repairs around the Plane tree in Granville Square were scheduled to remedy uneven surfaces following tree root movement. This was an ongoing problem as the Highways Team had last carried out repair work between lockdowns.

Full County Council Meeting

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that she had called for a Covid-19 vaccination centre to be set up in Stone. She said this would assist young people to

* 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.

get vaccinated, remove the need for travel to Stoke on Trent or Stafford and eliminate associated costs.

New Pub at Crown Wharf

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that she and Councillor Kenny had been involved in the Crown Wharf development from its inception. She had delivered a report in favour of the development, challenged the Highways Department (one of the first jobs she had undertaken as a County Councillor) and supported the development at a Borough Council planning meeting where the architect had not been in favour of the traditional design (preferring something modern).

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that she was proud of the new pub and welcomed its opening which will be enjoyed by, all including the High Street. She said the pub was a remarkable achievement given the prevalence of public house closures nationally.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP22/042 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman informed the Committee that Stafford Borough Council was now sharing its Chief Executive with Cannock Chase Council (on a temporary basis which may become permanent). Two deputy Chief Executives have been appointed – one at Cannock and one at Stafford. The officers are also looking at further shared services.

The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs Hood to address the Committee.

Trees on Westbridge Park

Councillor Mrs Hood referred the Committee to a coloured information sheet (distributed at the meeting) detailing the diseases that had damaged trees in Westbridge Park. The Borough Council had needed to fell the trees and to remove associated dangers to the public.

Councillor Mrs Hood emphasised that the trees were only removed because they were diseased and will be replaced by the Borough Council. She invited people to contact her with any questions.

Tilling Drive

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that completion of the temporary road had over run and Stafford Borough Council's Legal Department had written to the developer about the delay.

She informed the Committee that the play area on Tilling Drive will be enhanced and only youngsters will be playing football there.

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that she was working to achieve a compromise with the care home developers on forming a workable screen. She said removing the footpath at the side of the field had been suggested along with the planting of an avenue of trees. A local business has very kindly come forward to provide them. She called for ideas from the Councillors present.

* 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.

Full Borough Council Meeting

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that the new Corporate Business Plan 2021-24 had been issued at the full Council Meeting (which could also be downloaded). She said Stone had one of the strongest communities in the Borough which had been demonstrated repeatedly through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillors were also given the new Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework booklet, and the draft Equality and Inclusion Policy 2021-24. The Borough Council's vision was to have a prosperous and attractive borough and an equal opportunity for all.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that the Welcome Back Fund would be financing the hanging baskets in the town and additional seating in the High Street.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that the Borough Council had granted the Royal British Legion the Freedom of the Borough which was unanimous decision.

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that a member of the public had asked the Leader of the Borough Council what action would be taken in response to the Boundary Commission for England's Boundary Review proposals and the Leader's response had been that town and parish councils should sort the matter out themselves. He didn't feel the Borough Council should get involved.

Councillor Mrs Hood expressed her view that this was a disappointing response and the Town Council had done an excellent job in writing to the Boundary Commission. Her belief that 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' was also the overwhelming message from residents. She assured everyone that the five Borough/Town Councillors would be pleased to continue working for the town on this matter.

GP22/043 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP22/044 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 8 July 2021 (Minute Numbers GP22/019 – GP22/037), be approved as a correct record.

GP22/045 Minutes of Sub-Committees

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 6 July 2021 (Minute Numbers TTP22/001 – TTP22/007), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP22/005 be adopted.
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 6 July 2021 (Minute Numbers ENV22/001 – ENV22/006), that the draft minutes be noted and the

* 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.

recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers ENV22/005 and ENV22/006 be adopted.

- c) Mayor's Charity Sub-Committee held on 6 July 2021 (Minute Numbers MC22/001 – MC22/006), that the draft minutes be noted along with the resolutions of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers MC22/004, MC22/005 and MC22/006.

GP22/046 Requests for Grants from Local Organisations

Florence Brass Band - £500

The Committee considered the grant application from Florence Brass Band requesting £500 towards two projects (identified before the Covid-19 pandemic struck). These are the redesigning of the storeroom to make it more ergonomic and improve safety when players collect instruments and accessories, and the advertising of vacant positions within the band.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the application didn't meet the Town Council's policy in relation to the level of reserves compared with annual income.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Florence Brass Band.

GP22/047 Covid-19

The Committee considered an email from Stafford Borough Council enquiring about the Town Council's intentions to commemorate local people who had lost their lives to Covid-19.

A copy of an email from Corporate Support had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The Committee expressed the strong view that a commemoration should include all people who had been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (including their relatives, friends and colleagues) and not just those who had died. The crisis had affected children who have missed almost two years of education, key workers and many others who have endured horrendous experiences.

The Committee also expressed the view that Stone was a distinctive and separate community wishing to create its own memorial or other appropriate commemoration. This approach would be far more significant for Stone people and reflect all sectors of the community.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is asked to inform the Borough Council that the town will independently be considering a commemoration for local people whose lives have been affected by Covid-19 and will advise the Borough Council should finance be required.

GP22/048 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies

The Committee received a copy of the Town Council's response to the Boundary Commission for England's Review of Parliamentary Constituencies (circulated with the agenda for the meeting)

* 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 Chairman reminded the Committee that the Town Council's draft representation had been circulated to Councillors prior to its submission. He confirmed that no Councillor had requested changes or alterations and all comments given had been positive.

GP22/049 Heroes of Stone Award

The Committee considered the establishment of a Town Mayor's Heroes of Stone award Scheme.

The Chairman invited the Town Mayor to address the Committee.

The Town Mayor advised the Committee that he would like to establish an annual Stone Heroes Awards Scheme in recognition of exceptional voluntary work delivered by the people of Stone. It would be similar to other award schemes except that local people will be recognised who might otherwise be overlooked by the larger district or county. The recipients would be nominated and the awards categorised into: Community Hero of the Year, Junior Hero of the Year, Team of the Year, Environmental Hero of the Year and the big award of Stone's Hero (which would be one of the four nominees).

There would be a merit award and a winner with the awards ceremony taking place at the Mayor's Civic Dinner.

The Town Mayor suggested the judges consist of the Mayor and Mayoress, the Mayor of the previous year, the Deputy Mayor and potentially the Mayor's Chaplain.

The Committee asked that the Town Mayor consider genuine volunteers or someone who had done something truly remarkable, rather than organisations with lots of paid staff.

RESOLVED: That the Town Mayor submits his plans for the Heroes of Stone Award to the Town Clerk to enable the rules and costings to be prepared for consideration at a future General Purposes Committee.

GP22/050 Community Diagnostic Hubs

The Committee considered an email (which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting) from the Clinical Lead at the Community Diagnostic Hubs Project.

The Community Diagnostic Hubs Project is working to improve diagnostic services and is asking members of the public to take part in a survey. The survey requests information about how people currently access diagnostic services and views on what they think of the emerging proposals.

The Clinical Lead explained that most diagnostic tests used to work out what is causing a person's illness or symptoms are done in larger hospitals and national guidance now recommends that NHS organisations move towards a local approach for Community Diagnostic Hubs (CDHs) in the county.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee about the nature of the questions and the Committee concluded that collectively the Town Council could only respond to certain questions as the survey had more of a personal leaning.

* 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.

Although the Committee expressed the view that the general answers to the questions were obvious: NHS services require improvement in timeliness, resources and management, it was agreed that individually Councillors should give their personal opinion and should promote the survey in the community.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee be authorised to respond to the generalised questions in the survey, on behalf of the Town Council.

GP22/051 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made by the Council during the period 1 to 30 June 2021.

Councillor Mrs Hood said that the service provided by Stafford Borough Council to install and remove the bollards in the High Street was not always delivered. The Town Clerk said that he would follow this matter up.

GP22/052 Update from Working Groups:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that no meeting of the Steering Group had taken place.

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies informed the Committee that an excellent meeting had been held on 21 July via Zoom which was useful for these sorts of meetings as attendees were situated all around the northern part of the Borough. The usual topics were discussed such as HS2 and the consultation on the proposed Parliamentary Constituency boundaries.

Councillor Davies said that the forum continues to prove extremely useful and was not very time consuming for those who attend it.

Heritage Centre Working Group

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that the Working Group's first meeting had been held last week, and members were joined by an architect and two experts in the field of heritage centres. All will supply costings before moving on with the project.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the working group had split into two specialised work areas; one for the heritage centre build and internal fittings and the other for the displays and exhibits.

The Town Clerk gave reassurances that the working group was a single working group that involved a piece of work requiring specialities. He said the working group would be expected to come together on a regular basis to ensure that its work was co-ordinated.

* 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.

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 Stone ATC had a meeting that evening. He reported that they were doing very well and sent their grateful thanks to the Town Council for the grant that had assisted in the purchase of air rifles which are now in full use and adding an extra and valued dimension to the training that the cadets receive.

Stone ATC is down to 14 cadets at the moment but they are unable to have more than 12 people at any one time under the Covid regulations. Next month they are going to do some more recruiting.

Councillor Davies said Stone ATC will be looking at providing a nomination for the Town Mayor's Cadet and hope to be present on Civic Sunday. They are affected by the Air Training Corps Covid-19 regulations and won't be able to march but can be present at the church.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that there had been no meeting.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt reported that a meeting had taken place a week ago which was both a regular meeting and also the AGM. The main part of the meeting had been taken up by a representative from the Borough Council Housing Group who came to talk about the availability of suitably adapted houses. Houses offered to disabled people are not always suitably adapted for their disability. The Housing Group have agreed to work on an adapted properties register so the adaptations can be fitted/made to the houses that are available.

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that the website had been discussed and an expert had advised that changes were required due to Brexit. Further information was awaited on this matter.

The Chair has announced that he will be standing down next year which will bring the Committee close to collapse due to lack of membership. There is a need to recruit new members.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Kenney confirmed that there had been no further meetings since the Plot walk.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Mrs Hood, Councillor Mrs Davies and Councillor Powell confirmed that no meetings had taken place.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Green was not available to provide a report.

