



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

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15 Station Road
STONE
ST15 8JP

30 November 2021

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER 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 and Declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**
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 2 November 2021, Minute No's GP22/101 – GP22/117 (attached).
- b) To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 16 November 2021, Minute No's GP22/118 – GP22/122 (attached).

8. Minutes of Sub-Committees

- a) Estates Sub-Committee held on 16 November 2021, Minute Numbers EST22/009 – EST22/017 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes
 - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Number EST22/013 and EST22/017
- b) Management Sub-Committee held on 16 November 2021, Minute Numbers MAN22/015 – MAN22/023 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes

9. Budget 2021-22 to 2023-24 – Overview

To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached)

10. Provision of Hot Drinks

To consider the provision of hot drinks at Council and Committee meetings.

11. Town Council Payments

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

12. Update from Working Groups:

- a) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- b) Stone Heritage Centre Steering Committee
- c) Engagement with Young People

13. To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings as a representative of the Town Council

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group – J. Davies

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

Any other meetings

14. 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.

15. To consider the Confidential Minutes and recommendations of the undermentioned Committee:

- a) Estates Sub-Committee Meeting held on 16 November 2021, Minute Numbers EST22/009, EST22/016 and EST22/017 (attached)
 - i. To consider the Minutes
 - ii. To consider the Recommendations contained in Minute Number EST22/017

16. Stone Heritage Centre

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

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 the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 2 November 2021

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

Officers: Mr L. Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs K. Dawson (on Mayoral Duty), M. Green, J. Hickling and S. Walley

GP22/101 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: Mrs K. Dawson (on Mayoral Duty),
M. Green, J. Hickling and S. Walley.

GP22/102 Declarations of Interests

None

GP22/103 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP22/104 To receive the report of the County Councillors

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs Hood to address the Committee.

Fallen Trees in the River Trent

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that a tree had come down and was lodged underneath the old Walton Bridge. She has met with the Environment Agency who are planning to remove it when the water level reduces. The Stafford & Stone Canoe club will use the cut timber to shore up the river bank.

Councillor Mrs Hood has been assured that there is no danger to the bridge as the foundations are sound.

Another tree has come down in the river on Crown Meadow which will be left for wildlife as there is no danger of it moving position and causing an obstruction.

Traffic in the High Street

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that she had spent a lot of time in the High Street on Saturday, noting the safety risks caused by motorists travelling through the town. Only one bollard was installed in Mill Street leaving a large gap allowing access to vehicles. The Police have visited the High Street and approached a number of motorists.

* 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.

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that she had met with County Highways to discuss the possibility of an extension to the pedestrianised zone times to make the area safer for shoppers.

Traders have been invited to complete a tick box survey giving their views on what they would like to see happen. Taking account of loading and unloading requirements is an important consideration.

Councillor Mrs Hood said the road sign at the top of the High Street needed to give a clearer message to motorists.

Library Opening at Walton Priory Middle School

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that she had been invited to Walton Priory Middle School to the reopening of the library and had invited the Deputy Town Mayor to cut the ribbon with her. She said it was a delight to see the young children.

Meeting with Children

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that on Monday 18 October she had been invited to the 'Voice Project' where she had been delighted to meet a number of looked after children. It had been incredible to hear them talk about their lives as fostered children, their pathway through education and what they wanted to do when they left school.

Councillor Mrs Hood informed the Committee that there was a desperate shortage of foster carers and asked Town Councillors to spread the word.

Afghani Children and Families

Councillor Mrs Hood said that donations to Afghani children and families in Staffordshire can be made through a Just Giving page which is easily found through Google.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP22/105 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Councillor Fordham to address the Committee.

Councillor Fordham advised the Committee that the subjects on which he was intending to speak were all covered later in the agenda.

GP22/106 Representations from Members of the Public

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to brief the Committee on the procedure for receiving representations from members of the public.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that two people had made requests to speak at the meeting and each had a time slot of five minutes. At the end of their presentations there would be no response or questions from the Committee and speakers should take no further part in the meeting (other than as observers).

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Mr Andy Osgathorpe

Mr Osgathorpe advised the Committee that he wished to comment on the planning and design implications for the latest Westbridge Park Destination Park proposals.

Mr Osgathorpe referred the Committee to the changes from earlier proposed plans and expressed concern that the new design may not be a good idea due to issues related to anti social behaviour, flood risk, repositioning of the play facilities and the size of playing fields.

Mr Osgathorpe advised the Committee that whilst supporting the concept of destination parks to attract people to our town, Stafford Borough Council's policy on sports provision appears to be doing the opposite, causing an exodus of teams and supporters to playing fields outside of town. He said that there was a need to honour commitments to facilitate and develop community facilities like the sports courts, sports halls and Astro facilities at Alleyne's Academy. He also raised concerns about the provision of another car park.

