

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber, 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 19 October 2021

PRESENT: Councillor P. Leason in the Chair and
Councillors: T. Kelt, R. Kenney, J. Powell and R. Townsend

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

ABSENT: Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs K. Dawson, M. Hatton and J. Powell

ENV22/014 **Apologies**

Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs K. Dawson and J. Powell

ENV22/015 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received

ENV22/016 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

ENV22/017 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on the 31 August 2021 (Minute Numbers ENV22/007 – ENV22/013), were approved as a correct record.

ENV22/018 **Covid-19 Commemoration**

The Sub-Committee considered the arrangements for creating a place of reflection and of remembrance on land adjacent to Crown Meadow for those who have lost loved ones and whose lives have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The General Purposes Committee had asked the Environment Sub-Committee to oversee a tree planting project in consultation with the Borough Council's Biodiversity Officer.

The Sub-Committee expressed its support for tree planting in this location – particularly mature trees – and the installation of a small number of benches of suitable design.

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that the Biodiversity Officer's advice

had been sought on suitable trees and after considering various options had recommended a mix of pink and white blossom Cherry trees to create an attractive display in the spring. The species would deliver good medium height trees that were suitable for urban areas.

The Sub-Committee supported the suggestion although would have also liked to see diversity perhaps in the form of a mix of trees with different coloured leaves.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council seeks estimates for the purchase and planting of pink and white blossom cherry trees, Prunus Accolade and Prunus Umineko, to create a place of reflection and remembrance (on land adjacent to Crown Meadow).

ENV22/019 Crown Meadow Improvements

The Sub-Committee noted the updates relating to work undertaken by the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contractor on Crown Meadow. A written note had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the anticipated completion dates had changed for the tree replanting work which would now be October/November (rather than October), and the amphitheatre path would be completed in October.

The Sub-Committee highlighted that the Kingfisher seat was in poor condition and needed attention.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Biodiversity Officer had recommended removing the Himalayan Balsam prior to the cutting of the scrapes (by 50%) in order to prevent self seeding of the cut areas. The Grounds Maintenance Contractor has agreed to liaise directly with the Biodiversity Officer on the cutting of the scrapes, which may involve some additional costs.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that quotations for two new notice boards would be obtained as soon as the supplier of the existing notice boards on Crown Meadow had been identified. A price for a Covid-19 plaque for the new reflection/commemoration woodland would also be sought at the same time.

ENV22/020 Reports of Working Groups

a) Plastic Free Community/Single Use Plastics Working Group

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

Councillor Townsend advised the Sub-Committee that the Working Group had not met.

The Town Clerk updated the Sub-Committee on the Town Council's Plastics audit. He said that no plastic pens had been purchased and alternatives were being investigated, no new water cups would be ordered (drinks machines to be removed), no new ink cartridges have been ordered but old cartridges will be recycled, telephony equipment would be taken to a suitable disposal point and old IT equipment perhaps could be recycled after it is refreshed in November.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that he would compile a list of tasks in preparation for implementing the new Environment Policy.

b) Environmental Issues Working Group

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

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that no meeting had taken place recently but he had contacted the Borough Council to progress communication with Veolia. Some interesting information had been sent through which the Working Group were progressing.

He said that he had not yet heard back from the climate contacts.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that he had attended a Staffordshire Ambassador event in Keele which had dealt with energy efficiency and energy sharing.

Councillor Kelt informed the Sub-Committee that he had attended two meetings with Walton Priory Middle School. The first one with Councillor Powell, Councillor Townsend and the Town Clerk. The second meeting with Councillor Mrs Dawson. All had been impressed with the work the school were doing and their enthusiasm. Various items of interest were picked up from the meetings particularly in relation to the second Eco Group meeting.

The Councillors have agreed to continue liaising with the school and to promote the school's activities with other schools as no others have as yet responded to Town Council's letter.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that the Borough Council had suggested looking at a couple of Facebook groups, one of them being 'Sustainable Stone'. He said that he had also registered to go on the Borough Council's Climate Change Panel which is a review group.

Councillor Kelt is also planning to register with the Warwickshire County Association's Conference that is due to be held at the weekend.

He said that he had noted some interesting ideas at the V&A in Dundee during a recent visit (which might be more relevant to the Borough

Council than the Town) but would be carrying these forward through the working groups.

The Town Clerk provided the Sub-Committee with an update on commissioning an Energy audit. He said that Stafford Borough Council were taking responsibility for auditing the Council offices themselves and didn't want the Town Council to do anything. He has written to the Arch Company, the owners of Stone Station a number of times without response.

Stafford Borough Council was happy for the Town Council to undertake an energy audit at the Frank Jordan Centre but would like approval to be sought before carrying out any work.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that he would report back on the costs once he is in a position to ask the contractor to provide a price for both community centres.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that all the main energy contracts were for the supply of 100% renewable energy. He said there had been a significant price increase on gas from one of the suppliers which was not covered by a price cap (which applies to domestic customers).

The Town Clerk said the key objective at Crown Wharf was to minimise the daily charge. Having just taken on the building and the energy supplier, it was not known whether the fuel was 100% renewable.

Chairman