The meeting was temporarily suspended and then reconvened after the open session of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting had taken place.

GP22/054 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.

GP22/055 Heritage Centre Lease

The Committee considered whether to enter into a lease for the operation of the Heritage Centre. A copy of the lease and associated documents had been attached to the electronic version of the confidential agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is authorised to sign the lease for the Heritage Centre on behalf of the Town Council.

CHAIRMAN

Stone Town Council – Estates Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 27 July 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs L. Davies in the Chair and
Councillors: A. Best, M. Hatton, Mrs J. Hood and C. Thornicroft

By Chairman's invitation: Councillors: J. Davies and P. Leason

ABSENT: Councillors: I. Fordham, J. Powell and R. Townsend

EST22/001 Apologies

Councillors: I. Fordham, J. Powell and R. Townsend

EST22/002 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

EST22/003 Representations from Members of the Public

None received

EST22/004 Minutes of Previous Meeting

That the minutes of the Estates Sub-Committee meeting held on the 27 April 2021 (Minute Numbers EST20/041 – EST20/047), be approved as a correct record.

EST22/005 Update on Frank Jordan Centre

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to provide the Sub-Committee with an update on the Frank Jordan Centre.

The Town Clerk reported on the progress of works set up by the previous Chairman and confirmed that the only outstanding item was the painting of parking bay lines on the Frank Jordan Centre car park.

The Sub-Committee questioned whether it was advantageous to go ahead with the marking of the car park bays given that people don't necessarily park correctly and the costs of around £750 could be saved.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the original objective for

* 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.

marking the parking bays had been to increase the availability of spaces as parking was often haphazard.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Grounds Maintenance Contractor had drawn up a plan but was concerned about how long the lines would last as the surface material is rough and loose. The Grounds Maintenance Contractor was for this reason attempting to find a suitable material that would provide a reasonable life.

The Sub-Committee expressed concern that the work, for reasons relating to its execution and use of the car park thereafter, might not lead to a successful outcome. The car park is already difficult to negotiate and a topdressing might be first needed.

RECOMMENDED: That the marking of the car parking bays at the Frank Jordan Centre are put on hold at the present time.

EST22/006 Reports of Working Groups

Market Strategy (Market Pricing & Strategy)

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Market Strategy Working Group had not met.

Use of Frank Jordan Centre and Stone Station

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that no meeting of the Community Centres Working Group had taken place.

The Estates Sub-Committee meeting was adjourned and then reconvened after the Management Sub-Committee meeting had taken place.

EST22/007 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.

EST22/008 Update on Stone Station

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update the Sub-Committee on the current position on Stone Station Community Centre.

The Town Clerk updated the Sub-Committee on progress.

* 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.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Clerk is authorised to further progress this issue.

Chairman

* 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 – Management Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 27 July 2021

PRESENT: Councillor J. Davies in the Chair and
Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs L. Davies and R. Kenney

By Chairman's invitation: Mrs J. Hood and P. Leason

ABSENT: Councillor: I. Fordham, M. Green, T. Kelt and J. Powell

MAN22/001 **Apologies**

Councillors: I. Fordham, M. Green, T. Kelt and J. Powell

MAN22/002 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received

MAN22/003 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None received

MAN22/004 **Minutes**

That the Minutes of the Management Sub-Committee Meeting held on the 27 April 2021 (Minute No's MAN20/053 – MAN20/058), be approved as a correct record.

MAN22/005 **Policies and Procedures**

The Sub-Committee considered the updated Press and Media Protocol which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the main differences in the updated Protocol were that it had been tightened and expanded to include social media and self generated items such as Members' own websites or YouTube channels. The updated Protocol also focusses on the point that members of the public don't necessarily always understand when a Councillor is acting as a Councillor and provides guidance in this respect.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the most significant of the individual changes was that Councillors should not describe themselves as

* 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.

Councillors unless they are doing something directly related to council business, including ward casework. They should not describe themselves as Councillor when doing something for another body to ensure there is no question of confusion about their position.

The Town Clerk reminded the Sub-Committee that using a Councillor's own email address for council business was subject to Freedom of Information.

RECOMMENDED: That the Press and Media Protocol is accepted by the Town Council.

MAN22/006 Headstone

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update the Sub-Committee on project Headstone after implementation following the death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Headstone protocol had worked well although there hadn't been as many actions to implement as would have been required under normal circumstances (outside of Covid-19 restrictions).

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the action points agreed with Stafford Borough Council had not gone exactly to plan but good communication links had ensured that things did work out in the end. For example, the Town Council had been told not to issue its own press release using its own words (amongst other things) but the County Council and Borough Council proceeded to produce their own statements and Stone Town Council then followed their lead.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the document would be updated with new members of the Royal Family but he did not believe there was a need to update the procedures.

The Sub-Committee concluded that the protocol had worked well and the Town Clerk was thanked for his efforts.

MAN22/007 Financial Control

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that this item had been listed on the agenda after Councillors had expressed a desire to better understand the financial controls of larger town councils (rather than the financial controls of smaller councils which had been covered on various training courses).

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to brief the Sub-Committee on the Town Council's financial management and control procedures.

* 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 Clerk explained the Town Council's financial management and control procedures in detail (splitting the topic into strategic and operational financial management) with the support of an accompanying note* that was distributed at the meeting.

At the end of the briefing the Sub-Committee concluded that it was satisfied appropriate financial procedures were in place. The Chairman stressed that it was incumbent upon Councillors to take responsibility for checking reports (particularly the regular payments list and bank reconciliations) conscientiously.

MAN22/008 Updates

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to provide updates on the following:

a. Website

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that some improvements had been made to the website but more time was needed to modernise its design.

He explained that the website was a Council information website as opposed to a community website that sought to publicise the town.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that no new work had been undertaken in relation to Facebook.

The Sub-Committee expressed concern about potential data protection issues with Facebook and the Town Clerk suggested that a Facebook page, if launched, should include only news and event items.

b. Service Continuity Plan

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that time spent working from home had demonstrated an ability to do so which was useful to know in respect of service continuity.

He advised that there was still a lot of paper in the office and the Deputy Town Clerk was looking at the potential for digitising the office filing system.

The Sub-Committee concluded that the measures in place were effective but further lessons would continue to be learned to improve resilience in the future.

* 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.

MAN22/009 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.

MAN22/010 Staffing Matters

The Sub-Committee considered the Town Clerk's report on staff recruitment which had been issued with the agenda for the meeting.

The Sub-Committee concluded that it would revisit the staffing needs of the Council in respect of the Heritage Centre and Events and Marketing requirements when the staffing needs for the Heritage Centre had been identified.

Chairman

* 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.

Application for Grant Aid



Name of organisation:

Christ Church First School

Purpose of organisation:

Educational establishment for children from reception to year 4 (ages 4-9)

Amount of grant requested:

£500

Total cost of project (if appropriate):

£10000

Reason for grant request:

Christ Church First School is the only school in Stone town that has no green space for children's play. The playground is not very child-friendly; it is north facing, all tarmac and is surrounded by a wall topped with wire mesh. The intention of the PTFA is to improve the appearance and facilities of the playground making it a more attractive, safe and rewarding space in which the children can play. We hope to add murals to the wall, build a green space with an outdoor classroom area and instal a bike and scooter park.

We would like to apply to the Town Council for Grant Aid towards the installation of the bike and scooter park. Northesk Street is very busy, particularly in the morning, with children being dropped off at three schools and a nursery in the vicinity. We would hope to encourage parents to bring children to school on foot, scooters or bikes so as to reduce the congestion and pollution around the school. We would also hope to stress the health benefits for children in travelling to and from school in this way. If we can provide a secure place to leave scooter and bikes this will help us in this aim.

The new playground plans are all focused on pupil wellbeing and we plan to do much more work on this is the coming academic year. The ability to ride or scoot to school would certainly support these plans as physical activity is very important in terms of the benefits for children's mental health and th ability to provide more space to store the bikes and scooters would be a real bonus.

Benefits to Stone residents:

The pupils of the school will obviously benefit if we can provide these facilities for them.

In addition, anything that can be done to improve congestion at the north end of the town will be beneficial to residents in reducing pollution and the inherent danger of so many cars on narrow residential roads with on street parking. It will assist Stone’s environmental improvement aspirations.

Other sources of funding secured or being explored (with amounts where known):

The money for this venture will be raised almost entirely by the PTFA through fund raising activities The PTFA have already raised £600 towards the work through raffles and school functions. Raising this amount of money is an enormous undertaking for a small school with a significant proportion of pupils from low income families.

Is this an “exceptional” request (see notes)? If so, please explain why the Council should treat it as an exception:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Grants awarded by the Council in the last two years, and the uses made of the funding:

None

Statement of support from Council appointed representative (if applicable):

Click or tap here to enter text.