A full copy of Mr Osgathorpe's address is attached to the signed minutes of the Council.

Mrs Susan Crookshank – Chair of Governors at Alleyne's Academy

Mrs Crookshank advised the Committee that she wished to comment on Stafford Borough Council's broader Leisure strategy as she believes the new strategy will have a significant negative impact on sports provision in the town.

She referred to the changes since the 2016 strategy related to sports provision at the school and their negative impacts on the school and community.

The School warmly welcomes the Borough Council's investment in the town but believes more could be achieved. The sports centre has enormous potential with extensive football pitches, large sports hall, squash courts, free parking and a large MUGA (which at Alleyne's is 3 netball pitches) but more could be done with the swimming pool building converted to a sports hall or a multi-studio complex.

Mrs Crookshank advised the Committee that she is asking that the Borough reinstate funding for the new astro pitch and not divert section 106 sports money to the park and to work with the school to redevelop the swimming pool as a sports centre. She hoped Stone Town Council would support this request to protect sport in the Town.

A full copy of Mrs Crookshank's address is attached to the signed minutes of the council.

GP22/107 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 October 2021 (Minute Numbers GP22/079 – GP22/100), be approved as a correct record.

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GP22/108 Minutes of Sub-Committees

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 19 October 2021 (Minute Numbers TTP22/018 – TTP22/025), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TP22/024 be adopted.
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 19 October 2021 (Minute Numbers ENV22/014 – ENV22/020), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number ENV22/018 be adopted.
- c) Management Sub-Committee held on 19 October 2021 (Minute Numbers MAN22/011 – MAN22/014), that the draft minutes be noted and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number MAN22/014 be adopted.

GP22/109 Redevelopment of Westbridge Park

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Carolyn Trowbridge, Stafford Borough Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Leisure Portfolio; and Robert Simpson, Head of Operations at Stafford Borough Council to the meeting.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge advised the Committee that she had planned to speak about the Westbridge Park proposal but not the wider leisure strategy on this occasion.

She said that it was fantastic to see the Leisure Centre fully open and parks and green spaces appreciated for their health and wellbeing benefits. While covid and its legacy will be with us for some time we can now look forward to continuing with the plan to create an excellent destination park in Stone for the local community and visitors.

The budget which has gone through Cabinet is £1.5 million and should be sufficient to create something worthy of this beautiful green space between the river and the canal with access to the towpath and close proximity to town. The last destination park delivered in the borough ran to the cost of £400,000 and was received extremely well by the local community.

The consultation has now ended with 182 responses. The vast majority of which thought the indicative plan to be good or excellent. There were good points made including one about a walkway around the outside having 200m markers. This feature has been delivered at other parks and is well used by all ages.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge advised the Committee that she wanted the people of Stone to own the park, to feel part of it and for it to be theirs. She said it also needed to be sustainable and retain the natural beauty and tranquillity in some of these areas. The plan has to fit the needs of the people of Stone.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge said that she had read through all the paperwork back to 2014. The 2018 plan is very similar but the play area was further back which was liked by some but not by others. There were requests for more CCTV and toilet

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facilities and for the play area to be visible from the road. Due to the anti social behaviour on this site she thought it prudent to incorporate all of these asks.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge also requested that the site be kept as open as possible, making the protection of the wildlife a priority with inclusivity for all.

She said that she was hoping to be going in the right direction. Keeping an events space was important to Stone, making the project challenging. The biggest challenge is the weather and ground conditions and she has asked for hydraulic modelling to be carried out so that the effects of extra hardstanding can be understood.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge advised the Committee that the next step was to work through the consultation comments. She said she was eagerly awaiting the Town Council's representation as they were more important than any other because they represented so many people in Stone.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge talked about the design features of the Plan. She said the sunken garden by the side of Marks and Spencer is something which has never been done before. She said seating would be positioned along the canal side and an outdoor gym at the back. All car parks will be upgraded (canoe club and scout club). A Woodland area and nature play trails could be beautiful for children. A wheeled sports area would lead to the cycle path, there would be team play and a toilet block. All children's play will be kept together for parents to be able to monitor children of different ages.

There will be a main events entrance with other pedestrian entrances with planting.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge and Mr Robert Simpson took questions and noted comments from Town Councillors

What was the rationale for moving the position of the play areas towards Stafford Road (rather than accepting option C)?

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge advised the Committee that a lot of consultation comments had raised the issue of anti social behaviour, questioning the reason the play areas had been positioned further back. She said the park will never be locked up and will not have gates. Anti social behaviour is a big issue and plenty of CCTV coverage will be introduced.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge said the plans are subject to change and there will be a process of assessment and amendment. Once approved by full Council on 23 November with the agreed spend of £1.5 million, the project will go to tender and then through the planning process. Further consultations will take place at that time.

