

Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in St Michael's Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone, on Tuesday 6 July 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs J. Hood in the Chair and
Councillors: J. Davies, R. Kenney and J. Powell

By Chairman's invitation: No Councillors

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Best, I. Fordham, M. Green, P. Leason and C. Thornicroft

TTP22/001 Apologies

Councillors: A. Best, I. Fordham, M. Green, P. Leason and C. Thornicroft

TTP22/002 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

None received

TTP22/003 Representations from Members of the Public

None

TTP22/004 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on the 16 March 2021 (Minute Numbers TTP20/058 – TTP20/065), were approved as a correct record.

TTP22/005 Calendar of Events 2021 and 22

Events Schedule for 2021 and plans for 2022

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Hood, invited the Sub-Committee to consider a draft calendar of events for 2022* which had been distributed at the meeting.

The Chairman told the Sub-Committee that it was good that markets in the town had been able to go ahead recently. The Craft and Collectables market is getting more popular now that office staff are contacting new people and speaking to the traders. The traders are enthusiastic about coming to Stone and have lots of ideas on how the market can be improved.

The Chairman expressed her disappointment that it had not been possible for the St George's Day event to take place this year and informed the Sub-Committee

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that it may be possible to re-arrange the event for later this year, perhaps in the school holidays or possibly September.

The Chairman suggested that there probably wouldn't be an opportunity to hold a Music Festival this year as it would be difficult to secure the preferred acts. There are also concerns about whether Market Square would provide adequate space under the circumstances, moving out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Sub-Committee considered the possibility that it might be better to make plans for a Music Festival next summer and a late St George's Day event in 2021. This would show the people of the town that the Town Council is trying to get something going. It was acknowledged that the Town Council should also work in close liaison with the theatre.

The Sub-Committee suggested that it might be possible to hold a mini festival (in a suitable venue) taking advantage of local talent keen to start playing again, or a Buskers Day in the run up to Christmas to support traders in the town.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council does not make firm its provisional plans to hold a Music Festival in September but begins the arrangements for an event in the summer of 2022.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council notes that it may be possible to hold a "St George's Day" event in Stone, later in 2021.

Arrangements for the Platinum Jubilee

The Sub-Committee considered the arrangements for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

A letter from the Pageantmaster, Bruno Peek, had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

The Chairman reminded the Sub-Committee that Queen Elizabeth II is the first monarch in our history to reign for seventy years which is an incredible achievement. To mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Britons will have an extended Bank Holiday next year to run from Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June 2022.

The Beacon Lighting will be on Thursday 2 June and more than 1,500 beacons will be lit throughout the UK and Commonwealth in recognition of the Queen's long service. On Sunday 5 June, the country is being encouraged to hold the Big Jubilee Lunch.

The Sub-Committee acknowledged that a Farmers' market would be taking place in Stone on the Saturday of that weekend which leaves Thursday, Friday and Sunday for planning celebratory events.

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The Sub-Committee agreed that it should look at the ideas generated by the Working Group set up to plan for the VE Day 75 celebrations as this would be a good starting point for its preparations.

The Sub-Committee suggested that Stone Festival Committee is approached to find out what events the Committee is planning. It was also important to be aware of what was happening locally and nationally. Town Council events should not clash with events being broadcast on TV as there is a lot of coverage planned.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that two of the most popular bands had been approached and these are keen to perform. It would be handy to give them a fixed date.

The Sub-Committee suggested that a brass band play in Stonefield Park on the Sunday for members of the community who might not like big crowds. This would also fit in with a picnic lunch in the park.

The Sub-Committee agreed that it was important to get people who had lived in isolation through the pandemic outdoors as they deserved an opportunity to have a really good time.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Clerk is asked to make the necessary arrangements for the Beacon Lighting event on the Thursday which will involve approaching the bugler and a piper.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council sets the big celebratory event of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on Sunday 5 June 2021 and that the Town Clerk is asked to approach Murphy's Marbles and Lack of Commitments to perform on this day.

TTP22/006 **Christmas Lights**

Christmas Lights at Walton Shops

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to give an update on the 2021 Christmas lighting provision at Walton shops.

The Town Clerk reminded the Sub-Committee that the proposal for Walton shops was to erect two poles at the entrance to the car park with curtains attached to carry the lighting across to the shops, replacing the current lighting set up. Appointing a contractor to put up, take down and store the poles was not possible last year but the Town Clerk has succeeded in finding one this year.

The Town Clerk reported that there remain elements of the quotation which need clarification and these are expected back very soon.

He said that during the process of establishing the need for permissions, Stafford Borough Council had confirmed that planning permission was required for the lighting poles. Urban Vision has agreed to assist the Town Council with the planning application process.

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The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that due to timescales/lead times it probably made sense to order the equipment prior to the award of planning permission on the basis that it will go through. He emphasised that if the Town Council waits for planning permission before purchasing the lights, time would be tight, although ordering in advance will involve an element of risk. This was supported by the Sub-Committee.

Lighting of the Plane Tree

The Sub-Committee considered the lighting of the Plane tree for the Christmas season and the Chairman invited the Town Clerk to provide an update.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that every so often the lights had to be removed and put back on the tree to prevent its restriction of growth and also damage to the lights.

The Town Council's contractor, Christmas Plus, has advised that it would probably be best to do this work next year at a cost of £6,700 for replacement of the lights and re-wrapping of the tree. One small area of the tree won't be working this year (as it wasn't working last year either).

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that as an alternative to replacing the lights, like for like, Christmas Plus is offering a new system of lights which are coloured and patterned rather than static. The cost of this new system (which will also involve rewrapping of the tree) would be £10,000.

Some members of the Sub-Committee expressed a preference for retaining lights that are static and traditional. Flashing lights were not considered desirable and the Chairman informed them that she had seen a video of the new system, and it moved in the style of a lava lamp. They did not flash.

The Sub-Committee agreed that it would make a decision on the Plane tree lights after all Sub-Committee Members had had an opportunity to view the Christmas Plus video.

TTP22/007 **Reports from Working Groups**

To receive reports from Working Groups:

Remembrance Plaques Working Group

Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that after delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Oak Tree Farm was beginning to come back into action.

He said that he had produced the first cut of the design for the plaques and had a list of the 72 men from Stone who had died in service during the Second World War. Information about the circumstances of the men was available but not the addresses they were living at when they lost their lives. The working group will be working to locate this information.

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Councillor Davies said that it would be very nice to couple the project with the preparations for the 70th Anniversary of the Accession of Her Majesty and Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. The unveiling of the plaques with the assistance of the Town Mayor could be undertaken in 2022.

Councillor Mrs Davies informed the Sub-Committee that the materials and paints used to produce the 1000 ceramic poppies had stayed in good condition while outdoors, providing evidence that the materials were suitable for this project. She said the next step was to contact a supplier who would produce Stone Town Council transfers.

Chairman

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