Management Accounts Report

CCFS - Christ Church First School Period 9 (May 2021)

	FSC Christ Church First School									
	CURRENT PERIOD				YTD TOTALS				FULL YEAR	FORECAST
	Actual	Commitments	Budget	Variance	Actual	Commitments	Budget	Variance	Budget	Forecast
Income										
A0 - GAG funding	63,417.03	-	51,182.00	12,235.03	469,776.02	-	460,638.00	9,138.02	614,184.00	#VALUE!
A2 - Other Govt Grants	6,562.59	-	3,175.00	3,387.59	18,571.42	-	28,575.00	(10,003.58)	38,100.00	#VALUE!
A3 - Private Sector Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	#VALUE!
A4 - Other Income	637.99	-	1,766.00	(1,128.01)	7,230.32	-	15,894.00	(8,663.68)	21,192.00	#VALUE!
Total Income	70,617.61	-	56,123.00	14,494.61	495,577.76	-	505,107.00	(9,529.24)	673,476.00	#VALUE!
Expenditure										
Staffing Expenditure										
B0 - Teaching Staff	26,683.23	-	27,985.00	1,301.77	259,928.36	-	270,255.00	10,326.64	353,768.00	#VALUE!
B1 - Educational Support Staff	10,737.01	-	10,970.00	232.99	92,448.83	-	91,540.00	(908.83)	124,450.00	#VALUE!
B2 - Premises Staffing	659.50	-	673.00	13.50	5,408.92	-	5,365.00	(43.92)	7,384.00	#VALUE!
B3 - Admin Staffing	3,406.20	-	3,479.00	72.80	30,696.23	-	30,359.00	(337.23)	40,796.00	#VALUE!
B4 - Other Staff	1,205.13	-	1,727.00	521.87	14,245.99	-	14,535.00	289.01	19,716.00	#VALUE!
B5 - Agency Staff	3,075.00	-	2,208.00	(867.00)	30,181.11	-	19,872.00	(10,309.11)	26,496.00	#VALUE!
Total Staffing Expenditure	45,766.07	-	47,042.00	1,275.93	432,909.44	-	431,926.00	(983.44)	572,610.00	#VALUE!
C0 - Maintenance of Premises	1,719.70	-	83.00	(1,636.70)	3,095.03	373.75	747.00	(2,721.78)	996.00	#VALUE!
C1 - Other Occupational Costs	1,865.70	-	2,399.00	533.30	22,401.99	7.65	21,591.00	(818.64)	28,788.00	#VALUE!
D0 - Educational Supplies and Services	1,484.01	-	1,358.00	(126.01)	10,997.09	49.52	12,222.00	1,175.39	16,296.00	#VALUE!
E0 - Other Supplies and Services	7,334.16	-	7,534.00	199.84	68,165.38	38.77	67,806.00	(398.15)	90,408.00	#VALUE!
F0 - ICT Costs (Non Capital)	-	-	133.00	133.00	403.91	182.00	1,197.00	611.09	1,596.00	#VALUE!



Management Accounts Report

CCFS - Christ Church First School

Period 9 (May 2021)

G0 - Staff Development	99.00	-	342.00	243.00	2,884.60	-	3,078.00	193.40	4,104.00	#VALUE!
Total Other Expenditure	12,502.57	-	11,849.00	(653.57)	107,948.00	651.69	106,641.00	(1,958.69)	142,188.00	#VALUE!
Total Expenditure	58,268.64	-	58,891.00	622.36	540,857.44	651.69	538,567.00	(2,942.13)	714,798.00	#VALUE!
Surplus / (Deficit) excl. Capital	12,348.97	-	(2,768.00)	15,116.97	(45,279.68)	(651.69)	(33,460.00)	(12,471.37)	(41,322.00)	#VALUE!
Notes to the Management Accounts										
Capital										
Capital Income										
W0 - Capital Income	-	-	457.00	(457.00)	11,664.94	-	4,113.00	7,551.94	5,484.00	#VALUE!
Total Capital Income	-	-	457.00	(457.00)	11,664.94	-	4,113.00	7,551.94	5,484.00	#VALUE!
Capital Expenditure										
W1 - Capital Expenditure	-	-	385.00	385.00	16,848.94	6,710.00	3,465.00	(20,093.94)	4,620.00	#VALUE!
Total Capital Expenditure	-	-	385.00	385.00	16,848.94	6,710.00	3,465.00	(20,093.94)	4,620.00	#VALUE!
Total Capital Funds	-	-	72.00	(72.00)	(5,184.00)	(6,710.00)	648.00	(12,542.00)	864.00	#VALUE!
Surplus / (Deficit) inc. Capital	12,348.97	-	(2,696.00)	15,044.97	(50,463.68)	(7,361.69)	(32,812.00)	(25,013.37)	(40,458.00)	#VALUE!

Introduction

1. This report undertakes a review of the Council's Standing Orders Related to Council Business (Standing Orders).
2. In accordance with normal practice, this review should not be considered at the meeting on 7th September 2021, but stand adjourned until the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.

Background

3. It is good practice to review the Council's Standing Orders on a regular basis. The last review was undertaken in June 2019 and a number of changes have taken place since then, including Brexit and the pandemic.
4. A draft updated version of Standing Orders is attached. The revisions made are generally in respect of updated regulations and the consolidation, where appropriate, of temporary changes made during the pandemic. These changes are explained below.
5. There have also been some revisions made to improve English and readability which have no other material effect on the document.

Revisions

6. The main proposed changes to Standing Orders are set out below.
7. **Standing Order 6.3b** – This relates to the location of meetings and has been updated to allow the Town Clerk to determine the location of meetings if a good reason exists not to hold the meetings in their originally planned location. It includes the conversion of previously planned physical meetings to online meetings, where permitted by law, and vice versa.
8. **Standing Orders 10.8 and 10.9** – These revisions consolidate the changes to dealing with urgent matters that have been in practice during the pandemic. They including the procedure for dealing with urgent planning matters, which have become more common since the Planning Consultative Committee has moved to monthly meetings.
9. **Standing Order 16.2a** – Serving notice on Councillors by email to attend meetings has been added.
10. **Standing Order 18.5** – The Standing Order now allows for dates other than 30th June for the accounts submission deadline if specified in national Regulations.

11. **Standing Order 19.5** – This is related to procurement, and has been updated to reflect Britain's exit from the European Union and the latest contract threshold figures.

Conclusions

12. This report has considered the Council's Standing Orders Related to Council Business and made recommendation for updating them for consideration by the Committee.
13. In accordance with normal practice, these recommendations should not be considered at the meeting on 7th September 2021, but stand adjourned until the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.

Recommendations

14. The Committee is recommended to:
- a. Update the Council's Standing Orders Related to Council Business in accordance with the proposed revisions contained in this report.
 - b. Consider any other changes that it would want to make to Standing Orders.

Stone

Town Council



Standing Orders

Related to Council Business

September 2021

Contents

1	General.....	3
2	Rules of debate at meetings	3
3	Disorderly conduct at meetings.....	5
4	Meetings generally.....	5
5	Committees and sub-committees.....	8
6	Ordinary council meetings	9
7	Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees	10
8	Previous resolutions	11
9	Voting on appointments	11
10	Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer ...	11
11	Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice.....	12
12	Handling confidential or sensitive information.....	13
13	Draft minutes.....	13
14	Code of conduct and dispensations.....	13
15	Code of conduct complaints.....	14
16	Proper Officer	15
17	Responsible Financial Officer	16
18	Accounts and accounting statements	16
19	Financial controls and procurement	16
20	Staffing matters	18
21	Requests for information	18
22	Relations with the press/media.....	18
23	Execution and sealing of legal deeds	18
24	Restrictions on councillor activities	19

1 GENERAL

- 1.1 These standing orders govern the conduct of the business of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council¹.
- 1.2 Should there be a clash between the provisions of this document and those within other documents which prescribe the activities of the Council, the order of precedence shall be:
 - a. National Legislation
 - b. The Council's Standing Orders (this document)
 - c. All other documents
- 1.3 All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting. *(NOTE: Where a standing order incorporates a mandatory statutory requirement, the requirement and the circumstances in which the requirement applies is indicated in brackets following the relevant standing order below. This does not indicate that the application of the standing order is limited only to those circumstances, but just indicates the extent to which the standing order can be suspended by this provision).*
- 1.4 A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10 below.
- 1.5 The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a Councillor as soon as possible after they have delivered their acceptance of office form.
- 1.6 The decision of the chairman² of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

2 RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- 2.1 Items on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- 2.2 A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- 2.3 A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer will be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- 2.4 If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder.

¹ All references to "the Council" in this document shall also be considered to refer to the General Purposes Committee for functions which have been delegated to that Committee.

² All references to "Chairman" and "Vice-Chairman" shall be considered to refer to the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor in respect of a full Council meeting.

- 2.5 The mover of a motion shall have a right to reply, not exceeding five minutes, at the conclusion of the debate immediately before the motion is put to the vote. No further debate shall take place once this right to reply has been exercised.
- 2.6 An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- 2.7 If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the amendment becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- 2.8 An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- 2.9 A councillor may make an amendment to their own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall require the consent of the seconder.
- 2.10 Subject to standing order 2.11 below, if there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, in the order directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- 2.11 In exceptional circumstances, several amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- 2.12 A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- 2.13 The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- 2.14 Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 2.15 Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
- a. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - b. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
 - c. to make a point of order;
 - d. to give a personal explanation; or
 - e. in exercise of a right of reply.
- 2.16 During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- 2.17 A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting, whose decision shall be final.
- 2.18 When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:

- a. to amend the motion;
- b. to proceed to the next business;
- c. to adjourn the debate;
- d. to put the motion to a vote;
- e. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
- f. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
- g. to exclude the public and press;
- h. to adjourn the meeting; or
- i. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.