When the project goes to planning it will move from being an indicative plan to a final plan.

Over ten years ago disabled wooden adventure areas were removed from Westbridge Park. These were never replaced even though the money was available. Where has previous \$106 money gone?

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Councillor Mrs Trowbridge advised the Committee that the destination park project was scheduled for completion by 2023 but no one knows exactly when it will be finished. She said she was unable to talk about the wider historic issue as she hadn't been a Cabinet member for very long. However she gave assurances that S.106 money has stayed in Stone.

What is the point of having a footbath pitch that isn't to FA standard size?

Mr Simpson advised the Committee that a number of pitches don't meet FA Standards but pitches don't have to meet the standard to be used and enjoyed.

The Festival Committee and the Food and Drink Committee are concerned about the event space and their considerations must be taken into account before the plan is finalised. The Stone Festival and the Food and Drink Festival deliver tremendous community events and attract a large number of visitors to Stone.

Mr Simpson advised the Committee that he had been in touch with Richard Stevens over many weeks and access to the site was a key consideration. The Borough Council supports those events and will continue to support them in the future. Access will not affect the playing field.

The Town Council were told the new leisure centre would be delivered before M&S but it was the opposite way around. There should not have been a need to sell land at Tilling Drive to plug a hole in the finances.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge said she would be here to connect with the Town Council but was unable to comment on what had happened in the past.

Orienteering marker posts should be installed to provide training for orienteering. They could link to the one kilometre run with turnaround points. Attract interest along the canal side and installing markers. 1.7km all the way around.

This idea was acknowledged as a good one. The Borough Council are in contact with Stone Master Marathoners Running Club.

The proposals for Westbridge Park are fantastic but it is disappointing that sports provision cannot be delivered at Alleyne's Academy. The Leisure Centre provides a gym and a swimming pool but the Borough should secure funding to develop a multi sports centre with 3d pitch, badminton and other racket sports. Not to do this would let a huge proportion of the townspeople down.

How can we guarantee the safety of young people using the park when the festival will be bringing huge HGV vehicles through the area where they play? Has a risk assessment been undertaken? Can the entrance to the park be changed?

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge advised the Committee that the event entrance and road will be a lot safer to drive on and will be a surfaced road. Green areas will be reinforced and vehicles coming on to the site will not put children risk. Full risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure there is no risk.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the canoe club car park. Last Saturday 248 vehicles were parked on this very small car park.

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The Canoe Club would like the opportunity to develop their own car park.

Borough Councillors will be consulted on the number of car parking spaces, looking at charges and disabled spaces to ensure they are not limited by design.

Car parking charges feel like a loss rather than a gain.

Councillor Mrs Trowbridge advised the Committee that the first two hours may be free with a nominal fee after that. The fees will increase after 4 to 5 hours to prevent commuter/long stay parking.

Is the £1.5million locked or will it increase to take on additional costs?

Approval hasn't been given by full Council yet. The Cabinet has agreed to put money aside and this decision will be considered on 23 November. There will be no additional money as the Borough Council has commitments to other projects.

Why is all of the available money being spent in Stone rather than outlying parks such as Whitemill? Many of the smaller parks are in a dilapidated state and the Borough Council should have a rethink.

The Borough Council's strategy is to develop destination parks and move to green space at other smaller parks. Equipment will be maintained but not replaced at the end of its life. Work with community to look at how the park can continue.

Are there plans to install a crossing on Stafford Road?

The roads outside the boundary of the park are not included in the project. Councillor Mrs Trowbridge advised consultation with County Councillors on this.

Are there plans to plant more trees?

Yes there are plans to plant more trees.

The Council concluded that most of the proposal content will be welcomed with two areas of concern. Access to heavy vehicles needs to be safe and Festival events must work comfortably within the footprint/space.

Before leaving the meeting Councillor Mrs Trowbridge and Mr Simpson were thanked for their presentations.

GP22/110 Westbridge Destination Park Consultation

The Committee considered a Stafford Borough Council consultation inviting views on the redevelopment of Westbridge Park.

An email from the Borough Council with a link to the Online Survey had been issued with the agenda for the meeting. An accompanying poster detailing the transformation plans had also been enclosed.

The Committee noted that the Borough Council had approved an extension for the Town Council's comments to be submitted on 3 November (after the consultation had closed).

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A written proposal was distributed at the meeting (attached as an appendix to these Minutes) and the Committee was asked to consider whether its content should be submitted as the Town Council's response to the consultation.