- 2.19 Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that sufficient information is available to make a sound decision, the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- 2.20 Excluding motions moved under standing order 2.18 above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed five minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

3 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- 3.1 No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- 3.2 If these person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- 3.3 If a resolution made under standing order 3.2 above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

4 MEETINGS GENERALLY

- 4.1 Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost. *(Mandatory: Council only)*
- 4.2 Public notice of the time and place of meeting shall be given by posting it outside the Council's offices at least three days before the meeting. The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning. *(Mandatory: Council. For committees, the minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the*

day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting. There are no mandatory requirements for sub-committees)

- 4.3 Meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
(Mandatory: Council and Committees)
- 4.4 Subject to standing order 4.3 above and the provisions of the Council's scheme of public participation, members of the public are permitted to:
- a. Make representations or raise issues at any ordinary Council meeting in relation to the work of the Council.
 - b. Raise issues at any ordinary committee or sub-committee meeting related to items of business on the agenda.
 - c. Present petitions at any ordinary Council meeting on issues within the Council's remit.
- 4.5 Subject to standing order 4.4, no more than two members of the public are entitled to speak at any full Council meeting, and shall each shall speak once only, for not more than 10 minutes. Where more than two members of the public have requested to speak, the Proper Officer shall determine which requests shall have preference, based on their relevance to the meeting, the urgency of the matter to be raised and the time that the request was received.
- 4.6 In accordance with standing order 4.4 above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a full Council meeting shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question.
- 4.7 In accordance with standing order 4.6 above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response, to a committee or sub-committee for further consideration or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- 4.8 Subject to standing order 4.4, no more than four members of the public are entitled to speak at any committee or sub-committee meeting, and shall each shall speak once only, for not more than three minutes (five minutes if there are two or less speakers). Where more than four members of the public have requested to speak, the Proper Officer shall determine which requests shall have preference, based on their relevance to the meeting, the urgency of the matter to be raised and the time that the request was received.
- 4.9 No response shall be made to a public submission made under paragraph 4.8 above, nor any debate entered into, as the item will be fully debated when the agenda item itself is considered.
- 4.10 A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- 4.11 A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

- 4.12 A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- 4.13 Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- 4.14 The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present. *(Mandatory: Council and Committees)*
- 4.15 Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council. *(Mandatory: Council)*
- 4.16 The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting. *(Mandatory: Council)*
- 4.17 Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting. *(Mandatory)*
- 4.18 The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote. *See standing orders 6.8 and 6.9 below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council. (Mandatory)*
- 4.19 Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, their own vote will be recorded in the minutes. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- 4.20 In addition, any councillor may request that the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.
- 4.21 The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
- a. the time and place of the meeting;
 - b. the names of councillors present and absent;
 - c. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - d. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - e. if there was a public participation session; and
 - f. the resolutions made.
- 4.22 A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.

- 4.23 No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council, committee or sub-committee are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.
- 4.24 If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- 4.25 A meeting shall not exceed a period of 1.5 hours, nor any group of meetings held on the same evening exceed 2.5 hours without a resolution of the meeting to continue beyond this limit.

5 COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- 5.1 The council may appoint standing committees or other committees and sub-committees as may be necessary, and:
- a. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - b. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
 - c. shall permit a committee and sub-committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - d. shall appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee or sub-committee;
 - e. shall, after it has appointed the members of a committee or sub-committee, appoint the chairman of that committee or sub-committee;
 - f. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - g. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
 - h. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
 - i. may dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
- 5.2 Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee or sub-committee may appoint one or more working groups whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the appointing committee or sub-committee.
- 5.3 Notwithstanding any appointments made to sub-committees and working groups under standing orders 5.1d and 5.2 above, the Town Mayor and the chairman of the parent committee shall be ex-officio members of all sub-committees and working groups with full voting rights.
- 5.4 The members of a committee, sub-committee or working group may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.
- 5.5 Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.

6 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- 6.1 In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
- 6.2 In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.
- 6.3 All meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees shall take place at 15 Station Road, Stone, with the first meeting commencing at 7:00pm, unless:
 - a. it is specifically agreed otherwise at a previous meeting, or,
 - b. it is anticipated, prior to the dispatch of meeting notice(s), that there would be a good reason that the meeting(s) should not be held in this or another previously agreed location, wherein the Town Clerk would be authorised to arrange an alternative location for the meeting(s). This includes the calling of an online meeting where permitted by law, or the conversion of a previously planned online meeting to a physical one.
- 6.4 In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.
- 6.5 The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor.
- 6.6 The Town Mayor, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.
- 6.7 The Deputy Mayor, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Town Mayor at the next annual meeting of the council.
- 6.8 In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a successor Town Mayor has been elected. The current Town Mayor shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 6.9 In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a new Town Mayor has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 6.10 Following the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting may include:
 - a. In an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
 - b. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
 - c. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - d. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;

- e. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
- f. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- g. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- h. Appointment of any new committees;
- i. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- j. Review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
- k. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- l. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- m. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
- n. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;
- o. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- p. Review of the council's complaints procedure;
- q. Review of the council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998;
- r. Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press/media; and
- s. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council.

7 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- 7.1 The Town Mayor may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.
- 7.2 If the Town Mayor does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.
- 7.3 The chairman of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- 7.4 If the chairman of a committee or a sub-committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee or a sub-committee.

8 PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- 8.1 A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least six councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- 8.2 When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 8.1 above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

9 VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- 9.1 Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

10 MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- 10.1 A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- 10.2 No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least ten clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice, the day of the meeting, Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays.
- 10.3 The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 10.2 above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- 10.4 If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 10.2 above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least ten clear days before the meeting.
- 10.5 If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

- 10.6 Subject to standing order 10.5 above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- 10.7 Should any urgent business arise between scheduled meetings of the Council or any standing committee or sub-committee, the Proper Officer will call a special meeting to deal with the issue.
- 10.8 Where urgent planning business occurs between ordinary meetings of the Council's Planning Consultative Committee, the Proper Officer shall circulate details of the business to Members, asking for comments. Where the view of Members is clear, and where no Member has requested that a special meeting of the Planning Consultative Committee should be arranged to discuss the business, those views shall be conveyed to the Borough Council by the Proper Officer following consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Consultative Committee or other appropriate Member(s) in the absence of the Chairman.
- 10.9 Where any matter is so urgent that it is not reasonable to call a special meeting with the legally required notice periods, the Council's Proper Officer is authorised to take any decision on behalf of the Council which can legally be delegated by the Council to an officer. Before taking such a decision, the Proper Officer shall take reasonable steps to consult with Council Members, and shall report the decision and the reason for its urgency at the next ordinary meeting of the Council or one of its committees if the decision would normally have been taken there.

11 MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

- 11.1 The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
- a. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - b. to move to a vote;
 - c. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - d. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - e. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - f. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - g. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - h. to require a written report;
 - i. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
 - j. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - k. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - l. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
 - m. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - n. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - o. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
 - p. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - q. to close a meeting.

12 HANDLING CONFIDENTIAL OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION

- 12.1 The agenda, papers that support the agenda, and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- 12.2 Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

13 DRAFT MINUTES

- 13.1 If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- 13.2 There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 11.1a above.
- 13.3 The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- 13.4 If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but that view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- 13.5 Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

14 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 4.22 above.

- 14.1 All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- 14.2 Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

- 14.3 Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall not take part in any debate or vote at a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a personal interest, though they would be permitted to take part in a public participation item in the same way as any member of the public.
- 14.4 Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer before the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- 14.5 A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the meeting of the council, committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- 14.6 A dispensation request shall confirm:
- a. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - b. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - c. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding the remaining time to the next Council election) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - d. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- 14.7 Subject to standing orders 14.4 and 14.6 above, dispensation requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- 14.8 A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 14.5 above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:
- a. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business, or
 - b. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area, or
 - c. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

15 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- 15.1 Upon formal written notification from Stafford Borough Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 12 above, report this to the council.
- 15.2 Where the notification in standing order 15.1 above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Town Mayor of this fact, and the Town Mayor shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 15.4 below.
- 15.3 The council may:

- a. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
 - b. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- 15.4 Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office. *(Mandatory)*

16 PROPER OFFICER

- 16.1 The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent or otherwise unable to act.
- 16.2 The Proper Officer shall:
 - a. at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by email (where agreed) or by delivery or post at their residences, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda. *(Mandatory for council and committees. See standing order 4.2 above for the meaning of clear days.);*
 - b. give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them); *(Mandatory for council and committees. See standing order 4.2 above for the meaning of clear days.);*
 - c. subject to standing order 10 above, include on the agenda all motions put forward by councillors unless withdrawn by the councillor themselves at least six clear days before the meeting;
 - d. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in the office *(Mandatory);*
 - e. facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
 - f. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities *(Mandatory);*
 - g. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
 - h. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
 - i. assist with responding to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the council's policies and procedures relating to the same;
 - j. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
 - k. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;
 - l. arrange for legal deeds to be executed; See also standing order 23 below.
 - m. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;

- n. record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority;
- o. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
- p. retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used for the sealing of legal deeds without a resolution to that effect. *See also standing order 23 below.*

17 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 17.1 The Town Clerk shall undertake the role of responsible financial officer, unless there is a council resolution appointing a different officer. The council shall appoint an appropriate staff member to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

18 ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- 18.1 "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England)
- 18.2 All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council's financial regulations.
- 18.3 The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise the Council's income and expenditure compared with the approved budget and an explanation of significant variances.
- 18.4 As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide each councillor with a statement summarising the council's income and expenditure for the year and the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of the annual return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- 18.5 The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices for a year to 31 March. The annual return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June or any other such date as specified in regulations.

19 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- 19.1 The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
- a. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - b. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;

- c. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - d. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - e. procurement policies (subject to standing orders 19.3 to 19.8 below).
- 19.2 Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly for fitness of purpose.
- 19.3 The letting of contracts by the Council must be in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, or subsequent replacement/supplementary legislation.
- 19.4 Contracts below the value of £25,000 are outside the scope of standing orders, but may be governed by the provisions within the Council's financial regulations.
- 19.5 Contracts above the value prescribed in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 of £189,330³ or £4,733,252³, which have "detailed and complex" requirements will be undertaken in partnership with the Borough or County Council, who will be able to ensure that these complex regulations are adhered to.
- 19.6 Between these two figures, the Council may:
 - a. Advertise the contract or otherwise offer it on the open market. In this case the provisions of the 2015 regulations apply, and the contract must also be published on the "Contract Finder" website.
 - b. Offer the contract to a closed list of contractors, whereby the provisions of the 2015 regulations do not apply.
 - c. Offer the contract to its "preferred contractor" identified for that area of work, where the 2015 regulations regarding advertising on the "Contracts Finder" website would also not apply.
- 19.7 Subject to any additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works under standing orders 19.6a and 19.6b above where the value is anticipated to exceed £60,000 shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - a. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - b. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - c. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and/or other manner that is appropriate (standing order 19.6a only);
 - d. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - e. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;

³ September 2021 values. These figures may vary from time to time.