The Committee agreed that the following amendments be incorporated into the proposal:

- That the Borough Council's objectives for the Park include 'safety of the public' (first paragraph).
- That Alleyne's Academy is written in full (second paragraph).
- That the Town Council 'urge' the Borough Council to 'continue' working productively with organisations (third paragraph).
- That the Town Council asks for a development time table for the project (fourth paragraph).

RESOLVED: That the form of words circulated at the meeting be submitted as the Town Council's representation on the Westbridge Park consultation with the additional amendments agreed.

GP22/111 Engaging with Young People

The Committee considered the membership of an 'Engagement with Young People Working Group' which had been recommended by the Management Sub-Committee (Minute Number MAN22/014).

The following documents had been attached to the agenda:

- Councillor Mrs Dawson's Youth Council Research Summary
- Councillor J. Davies' Youth Involvement Notes

A copy of the Protocol for the Appointment of Student Advisors in Association with Ringwood School, and NALC publication 'Whatever, yeah?' Had been attached to the electronic version of the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the following Members be appointed to the Engagement with Young People Working Group:

Councillors: Mrs L. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson and ex-officio members of the Council.

The Committee resolved to suspend standing order 4.25 to allow the meeting to continue beyond the one and a half hour time limit.

GP22/112 Stone Heroes Awards

The Committee considered the report* of the Town Clerk setting out the Town Mayor's proposal regarding the Stone Heroes Awards Scheme.

A copy of the report had been issued with the agenda for the meeting.

The Chairman invited the Town Mayor to address the Committee.

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The Town Mayor advised the Committee that the report was straight forward and outlined in detail the Heroes Awards idea and how it would be executed, with costs.

RESOLVED: That the Committee supports the Stone Heroes Awards Scheme.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agrees a supplementary estimate of £600 for the current year, with an addition of £1,300 per annum added to the budget for future years.

GP22/113 Town Council Payments

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

GP22/114 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 J. Davies informed the Committee that the Stone Area Parish Liaison Group met on 27 October 2021 and representatives had attended from Eccleshall, Barlaston, Swynnerton, Stone Rural, Chebsey, Standon, Sandon, Hilderstone and Yarnfield. He thanked the Town Clerk for his input which everyone benefits from. The Group discussed the First Access Group and various matters including transport for the over 16's attending school in rural areas; the only one of two education areas in England who are not facilitating the filling of empty seats on buses.

An update was given on the Heritage Centre and planning and the Borough Council's disregard for Neighbourhood Plans.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Liaison Group was a very useful forum that enabled discussion on a range of common issues.

Heritage Centre Steering Committee

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that a meeting for Council members of the Steering Committee was in the process of being arranged for next week. They have five designs for the Heritage Centre to discuss and costs will go to the full steering committee and the General Purposes Committee.

GP22/115 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 the Annual General Meeting of Stone ATC would be held on 9 November 2021.

Age Concern Stone & District

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

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Stafford & Stone Access Group

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

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that he had attended a meeting with Councillor Davies and there was discussion on repairs that were needed to the lock keepers house.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Mrs Hood and Councillor Mrs Davies had attended a meeting of the Stone Community Hub.

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that lots of changes had taken place and the Hub had reported on its healthy financial state. It is in the process of electing a chairman and a treasurer. Things are ticking along nicely.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Green was not available to provide a report.

The meeting was adjourned and then reconvened after the open session of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting and the confidential section of the Town Council meeting had taken place.

GP22/116 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 items of business.

GP22/117 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 October 2021 (Minute Numbers GP22/079 and GP22/100), be approved as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN

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Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 16 November 2021

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: K. Argyle, A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham, T. Kelt,
P. Leason, J. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Officers: Mr L. Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs K. Dawson, M. Green, M. Hatton, J. Hickling,
Mrs J. Hood, R. Townsend and S. Walley

GP22/118 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: Mrs K. Dawson, M. Green, M. Hatton,
J. Hickling, Mrs J. Hood, R. Townsend and S. Walley.

GP22/119 Declarations of Interests

None

GP22/120 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP22/121 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP22/122 Police and Fire Commissioner

The Committee considered a consultation on the key priorities in the Staffordshire
Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, and Fire and Rescue Plan 2021 – 2024.

An email from Ben Adams, Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue,
Crime had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The following documents had been attached to the electronic version of the
agenda:

- Draft Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024
- Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024

The Chairman advised the Committee that an extension of time to the close date
for comments had not been granted by the Police and Fire Commissioner. He also
advised that the answers to the consultation were required in a multiple choice
format which was difficult for the Town Council to complete collectively.

* 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.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council would not submit a collective response to the public consultations on the Police and Crime Plan, and the Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024, but Town Councillors would be asked to respond individually.