- f. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

19.8 Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value, or any, tender.

20 STAFFING MATTERS

- 20.1 The Town Clerk shall act as employer for of the Council's paid employees and voluntary staff.
- 20.2 All written records in respect of staffing matters shall be kept confidential and secure. Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records if so justified.
- 20.3 Appointments, dismissals, performance, disciplinary issues and grievances shall be considered in accordance with the Council's Staffing Guidelines.

21 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

- 21.1 Requests for information held by the council shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 21.2 Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee. The said committee shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

22 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

- 22.1 Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

23 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing orders 16.2l and 16.2p above.

- 23.1 A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- 23.2 Subject to standing order 23.1 above, the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.

24 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- 24.1 No Councillor shall purport to represent the Council, or make any suggestion that they have the authority to make a binding decision on behalf of the Council, unless previously authorised by a properly minuted resolution.
- 24.2 Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
- a. inspect any land and/or premises which the council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - b. issue orders, instructions or directions.

Introduction

1. This report undertakes a review of the Council's Financial Regulations.
2. In accordance with normal practice, this review should not be considered at the meeting on 7th September 2021, but stand adjourned until the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.

Background

3. It is good practice to review the Council's Financial Regulations on a regular basis. The last review was undertaken in June 2019 and a number of changes have taken place since then, including Brexit and the pandemic.
4. A draft updated version of Financial Regulations is attached. The revisions made are generally in respect of Brexit and changes agreed since the last full update. These changes are explained below.
5. There have also been some revisions made to improve English and readability which have no other material effect on the document.

Revisions

6. The main proposed changes to Financial Regulations are set out below.
7. **Regulation 5.7b** – This changes the requirement to produce a report of all payments¹ alongside the quarterly budget monitoring reports to a requirement to produce a report of all payments¹ to each ordinary meeting of the General Purposes Committee. In practice, this increased frequency of reporting has already been taking place for several months.
8. **Regulation 5.10** – The update allows payments to be made using PayPal. Payments by PayPal were approved by this Committee at its meeting on 5th November 2019, Minute 20/123. The revision consolidates this amendment, and requires all electronic payments to be included in the report to this Committee required by Regulation 5.7b.
9. **Regulation 10.3** - This is related to procurement, and has been updated to reflect Britain's exit from the European Union and the latest contract threshold figures.

¹ except those already exempted by regulation 5.8

Conclusions

10. This report has considered the Council's Financial Regulations and made recommendation for updating them for consideration by the Committee.
11. In accordance with normal practice, these recommendations should not be considered at the meeting on 7th September 2021, but stand adjourned until the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.

Recommendations

12. The Committee is recommended to:
 - a. Update the Council's Financial Regulations in accordance with the proposed revisions contained in this report.
 - b. Consider any other changes that it would want to make to Financial Regulations.

Stone

Town Council



Financial Regulations

September 2021

Contents

1	General	3
2	Accounting And Audit (Internal And External)	5
3	Annual Estimates (Budget) and Forward Planning	7
4	Budgetary Control and Authority To Spend	7
5	Banking Arrangements and Payments	8
6	Payment of Salaries	9
7	Loans and Investments	10
8	Income	11
9	Orders for Work, Goods and Services	12
10	Contracts	12
11	Payments Under Contracts for Building or Other Construction Works (Public Works Contracts) ..	14
12	Stores and Equipment	14
13	Assets, Properties and Estates	15
14	Insurance	15
15	Charities	16
16	Risk Management	16
17	Suspension and Revision of Financial Regulations	16

1 GENERAL

- 1.1 These regulations govern the conduct of the financial activities of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council or the General Purposes (GP) Committee¹.
- 1.2 Should there be a clash between the provisions of this document and those within other documents which prescribe the activities of the Council, the order of precedence shall be:
 - a. National Legislation
 - b. The Council's Standing Orders
 - c. Financial Regulations (this document)
 - d. All other documents
- 1.3 The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.4 The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - a. for the timely production of accounts;
 - b. that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - c. to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - d. identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.5 These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.6 Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7 Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Town Clerk shall be the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), and as such shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

¹ All references to "the Council" in this document shall also be considered to refer to the General Purposes Committee for functions which have been delegated to that Committee.

The terms “Town Clerk” and “RFO” are, however, used separately throughout this document to allow for a situation where this may not be the case.

- 1.9 The Town Clerk and/or RFO may delegate items ascribed to them within this document to another employee, but will still remain accountable to the Council for those items.
- 1.10 The RFO;
- a. acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - b. administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - c. determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - d. ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - e. maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - f. assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - g. produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.11 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council’s transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.12 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- a. entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - b. a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
 - c. wherever relevant, a record of the council’s income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.13 The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- a. procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - b. procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;

- c. identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - d. procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - e. measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.14 The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular, any decision regarding:
- a. setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
 - b. approving accounting statements;
 - c. approving an annual governance statement;
 - d. borrowing;
 - e. writing off bad debts;
 - f. declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
 - g. the consideration of any report from the Council's internal or external auditors,
- shall be a matter for the full council only.
- 1.15 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.
- 1.16 In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2 ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2 The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts

shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 2.3 The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.4 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.5 The internal auditor shall:
- a. be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - b. report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - c. to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - d. have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.6 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- a. perform any operational duties for the council;
 - b. initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - c. direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.7 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.8 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.9 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any report from internal or external auditors.

3 ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1 The Council's budget shall be prepared on an "Income and Expenditure" basis.
- 3.2 The GP Committee shall consider a report of the RFO setting out the prospects for the following three years' capital and revenue budgets no later than January each year. Each Sub-Committee shall be asked to formulate its proposed budget for the next three years based on policy guidelines determined by the GP Committee, and to submit these proposals to the Committee for further consideration.
- 3.3 After considering the Sub-Committees' proposals, the GP Committee shall determine a balanced and affordable budget to be recommended to the Council for the following three financial years.
- 3.4 The Council shall review the GP Committee's recommendations not later than the end of February each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year and determine indicative precepts for the following two years.
- 3.5 The annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4 BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1 The Town Clerk is authorised to seek tenders/quotations, place orders and make payments in accordance with the approved annual budget, the Council's policies, and these Financial Regulations. Where the annual budget identifies specific items for which no expenditure should be incurred without the express approval of the Council, the Clerk should refer proposed spending for approval before that spending is incurred. In all other cases, the Clerk is authorised to proceed without specific approval.
- 4.2 The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a budget monitoring statement comparing actual expenditure against that planned for each approved budget head.
- 4.3 The Town Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure. Where there is no available budget, the Clerk shall, wherever possible, discuss the issue with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee or, in their absence, the Vice Chairman or Town Mayor before incurring the expenditure. Where no or insufficient budget provision existed, the Town Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.4 In general, unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Where a budget has been agreed by the Council as a "rollover budget", then unspent amounts may be rolled-over into the subsequent financial year by making

use of a rollover reserve. This provision may also be used on a one-off basis for specific items, subject to agreement of the Council.

- 4.5 All expenditure and income of the Council shall be included within its revenue account unless a specific Council resolution has determined that it shall be treated as capital. Once such as resolution has been passed, no expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any such capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained, to meet the full projected costs of the project.
- 4.6 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.7 Changes in earmarked reserves, other than the rollover reserve, shall require approval by council.
- 4.8 Notwithstanding the provisions above, all expenditure and income related to the Town Mayor's charity will, in the interests of transparency, be accounted for by the use of a specified reserve account for each Town Mayor.

5 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND PAYMENTS

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed.
- 5.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk. The Clerk shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received or carried out in accordance with the needs of the Council.
- 5.3 The RFO shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetic accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The Clerk shall settle invoices promptly.
- 5.4 All cash received must be banked intact.
- 5.5 No petty cash account shall be maintained.
- 5.6 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance, pension contributions or other reasons, should be made from the Council's bank account.
- 5.7 A schedule showing payments from the Council's bank accounts shall be prepared by the RFO and presented:
 - a. To the Council on a quarterly basis in respect of payments over £250, and,
 - b. To the General Purposes Committee at each ordinary meeting.

- 5.8 For the purposes of the schedules referred to in paragraph 5.7 above:
- a. Staff salary and related payments should not be included, but total figures for a period should be made available to any Member on request. Details of payments to individual employees will only be made available in accordance with paragraph 6.4 below.
 - b. Payments in respect of the Mayor's Charity Fund will not be included, but should be made available to any Member on request.
- 5.9 The Council acknowledges that the commitment to make a payment occurs at the time an order is placed or similar arrangement made, not at the time a payment itself is made. It does not, therefore, consider that excessive controls on payments which may hamper the efficient operation of the Council need to be applied, providing that adequate controls over ordering and reporting are in place in accordance with these regulations.
- 5.10 Payments may be made by way of cheque, direct debit, bank transfer, purchasing card, PayPal, internet banking, BACS or CHAPS, provided that:
- a. All cheques shall be signed by two individuals included within the bank mandate, at least one of which shall be a Member of the Council and not more than one shall be an officer.
 - b. Transfers between Council bank accounts may be authorised by the RFO.
 - c. Payments via purchasing card can be made by a single authorised officer, and are limited to £1,000 in any single transaction, with a maximum of £5,000 outstanding at any one time.
 - d. Electronic payments and direct debits, including payments via PayPal and internet banking, can be made by a single authorised officer, but the supporting paperwork should also be signed by a second officer. All such payments should be included within the report to the General Purposes Committee required by regulation 5.7b above, subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 5.8 above.
- 5.11 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted. Officers authorising payments will be required to follow these same arrangements in respect of pecuniary or other interests.

6 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 6.1 As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.

- 6.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 6.3 Once an employee's salary and conditions has been determined by the Council or an authorised Appointments Panel and a contract of employment has been signed, no changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council, except where required for the payment of overtime, absence cover, incremental progression or similar matters.
- 6.4 Payments to individual employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall not be open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a. by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b. by the internal auditor;
 - c. by the external auditor; or
 - d. by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 6.5 Any termination payments beyond those required by law shall require the approval of the Council.

7 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 7.1 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 7.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the council in the first instance, though the renewal and extension of existing leases may be authorised by the Town Clerk providing that there is provision within the Council's budget and that he/she is satisfied that the arrangement represents value for money for the Council.
- 7.3 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 7.4 The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

- 7.5 All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 7.6 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 7.7 Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 above.

8 INCOME

- 8.1 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 8.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied by the Council shall be considered annually by the council as part of the budget process, and notified to the RFO who shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 8.3 The council will undertake a full review of all fees and charges periodically, following a report of the Clerk.
- 8.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 8.5 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 8.6 A record shall be maintained by the RFO of the amounts making up the total of each paying-in slip.
- 8.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 8.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 8.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 8.10 Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the

Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting (see also Regulation 15 below).

9 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 9.1 An official order number shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Details of orders shall be retained.
- 9.2 All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction.
- 9.3 A Member may not specify the use of a particular supplier, issue an official order or make any contract (verbal or written) on behalf of the council.
- 9.4 The RFO shall satisfy themselves as to the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of an order.

10 CONTRACTS

- 10.1 Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to the following items:
 - a. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - b. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - c. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - d. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
 - e. for additional audit work of the external auditor;
 - f. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price: and
 - g. In circumstances where continuity of supplier is considered by the RFO to offer greater benefits to the Council than retendering.
- 10.2 Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015

("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations².

- 10.3 The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive (which may change from time to time)³.
- 10.4 Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- 10.5 All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 10.6 Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to the requirements of Standing Orders related to procurement⁴ and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 10.7 When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- 10.8 Where the Clerk has determined that there is a benefit to the Council to let a contract in association with one or more other partners, or to make use of another authority's facilities such as the County Council's e-tendering system, the requirements of these regulations shall be replaced by the requirements of the regulations of the lead body for the letting of the contract.
- 10.9 When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 but in excess of £3,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph 10.1 above the Clerk or RFO shall, where possible, obtain 3 quotations. Below this figure, the Clerk or RFO shall seek to obtain the best overall value for money for the

² The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

³ Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts £189,330
- b. For public works contracts £4,733,252

⁴ Standing Order 19 based on the version effective from September 2021 which was current at the time of preparing this document. This reference may change in subsequent versions of standing orders.

Council after taking into account cost, quality of service and availability, and shall strive to obtain one or more estimates for the work/service to be performed.

- 10.10 The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 10.11 Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

11 PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)

- 11.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 11.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 11.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Council and notified to the Contractor in writing before any work has begun, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision as a result.

12 STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 12.1 Where the Council operates a system of stock control, or holds a supply of equipment for the use of a number of people, the Town Clerk shall be responsible for the arrangements for the care and custody of these stores and equipment.
- 12.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 12.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 12.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

13 ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 13.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 13.2 No tangible moveable property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 13.3 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.5 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

14 INSURANCE

- 14.1 Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.
- 14.2 The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 14.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 14.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 14.5 All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council, or duly delegated committee.

15 CHARITIES

- 15.1 Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

16 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 16.1 The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 16.2 When considering any new activity, the Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

17 SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 17.1 It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 17.2 The council may, by resolution, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that the advice of the RFO regarding the risks and implications has been considered prior to the suspension. Details of the suspension must be recorded in the minutes, and must include a record of the advice of the RFO if the council has chosen not to follow it.

* * *

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Committee of the Council's current financial position compared with its budget for the year, and to recommend action in any areas of concern.

Background

2. The Council's budget was approved in February 2021. Good financial management requires the Council to:
 - a. Keep the amount of the budget that it requires under review,
 - b. Monitor spending and income against budget projections, and,
 - c. Take appropriate action to ensure that the Council's financial stability is maintained.
3. This one of a series of regular reports which are presented to the General Purposes Committee on a broadly quarterly basis. The reports consider the Council's financial position at the end of the most recent month available at the time the report is written. On this occasion, the report considers the position as at the end of July 2021.
4. The report will first look at any adjustments proposed to the budget for 2021-22. It will then highlight any areas where net spending differs from that planned in the budget and focus on the income received from the Council's major income generating activities.
5. Reports have previously included a full list of Council spending since the previous budget monitoring report. This has now been replaced by a monthly report of spending to each ordinary meeting of this Committee, so it is no longer included.

Adjustments to 2021-22 Budget

6. The meeting of the Council on 8th July 2021 considered the final accounts for 2020-21 and approved a number of unspent budgets to be rolled over into the current year. These rollovers have now been added to the approved budget of the Council.
7. Appendix A sets out the agreed budget adjustments and the consequent changes to the current approved budget.

Comparison of Budget with Actual Spending and Income

8. Appendix B sets out a comparison of the budget to date with spending up to the end of July 2021. The budget to date has been estimated with reference to spending patterns in previous years and other available information, but is a fairly broad estimate with a significant margin for error in most areas of the budget. Nevertheless it is a good starting point for identification of potential problems.
9. Members should note that positive numbers in the table reflect expenditure or an adverse variance (overspend), whereas negative numbers represent income or a favourable variance (underspend).
10. Overall, at the end of July 2021, net spending was £66,877 compared with a budget up to that time of £91,011 – a net underspending to date of £24,134. Significant variations are identified below.
11. Significant adverse variances are:
 - a. Administration (£619): Whilst this is not a particularly significant variation at present, it has been highlighted in order to point out to the Committee that this budget is expected to overspend this year, to be balanced by underspendings in future years via the rollover process. This is due to the office IT equipment refresh being due in the autumn. Equipment is refreshed every three years, with an overspending expected in the year of refresh and underspendings in other years to compensate.
12. Significant favourable variances are:
 - a. Frank Jordan Centre (£6,074): This variance is due to increased lettings, a payment in advance by the Hub, and reductions in utility and maintenance costs.
 - b. Tourism and Town Promotion (£4,171): Due to the pandemic a number of events that would normally have taken place have not been able to be held. This has resulted in an underspending against this budget.
 - c. Salaries and Employment Costs (£6,535): This variance has arisen due to the vacancy in the Events and Marketing Assistant post, furlough income, and the delayed implementation of the national pay award.
 - d. Accommodation (£4,392): The rental invoice for the Station Road offices has not yet been received from Stafford Borough, resulting in this underspending. No underspending is expected by the end of the year.
13. It can thus be seen at this stage that costs are generally under control, though actual net spending varies from the estimated approved budget to date in some areas.

Income from Major Income Generating Activities

14. Income from the Frank Jordan Centre, Stone Station and the Town Market together represents almost 10% of the Council's total income. Virtually all of the remaining income is fixed in advance of the year (Precept/Concurrent Functions Allowance), but this 10% can

vary within the year in accordance with the Council's success with letting its community centres and market stalls.

15. With this in mind, Members need to closely monitor these income items to ensure that its budget remains in balance.
16. Attached at Appendix C are a set of graphs showing a comparison of income received to date with the level anticipated for each month. Whilst it must be remembered that the way the income has been profiled is still quite crude, the graphs are showing a position where income is above target for the Frank Jordan Centre, below target for the Stone Station and broadly on target for the Town Market.

Recommendations

17. The Committee is recommended to:
 - a. Note the approved adjustments to the Council's budget set out at Appendix A.
 - b. Note the Council's performance against budget at the end of July 2021.
 - c. Consider any action it wishes to take in the light of the information within this report.

Stone Town Council

Budget Adjustments 2021-22

	Contribution to (from) Reserves £	Shelters & Street Furniture £	Building Maint'ce £	Crown Meadow Imp'ments £	Allotments £	Env'mentl Initiatives £	Grants £	Admin £	Heritage Centre (Capital) £	C'virus Contingncy £
Council 8th July 2021										
Rollover re Bus Shelters & Street Furniture	-700	700								
Rollover re Building Maintenance	-19,700		19,700							
Rollover re Crown Meadow Improvements	-1,425			1,425						
Rollover re Allotments	-350				350					
Rollover re Environmental Initiatives	-2,750					2,750				
Rollover re Grants	-6,385						6,385			
Rollover re Administration	1,058							-1,058		
Rollover re Stone Heritage Centre (Capital)	-125,000								125,000	
Rollover re Coronavirus Contingency	-4,000									4,000
TOTAL	-159,252	700	19,700	1,425	350	2,750	6,385	-1,058	125,000	4,000
Original Budget	-77,088	8,400	10,000	3,400	100	3,000	8,200	26,100	55,000	6,700
Current Budget	-236,340	9,100	29,700	4,825	450	5,750	14,585	25,042	180,000	10,700