CHAIRMAN

Stone Town Council – Estates Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 16 November 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs L. Davies in the Chair and
Councillors: A. Best, I. Fordham, J. Powell, R. Kenney and C. Thornicroft

Officers: Mr L. Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

By Chairman's invitation: No Councillors

ABSENT: Councillors: M. Hatton, Mrs J. Hood and R. Townsend

EST22/009 Apologies

Councillors: M. Hatton, Mrs J. Hood and R. Townsend

EST22/010 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

EST22/011 Representations from Members of the Public

None received

EST22/012 Minutes of Previous Meeting

That the minutes of the Estates Sub-Committee meeting held on the 27 July 2021 (Minute Numbers EST22/001 – EST22/008), be approved as a correct record.

EST22/013 Street Furniture

The Chairman invited Town Councillors to consider the arrangements for a site visit to assess the condition of the High Street furniture.

RECOMMENDED: That Town Councillors who are interested in attending a visit of the town submit their names to the office along with an indication of whether they would be available during the day time.

* 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.

EST22/014 Reports of Working Groups

Use of Frank Jordan Centre and Stone Station

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee (following advice from the Town Clerk) that no meeting of the Community Centres Working Group had taken place since before the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

The Chairman suggested that there wasn't presently a need for this working group and after agreement from the Sub-Committee it was decided that closure of the working group would be listed for consideration on the next agenda.

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

EST22/015 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.

EST22/016 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential minutes of the Estates Sub-Committee meeting held on the 27 July 2021 (Minute Numbers EST22/001 and EST22/008), be approved as a correct record.

EST22/017 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.

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

Chairman

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Stone Town Council – Management Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 16 November 2021

PRESENT: Councillor J. Davies in the Chair and
Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs L. Davies, I. Fordham, T. Kelt, J. Powell and
R. Kenney

Officers: Mr L. Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

By Chairman's invitation: A. Best

ABSENT: Councillor: Mrs A. Burgess and M. Green

MAN22/015 **Apologies**

Councillor: M. Green

MAN22/016 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received

MAN22/017 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None received

MAN22/018 **Minutes**

- a) That the Minutes of the Management Sub-Committee Meeting held on the 27 July 2021 (Minute Numbers MAN22/001 – MAN22/010), be approved as a correct record.
- b) That the Minutes of the Management Sub-Committee Meeting held on the 19 October 2021 (Minute Numbers MAN22/011 – MAN22/014), be approved as a correct record.

MAN22/019 **Working Groups**

The Sub-Committee reviewed the operation of working groups.

A summary of current working groups with their parent committee and sub committees had been issued 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 advised the Sub-Committee that the purpose of working groups was to consider specific topics or issues before reporting back to the parent committee/sub-committee, reducing the need for too many Councillors to be involved in the detail work. Working groups don't have the authority to take decisions but are valuable in examining issues, consulting experts and making recommendations.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the issue with working groups was that they can last forever, requiring the need to prune them. He said he was interested in making sure the governance of the Town Council was working to the best effect of the town.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that working groups should be set up for a particular purpose where, ideally, three to five councillors work on a particular project. No decisions can be made by the working groups and are required to produce a written report to the parent committee in order for recommendations to be made. The group should generally have a defined end either on a specific date or when the task has been completed. The working group should not be ongoing in the long term.

The Sub-Committee acknowledged that groups such as the Stone Area Parish Liaison Group were not working groups of the Council and operated in a different way.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the current list of working groups appeared to be in accordance with what was needed. The only group that hadn't met was the Market Strategy Working Group.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the working groups should be kept under regular review.

MAN22/020 Charity Policy

The Committee considered the Town Council's policies on national and larger sized charities who make applications for grant aid. A copy of the Council's current policy had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Council is sometimes asked to support organisations where questions are raised about whether they are local. As grant aid is paid by the people of Stone through the precept, the Council is responsible for making sure the expenditure goes to causes which directly benefit the town.

The Chairman asked the Sub-Committee whether it should tighten up the definition of local to make that clearer.

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The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that there was no local definition in the qualifying criteria, just that the organisation provides a benefit to the area. There have also been discussions about whether it is good use of finances to subsidise organisations that are many times the size of the Town Council.

The Sub-Committee suggested that it was stipulated in the application that the money was spent in Stone as larger organisations might not do that – they just ask for funding. The application form asks how the money will be spent and this is easy to follow through with a small group/organisation but more difficult with a larger organisation.

The Sub-Committee considered a range of financial and geographic qualifying criteria which could include an explicit definition for ‘local’ and turnover and reserves limits.

The Town Clerk offered to undertake some analysis of organisations to identify their turnover levels and to see where a good line might be drawn.

The Sub-Committee asked the Town Clerk to undertake an analysis exercise to produce some figures and options on forms of words that can be considered at its next meeting.