Stone Town Council

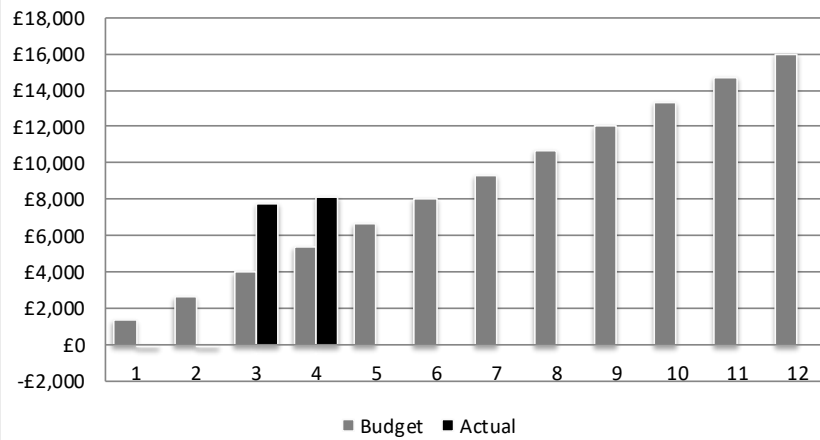
Budget Monitoring Statement 2021-22

Appendix B

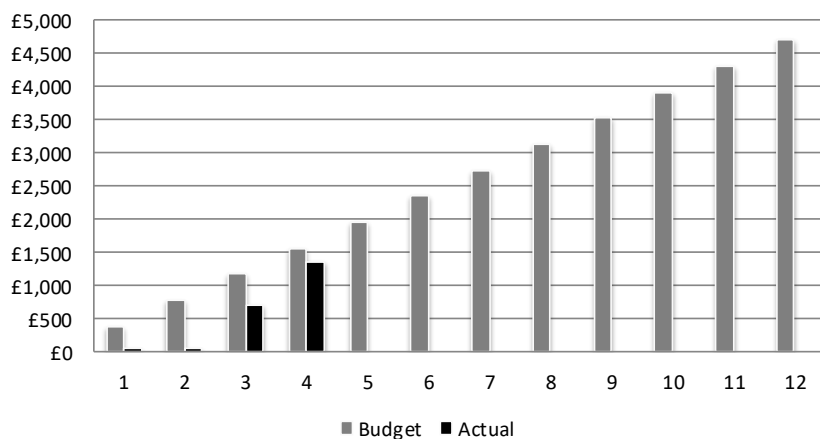
Revenue Account to End of Period 4 Jul-21

	Original Budget £	Current Budget £	Budget to Date £	Actual to Date £	Variance to Date £	Budget Remaining £
Major Income Generating Activities						
Frank Jordan Centre						
Income	-16,000	-16,000	-5,333	-8,099	-2,766	-7,901
Expenditure	20,900	20,900	6,966	3,658	-3,308	17,242
Net	4,900	4,900	1,633	-4,441	-6,074	9,341
Stone Station						
Income	-4,700	-4,700	-1,567	-1,364	203	-3,336
Expenditure	17,600	17,600	5,867	5,171	-696	12,429
Net	12,900	12,900	4,300	3,807	-493	9,093
Town Market						
Income	-18,000	-18,000	-6,000	-6,148	-148	-11,852
Expenditure	7,700	7,700	2,567	2,645	78	5,055
Net	-10,300	-10,300	-3,433	-3,503	-70	-6,797
Other Activities						
Stone Heritage Centre	20,000	20,000	0	0	0	20,000
Car Parking	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bus Shelters & Street Furniture	8,400	9,100	800	399	-401	8,701
Public Conveniences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Street Lighting	800	800	0	0	0	800
Dog & Litter Bins	1,150	1,150	250	185	-65	965
Joules Clock	300	300	100	0	-100	300
Town Electricity Supply	400	400	133	63	-70	337
Building Maintenance	10,000	29,700	0	0	0	29,700
Grounds Maintenance	17,700	17,700	5,000	4,653	-347	13,047
Crown Meadow Improvements	3,400	4,825	0	-4	-4	4,829
Allotments	100	450	150	-131	-281	581
Environmental Initiatives	3,000	5,750	0	0	0	5,750
Christmas Lights	23,100	23,100	0	0	0	23,100
Tourism & Town Promotion	20,250	20,250	6,750	2,579	-4,171	17,671
Grants to Outside Bodies	8,200	14,585	0	0	0	14,585
Salaries & Employment Costs	162,300	162,300	54,100	47,565	-6,535	114,735
Accommodation	5,100	5,100	160	-4,232	-4,392	9,332
Insurances	6,400	6,400	7,500	7,403	-97	-1,003
Administration	26,100	25,042	10,000	10,619	619	14,423
Audit & Legal Fees	2,000	2,000	-800	-907	-107	2,907
Town Council Elections	9,000	9,000	0	0	0	9,000
Allowances - Mayor & Deputy Mayor	3,300	3,300	1,100	864	-236	2,436
Regalia & Presentations	500	500	167	67	-100	433
Civic Activities	1,700	1,700	567	0	-567	1,700
Remembrance Sunday & War Memorials	7,000	7,000	667	120	-547	6,880
Miscellaneous	6,000	6,000	2,000	1,789	-211	4,211
Interest	-400	-400	-133	-18	115	-382
Neighbourhood Plan	7,900	7,900	0	0	0	7,900
Stone Heritage Centre (Capital)	55,000	180,000	0	0	0	180,000
Coronavirus Contingency	6,700	10,700	0	0	0	10,700
Town Promotion	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
General Contingency	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	10,000
Total	437,900	597,152	91,011	66,877	-24,134	530,275
Precept & Financing	-360,812	-360,812	-180,406	-180,387	19	
Contribution to (from) Reserves	-77,088	-236,340	89,395	113,510	24,115	

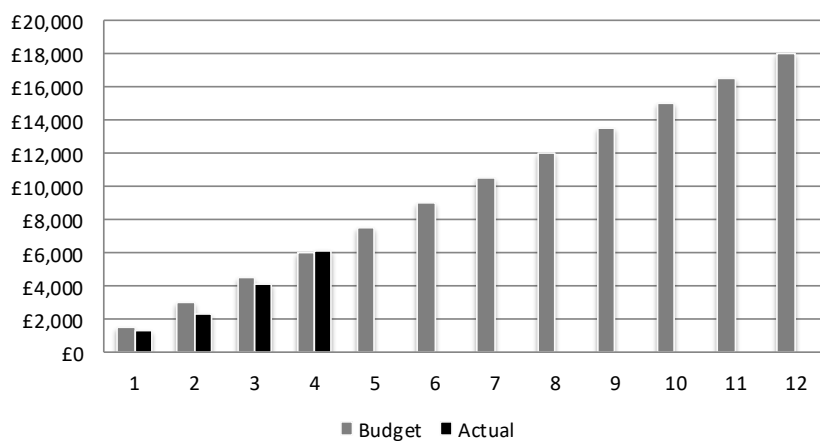
Frank Jordan Centre Income 2021-22



Stone Station Income 2021-22



Town Market Income 2021-22



Introduction

1. This report considers the governance arrangements for the Stone Heritage Centre project and recommends an appropriate structure to the Committee.

Background

2. Following agreement by the meeting of this Committee on 3rd August 2021, the lease for the former fire station at Crown Wharf has now been signed and the Council has commenced a project to bring the property back into use as a Heritage Centre.
3. The Council has established a Heritage Centre Working Group to oversee the project, but it has already become clear that a working group is not the appropriate form of governance for such a project. In particular, working groups have no decision making or spending power in their own right and must seek such authority from the General Purposes Committee on all occasions. This is too restrictive for a project where, for example, decisions may need to be made quickly in order to meet deadlines, or to deal with questions raised by contractors.
4. This report therefore recommends an alternative approach to the governance of this project.

Proposals

5. Attached as an appendix is the proposed terms of reference for a “Heritage Centre Steering Group” which would replace the Heritage Centre Working Group in overseeing the project on behalf of the Council. The format of this proposed Steering Group is based on the model already used for the group that successfully delivered the Council’s Neighbourhood Plan project.
6. The key elements of this proposed process are:
 - a. **The General Purposes Committee**, which would receive regular reports from the Steering Group and make strategic project decisions based on advice from the Group. This would include, for example, the final design of the Heritage Centre, its staffing structure and its operating and acquisitions policies.
 - b. **The Town Clerk**, who would manage the operational aspects of the project and exercise existing delegated powers wherever possible to enable decisions to be made quickly in line with Council policy. For example, this would include letting contracts, dealing with contractors on a day to day basis and spending/managing the

project budget to enable the Heritage Centre to be established in accordance with Council policy.

- c. **The Heritage Centre Steering Group**, which would be the key tactical group, overseeing and driving the project and, where appropriate, advising the Council on its strategic policies and the Clerk on the operational aspects of the project.
7. If this proposal is accepted, it is further proposed that the current members of the Working Group become the members of the new Steering Group, and the group be supported as follows:

Members

Councillors: R Kenney (Charman)
J Hood
P Leason
L Davies
K Dawson

Co-opted: S Nuttall
S Booth
T Cockin
T Fuller

Support

Consultants: Byatt Oliver Limited (Architectural)
Meddings Associates (interior Design & Concept)
Hindsight Heritage (Interior Design & Concept)

Staff: L Trigg (Overview and Building Work)
R Mincher (Interior Design & Concept)

Operation of Steering Group

8. The establishment of the new Heritage Centre will require the undertaking of a number of specific work streams as the project progresses, which will need to utilise different skills within the Steering Group.
9. Initially two work streams were identified by the Working Group related to preparing the building for use and planning the concept and content of the Centre. Other streams may be identified as the project progresses.
10. These two streams were led by Councillors Kenney and Leason respectively, and it is proposed that these arrangements continue within the new Steering Group. All recommendations to the General Purposes Committee would, however, need to be considered by the full Group before being proposed. This is reflected in the attached terms of reference.

11. Once the design of the new Centre has been agreed by the General Purposes Committee, it will be necessary to undertake a more formal approach to project management, including the introduction of change control procedures.

Decisions Under Delegated Powers

12. In order to get the project under way without delay, the following decisions have already been taken by the Town Clerk under delegated powers:
 - a. Obtaining insurance for the property from the Council's insurers from the date of the signing of the lease. This is specialist insurance with restricted cover and a large excess which will apply only until the building is operational, at which point the Council's normal insurance arrangements will be valid.
 - b. The appointment of Byatt Oliver Limited as architects for the project based on a quotation for the work. Byatt Oliver Limited has previously advised the Council on this project and also supports the Crown Wharf Theatre project.
 - c. The appointment of Meddings Associates and Hindsight Heritage as interior design and concept consultants based on a quoted daily rate. Both have previously worked on significant heritage projects.
13. It should be noted that the appointments under paragraphs 12.b and 12.c above were made under Financial Regulation 10.1(b), which permits specialist services to be contracted without competitive quotations. The appointments were made after receiving recommendations based on previous work, after considering detailed CVs and after the consultants had met members of the Working Group.