MAN22/021 Updates

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

a. Website/Facebook

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the resource to improve the website/Facebook did not exist at present and was not likely to be resolved until the post of Marketing Assistant/Heritage Centre Manager had been filled.

b. Service Continuity Plan

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee about ongoing progress with service continuity. A new telephone system has been installed and is up and running and enabling more sophisticated uses than previously. Calls can be transferred between mobile phones at home which is invisible to the customer with a lot more functionality to come.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Council was about to have a refresh of its IT equipment. This was due to be installed over a three day implementation period in December 2021. All systems will be going to the cloud (Microsoft Azure) with no local

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server and the same experience in any location. The new system should improve resilience with backups in the cloud and local service provider guarantees. The system should also provide easier implementation at the Heritage Centre.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the system should be more robust with the most likely point of failure the office internet – though in the event of an extended office internet failure staff would still be able to have full access to office systems at any location with an operational internet link. The new system should therefore offer a high level of resilience and security, and is leading edge in the local council sector.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Headstone Plan had proven its worth and was ready should it be needed again.

MAN22/022 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.

MAN22/023 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential minutes of the Management Sub Committee, held on 27 July 2021, Minute Numbers MAN22/001 and MAN22/010, be approved as a correct record.

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.

Introduction

1. This report sets out the prospects for the Council's 2022-23 to 2024-25 budget. It considers the overall position of the Council, the context in which the budget needs to be set and the standstill budget, which is the starting point for the determination of the 2022-23 precept.

Background

2. Before addressing the figures relating to the budget, it is first necessary to consider the context in which the budget needs to be set.
3. For a number of years, the Council has received payments of around £30,000 from Stafford Borough Council in addition to the precept. For 2022-23 this includes £21,419 to compensate for a previous reduction in this Council's Taxbase due to benefit changes and £11,461 for the cost of concurrent functions. Neither of these payments are a legal requirement, and, at the time of writing this report, have not been finally confirmed though they are based on provisional figures provided by Stafford Borough. The figures in this report assume that these payments will continue into the foreseeable future at the same cash level as estimated for 2022-23.
4. The Secretary of State has the power to require a referendum of local people before the Council Tax can be put up by more than a specified percentage. Currently, parish councils are exempt from this requirement, though this may change if Council Tax increases in the sector become excessive.
5. This year's budget is also being prepared with the additional uncertainty resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.
6. The figures below, however, assume that all Council services will continue at broadly their current level. Previous lockdown and Covid operating experience has resulted in the Council having already made additional spending on the safety of office, community centre and other facilities and on the ICT infrastructure to support remote meetings and home working. Ongoing costs have also been built into standstill budgets. It is therefore likely that any loss of income due to future lockdowns or restrictions would be balanced by a reduction in event spending. No Covid contingency has therefore been provided.
7. This position may need to be reviewed when the budget is finalised in February.

Standstill Budget

8. The table at Appendix A sets out the Council's current and forecast position for each budget. It is also summarised below by Sub-Committee:

Actual		Budget	Forecast	Budget	Budget	Budget
2020-21		2021-22	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
£		£	£	£	£	£
30,275	Estates	59,250	53,080	30,600	31,170	31,350
18,307	Environment	28,725	28,700	18,270	18,780	19,320
27,760	Tourism & Town Promotion	32,800	30,800	39,500	35,350	34,800
201,999	Management	243,127	222,567	244,190	291,850	269,440
-	Neighbourhood Plan	7,900	525	-	-	-
-11,461	General Purposes	214,450	173,500	163,500	28,500	29,700
18,377	Earmarked Reserves	-167,152	-159,777	-	-	-
285,257	TOTAL	419,100	349,395	496,060	405,650	384,610

9. The figures above and in Appendix A are based on the following:
- Known and forecast expenditure for the remainder of the current financial year.
 - Forecast expenditure for the next three years, based on a standstill position. These figures therefore assume that current services will continue with no growth or cutbacks other than those which are already been committed by previous decisions of the Council.
 - An estimation of likely cost levels for 2022-23, with further inflation of 2% per annum on salaries and 3% on other costs from April 2022, unless specific information is available.
 - A 3% per annum increase in fees and charges.
10. In addition, most budgets which are actually under the control of the General Purposes Committee have been included within the Management Sub-Committee above, to ensure that budgets can be examined at the sub-committee level before reporting back to General Purposes for decision.
11. It can be seen from the above table that the current budget is forecast to underspend by around £69,705, after providing for a number of budget adjustments agreed by the Committee during the year. This is largely due to the holding vacant of the events and marketing post, not requiring the full provision made for the effects of the pandemic, and a revised opening date for the new Heritage Centre.

Standstill Budget 2022-23

12. The standstill budget for 2022-23, at £496,060, is £156,560 more than the forecast made when the 2021-22 budget was approved in February 2021. The main reasons for this difference are a number of adjustments related to the Heritage Centre project, which are the subject of a separate report to this Committee.