Conclusions

14. This report has considered the governance arrangements for the Stone Heritage Centre project and made recommendations for the improvements required to enable a successful project.
15. These recommendations are summarised below.

Recommendations

16. The Committee are recommended to:
 - a. Replace the current Heritage Centre Working Group with a Heritage Centre Steering Group, operating as proposed within the report.
 - b. Adopt the terms of reference annexed to this report for the Steering Group.
 - c. Appoint the Vice Chairman of the Steering Group
 - d. Note the decisions already taken by the Town Clerk under delegated powers.

1 HERITAGE CENTRE STEERING GROUP

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Heritage Centre Steering Group is to oversee the establishment of the Stone Heritage Centre, and to make recommendations to the General Purposes Committee accordingly.

MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENT

- 1.2 The Steering Group shall consist of up to ten members in total, drawn from the membership of the Town Council and co-opted, non-Councillor members. These members shall be appointed by the General Purposes Committee to serve until the completion of the project, but may be changed by that Committee at any time in accordance with the above principles.
- 1.3 In addition to the above, the Town Mayor and Chairman of the General Purposes Committee shall be ex-officio members of the Steering Group if not directly appointed in their own right.

CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

- 1.4 The Chairman of the Group shall be the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, if directly appointed as a member of the Group¹. If this is not the case, the Chairman shall be a Town Councillor who would be appointed by the General Purposes Committee for the duration of the project, but whose appointment may be reviewed by the Committee at any time.
- 1.5 The Vice Chairman shall be a Town Councillor who would be appointed by the General Purposes Committee for the duration of the project, but whose appointment may be reviewed by the Committee at any time.
- 1.6 If neither the Chairman nor the Vice Chairman are able to preside at a meeting of the Steering Group, the members of the Steering Group present shall elect a Town Councillor as a temporary Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

QUORUM

- 1.7 No business shall be dealt with unless at least three members of the Steering Group are present, including at least three Councillor members. If there is no quorum, all items for which the Steering Group would be inquorate shall be deferred until the next meeting of the Steering Group.

¹ But not if an ex-officio member only.

ATTENDANCE BY COUNCILLORS WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE STEERING GROUP

- 1.8 Any member of the Council who is not a member of the Steering Group may attend the meeting and may speak on any item, if invited by the Chairman in advance of the meeting. Such a member may not make or second any proposals or amendments, and may not vote.
- 1.9 The requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct will apply to all Councillors and non-Councillor members present at the meeting, whether members of the Steering Group or not.

ATTENDANCE BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- 1.10 Meetings will not be open to the public.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

- 1.11 Meetings will normally be held on dates determined by the Steering Group. Where changes are required to these dates, this shall be determined by the Steering Group. If a decision on a meeting date needs to be made outside a meeting, it shall be determined by the Town Clerk following consultation with the Chairman whenever possible.

AGENDA AND PROCEEDINGS

- 1.12 There is no requirement for either a formal agenda or minutes.
- 1.13 The agenda, if any, shall be drawn up and circulated by the Town Clerk.
- 1.14 If the Steering Group wishes to prepare minutes it will be a matter for the Group's members. Steering Group minutes will not form part of the official minutes of the Council.
- 1.15 Other than as outlined above, or on an exceptional basis as agreed with the Chairman, the calling of meetings, booking of venues, preparation of agendas and minutes etc. will not normally be undertaken by the Town Council's staff.
- 1.16 The provisions of the Council's Standing Orders for Business shall not apply to meetings of the Steering Group other than to the extent determined by the Chairman to ensure the orderly and efficient conduct of business.
- 1.17 Where appropriate, the Steering Group has the power to establish sub-groups from within its membership to deal with specific work streams. Recommendations to the General Purposes Committee must, however, be considered and agreed by the Steering Group prior to presentation.

REPORTING

- 1.18 Decisions of the Steering Group shall have the status of recommendations to the General Purposes Committee, other than where they represent guidance to the Town Clerk in the exercise of delegated powers.
- 1.19 At each scheduled meeting of the General Purposes Committee, the Chairman or their nominated representative will be expected to report on the work of the Group, and to present any recommendations to the Committee. Such recommendations will not be considered by the Committee without a full written report or detailed minutes circulated with the meeting agenda and setting out the nature of the recommendations and their implications for the Council.

FUNCTIONS

- 1.20 To oversee the establishment of the Stone Heritage Centre and to make recommendations to the General Purposes Committee accordingly.
- 1.21 To advise the General Purposes Committee on its strategic policies relating to the establishment of the Heritage Centre
- 1.22 To provide guidance to the Town Clerk in respect of the operational aspects of establishing the Heritage Centre.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COUNCIL BODIES

- 1.23 Whilst the Steering Group is responsible for overseeing the establishment of the Heritage Centre, it should be noted that policy issues related to management, staffing and finance fall under the purview of the Management Sub-Committee and/or the General Purposes Committee, even where they relate to the Heritage Centre.
- 1.24 If a difference of opinion develops between this Steering Group and any other Council body, the General Purposes Committee shall determine how the matter will be resolved.

DURATION

- 1.25 The Steering Group will be automatically disbanded if it is still in existence at the date the Heritage Centre commences operation.

Date: 24/08/2021

Time: 09:55:07

Stone Town Council - Payments

Page: 1

The table below lists payments made by the Council in the period since the last report, for the Committee's information.

The table includes payments by cheque, direct debit, PayPal, telephone banking and online banking. It excludes salary and related payments, payments from the Mayor's Charity, and transfers between the Council's bank accounts, which can be seen by any Member on request. All amounts exclude VAT.

Payment Date From : 01/07/2021

Payment Date To : 31/07/2021

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
12/07/2021	1746589	British Gas	Elec 61 High St May/June 2021	11.35
20/07/2021	158986017	World Pay	Worldpay monthly fee - June 2021	9.99
20/07/2021	159079253	World Pay	Worldpay managed service fee June 2021	12.50
05/07/2021	INV05024489	Water Plus	Water Supply & Usage 28/02/21 to 18/06/21	291.27
28/07/2021	6316984	Water Logic	Water Cooler Rental June 2021	6.05
28/07/2021	6316985	Water Logic	Water Cooler Rental June 2021	12.71
28/07/2021	6297462	Water Logic	Water cooler rental June 2021	5.00
20/07/2021	742962701/001/07	Virgin Media Business	Telephone Line Rental / Calls July 2021	65.46
26/07/2021	743014903/001/07	Virgin Media Business	Broadband July / Aug 2021	50.00
28/07/2021	VEO1080689	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection June 2021	57.92
28/07/2021	VEO1080688	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection June 2021	69.92
13/07/2021	SI-149931	Mailing room	Franking Machine Rental Jul to Sep 2021	60.00
26/07/2021	143691	Prism Solutions	Prism Support Service Aug 2021	622.33
01/07/2021	66119	Prism Solutions	Leased Lines June 2021	46.69
01/07/2021	66119	Prism Solutions	Leased Lines June 2021	44.45
07/07/2021	V01888433572	EE	Moblie Phone Charges July 2021	21.53
07/07/2021	V01888433572	EE	Moblie Phone Charges July 2021	21.53
07/07/2021	V01888433572	EE	Moblie Phone Charges July 2021	22.99

Date: 24/08/2021

Time: 09:55:07

Stone Town Council - Payments

Page: 2

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
20/07/2021	713412021102795	Pozitive Energy	Gas Usage June 2021	66.54
12/07/2021	1745703	British Gas	Feeder 1 High St Elec May / Jun 2021	8.80
16/07/2021	713392021102145	Pozitive Energy	Elec Usage June 2021	149.37
20/07/2021	713382021102796	Pozitive Energy	Elec Usage June 021	122.11
19/07/2021	INV97072818	Zoom Video Comm Inc	Zoom Charge Jul/Aug 2021	47.96
20/07/2021	713402021102795	Pozitive Energy	Gas Usage June 2021	38.83
13/07/2021	EU-01913201	Opayo by Elavon	Opayo / Sage June 2021	15.00
16/07/2021	SI-377	Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association	SPCA Facebook to enhance comms course	30.00
05/07/2021	580865ALTO	Altodigital Networks Ltd	Photocopies 10/03/21 to 09/06/21	12.59
05/07/2021	244/21/0169387	Siemens Ltd	Photocopier Lease Rental 21/6/21 to 20/9/21	150.00
30/07/2021	16781	Peter Plant Jewellers	Repair Mayor's Chain	41.67
23/07/2021	16	MJ Plant	June 2021 - Maint of Amphi, C Meadow and Allots	1,554.00
23/07/2021	15	MJ Plant	May 2021 - Grounds Maint for C Meadow, Amphi,	1,554.00
26/07/2021	252039	Hammond Hygiene Solutions Ltd	Toilet rolls and cleaning materials	46.50
02/07/2021	INV-0537	Current Electrical & Property Services	Marquee set up June 2021	1,055.00
23/07/2021	14207	Call Handling Services Ltd	Call Handling Service June 2021	16.37
26/07/2021	108294	B Hygienic Ltd	Office Air Sanitiser Unit July 21 to June 22	286.00
21/07/2021	7070288353	Stafford Borough Council	Office Rental 20/07/21 to 19/10/21	150.00
05/07/2021	Rates July 2021	Stafford Borough Council	FJC Rates July 21	434.00
05/07/2021	Rates July 2021	Stafford Borough Council	Station Rates July 2021	225.00
05/07/2021	Rates July 2021	Stafford Borough Council	Mkt Sq Rates July 2021	35.00
09/07/2021	ICO Charge	Information Commissioner's Office	ICO Annual Charge 2021/22	35.00
19/07/2021	INV-392467	AutoEntry	AutoEntry Monthly Sub July 2021	9.00
				<u>7,514.43</u>