The Budget Process

13. The standstill budget is, however, just the starting point for the budget process. Members will want to review the amounts provisionally included. In addition, there are likely to be other areas where members will want to undertake new developments, or stop/change the things that the Council is doing now.
14. Budgets have been allocated to each of the sub-committees, and over the next few weeks they will need to consider these budgets in detail to determine the best pattern of spending to meet the Council's objectives and obligations. The results of those deliberations will then be reported to the next meeting of this Committee on the 25th January 2021 to determine the budget recommendations to Council.

Recommendations

15. That the Committee notes the standstill budget position for 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 and the issues related to setting the precept, and:
 - a. Asks each sub-committee to consider its financial needs for the next three years and report back to the General Purposes Committee on 25th January 2022 with its budget proposals,
 - b. Considers whether it wishes to give any specific instructions to these bodies which they would need to have regard to while preparing their proposed budgets.

Stone Town Council

Appendix A

Standstill Budget 2022-23 to 2024-25

Actual 2020-21		Budget 2021-22	Forecast 2021-22	Budget 2022-23	Budget 2023-24	Budget 2024-25
£		£	£	£	£	£
9,427	Frank Jordan Centre	4,900	2,900	3,700	3,800	3,600
12,703	Stone Station	12,900	9,700	9,200	9,500	9,700
-	Stone Heritage Centre (Running)	20,250	-	20,000	40,000	41,200
-2,473	Town Market	-10,300	-8,000	-10,400	-10,700	-11,000
4,782	Car Parking	-	-	-	-	-
1,594	Bus Shelters & Street Furniture	9,100	9,050	5,280	5,420	5,570
771	Street Lighting	800	700	700	700	700
740	Dog & Litter Bins	1,150	1,090	1,020	1,050	1,080
-	Joules Clock	300	300	300	300	300
257	Town Electricity Supply	400	340	400	400	400
-	Building Maintenance	29,700	29,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
17,349	Grounds Maintenance	17,700	19,560	20,140	20,700	21,300
3,683	Crown Meadow Improvements	4,825	4,870	-	-	-
-2,725	Allotments	450	-1,480	-1,870	-1,920	-1,980
-	Environmental Initiatives	5,750	5,750	-	-	-
21,268	Christmas Lights	23,100	21,200	26,650	22,100	21,150
360	Advertising	-	-	-	-	-
8,605	Tourism & Town Promotion	20,000	17,600	23,250	23,950	24,650
3,980	Grants	14,585	14,585	8,300	8,500	8,600
161,563	Salaries & Employment Costs	162,300	150,000	183,000	199,000	205,000
4,768	Accommodation	5,100	5,350	5,510	5,670	5,830
6,184	Insurances	6,400	6,350	7,040	7,250	7,460
21,288	Administration	25,042	25,042	26,900	27,700	28,520
975	Audit & Legal Fees	2,000	1,090	1,240	1,280	1,320
-	Town Council Elections	9,000	9,000	-	30,000	-
2,534	Allowances - Mayor & Deputy Mayor	3,300	3,100	3,190	3,280	3,380
381	Regalia & Presentations	500	300	500	500	500
210	Civic Dinner & Hospitality	2,300	2,800	3,500	3,600	3,700
987	Remembrance Sunday & War Memorials	7,000	2,000	2,060	2,120	2,180
-564	Miscellaneous	6,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
-308	Interest	-400	-50	-50	-50	-50
-	Neighbourhood Plan	7,900	525	-	-	-
-	Stone Heritage Centre (Setup)	180,000	180,000	155,000	-	-
-	Coronavirus Contingency	10,700	-	-	-	-
-	Town Promotion	5,000	5,000	-	-	-
-	General Contingency	10,000	-	-	-	-
-11,461	Concurrent Functions Allowance	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500
18,377	Rollover Reserve	-159,252	-159,252	-	-	-
-	Neighbourhood Plan Reserve	-7,900	-525	-	-	-
285,257	TOTAL	419,100	349,395	496,060	405,650	384,610

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Stone Town Council - Payments

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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 : 01/10/2021

Payment Date To : 31/10/2021

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
07/10/2021	SI-154949	Mailing room	Franking machine rental Oct to Dec 2021	60.00
08/10/2021	981570732	British Gas	Elec Supply SC - Sep 2021 Amphi	10.31
25/10/2021	123545	E On	Highways Lighting Energy & Maint 2021/22	607.11
12/10/2021	SI-496	Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association	SPCA Training Course - Agendas & Minutes TW	40.00
25/10/2021	7070288879	Stafford Borough Council	Road Closure Order 14/11/21 Remembrance Sunday	117.70
13/10/2021	10545	Cress Security	FJC Annual Intruder Alarm Service / Maint Sep 21 to	90.00
20/10/2021	742962701/001/10	Virgin Media Business	Leased Lines / Calls Oct 2021	28.61
25/10/2021	743014903/001/10	Virgin Media Business	Broadband Charges Oct/Nov 2021	50.00
18/10/2021	EU-02009092	Opayo by Elavon	Opayo Subscription Sep 2021	15.00
28/10/2021	VEO1084438	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection Sep 2021	94.53
19/10/2021	INV112745932	Zoom Video Comm Inc	Zoom Subscription Oct/Nov 2021	47.96
01/10/2021	66524	Prism Solutions	Line Rental August 2021	46.69
01/10/2021	66524	Prism Solutions	Line Rental August 2021	44.45
15/10/2021	713392021117287	Pozitive Energy	Elec Supply Sep 2021	183.64
15/10/2021	713412021117287	Pozitive Energy	Gas Supply Sep 2021	76.02
15/10/2021	713402021117287	Pozitive Energy	Gas Supply Sep 2021	73.84
11/10/2021	2034785	British Gas	Elec Supply High Street Aug / Sep 2021	11.35
11/10/2021	2034279	British Gas	Elec Supply -Pillar 1 High St Aug/Sep 21	8.80

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Stone Town Council - Payments

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
20/10/2021	GB11UHF08AEUI	Amazon	Hoover Bags for new hoover at FJC	8.32
19/10/2021	598424835-2021-2	Amazon	Catering Urn / Water Heater for FJC	68.33
07/10/2021	V01917644987	EE	EE Mobile Charges Sep 2021	21.53
07/10/2021	V01917644987	EE	EE Mobile Charges Sep 2021	21.53
07/10/2021	V01917644987	EE	EE Mobile Charges Sep 2021	22.99
26/10/2021	88822	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Annual Premises Licence - Market Square Ref 88822	70.00
25/10/2021	148302	Prism Solutions	Prism IT Support Services Nov 2021	631.33
28/10/2021	VEO1084439	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Disposal Sep 2021	57.92
20/10/2021	GB11UFYZ6AEUI	Amazon	FJC Replacement Industrial Hoover	100.74
15/10/2021	713382021117287	Pozitive Energy	FJC Elec Usage - Sep 2021	134.58
26/10/2021	026	C Shingler T/A Hindsight Heritage	Developing Collection Policy & attending meetings	300.00
26/10/2021	2110030	Crown Highways	Walton Christmas Lights installation works	1,605.44
20/10/2021	001/2021	Equine Stunt Productions	St George's Event 23/09/21 - Fighting & Mounted	800.00
08/10/2021	41UG031-0005	Geosphere TA Parish Online	Parish Online Annual Subscription to 2.10.22	600.00
19/10/2021	173091090	World Pay	Worldpay Managed Service Fee Sep 2021	12.50
06/10/2021	147456	Prism Solutions	Server Migration and set up new hardware	5,406.00
06/10/2021	147456	Prism Solutions	Dell XPS 17 Laptop	1,842.82
06/10/2021	147456	Prism Solutions	Dell Latitude 3520 Laptop	2,362.86
06/10/2021	147456	Prism Solutions	Samsung 28 inch Monitor	826.80
06/10/2021	147456	Prism Solutions	Monitor Stands	78.06
06/10/2021	147456	Prism Solutions	Docking Stations	487.14
06/10/2021	147456	Prism Solutions	Wireless Keyboards	196.80
06/10/2021	147456	Prism Solutions	Delivery of IT Equipment	11.00
19/10/2021	173177607	World Pay	Worldpay Safer Payments Fee Sep 2021	5.00
20/10/2021	7070288907	Stafford Borough Council	Quarterly Office Rent 20/10/21 to 19/01/22	150.00
04/10/2021	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates Oct 2021 FJC	434.00

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Stone Town Council - Payments

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
04/10/2021	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates Oct 2021 Station	225.00
04/10/2021	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates Oct 2021 Mkt Sq	35.00
25/10/2021	SBC Lottery Licence	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Annual Lottery Registration 2022 and 2023	40.00
12/10/2021	Expense Claim	Trudy Williams	Refreshments and cutlery	30.63
12/10/2021	Expense Claim	Trudy Williams	Mail Merge Toolkit Pro Software	66.00
31/10/2021	6535274	Water Logic	Water Cooler Rental - Office Oct 2021	12.71
31/10/2021	6535273	Water Logic	Water Cooler Rental - Station Oct 2021	6.05
31/10/2021	6513563	Water Logic	Water Cooler Rental - FJC Oct 2021	5.50
18/10/2021	INV-441720	AutoEntry	AutoEntry Monthly Subscription - Oct 2021	9.00
				<u>18,291.59</u>