



# Stone

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## Town Council

**Town Clerk**  
Les Trigg

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Stone  
ST15 8JP

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23 December 2021

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in **St Michael's Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 4 JANUARY 2022 at 7:10pm**, or upon the rising of the Estates Sub-Committee, if later.

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

In view of the current situation regarding the pandemic, meetings may be rearranged or cancelled at short notice. Anyone planning to attend should check the Council's website before setting out. All attendees are asked to wear face masks throughout, other than when speaking as part of the meeting.

Les Trigg  
Town Clerk

Councillors: J. Davies (Chairman), I. Fordham (Vice Chairman), K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess,  
Mrs L. Davies, M. Green and T. Kelt

### **AGENDA**

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**
3. **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.

**4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- a) To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Management Sub-Committee held on 16 November 2021, Minute Numbers MAN22/015 – MAN22/023 (attached).

**5. Budget 2022-23 – 2024-25**

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

**6. Grants Policy**

To consider the Town Council's policies on applications for grant aid.

A report of the Town Clerk and a copy of the Council's current policy is attached.

**7. Updates:**

- a) Website/Facebook
- b) Service Continuity Plan

Will any Councillors who wish to speak at this meeting, but are not members of the Sub-Committee, please inform the Chairman before the start of the meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the Management Sub-Committee Meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of this scheme are displayed in the Council's notice boards and website.

# 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

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**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.

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\* 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**

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## Introduction

1. The Management Sub-Committee considers, on behalf of the General Purposes Committee, a number of the budgets under the control of that Committee. The purpose of this report is to determine the level of budget for these services that the Sub-Committee wishes to recommend to the General Purposes Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

## Background

2. The General Purposes Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 considered the standstill budget for 2022-23 and indicative figures for the next two years based on a number of assumptions contained within the report.
3. Despite the uncertainty resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the standstill budget has been prepared on the basis that all Council services will continue at broadly their current level. Any adjustments required in this respect will be considered by the General Purposes Committee before the budget is finalised.
4. The figures for this Sub-Committee on the above basis are:

<b>Actual</b>		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>2020-21</b>		<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
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
-11,461	Concurrent Functions Allowance	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500	-11,500
<b>190,538</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>231,627</b>	<b>211,067</b>	<b>232,690</b>	<b>280,350</b>	<b>257,940</b>

5. In respect of the figures above, Members should note:
- a. The Grants budget is currently significantly unspent, with only around £1,000 having been awarded so far this year. Any sum remaining unspent at the end of the financial year will be rolled-over and added to the budget for spending in 2022-23.
  - b. The Salaries and Employment Costs is forecast to underspend in the current year due to holding the Events and Marketing Assistant post vacant. The budget for 2022-23 and subsequent years includes, from July 2022, the costs of a new full time post covering the roles of both the new Heritage Centre Manager and the currently vacant Events and Marketing Assistant post. Pay awards have been provided for at 2% per annum, though at the time of writing the pay award for April 2021 has not been agreed.
  - c. The Insurance budget includes an estimate of the additional premium in respect of the Heritage Centre.
  - d. The administration budget is currently overspent due to the cost of refreshing the Council's ICT provision this year, but this overspending will be rolled forward to be met from a projected underspending in 2022-23. The 2023-24 figure includes £8,000 for the net cost of replacing the Council's iPads.
  - e. The Town Council is still awaiting a figure from Stafford Borough for the cost of the May 2021 by-election, so the forecast has been assumed at the same level as the original budget provision. The 2023-24 budget includes the estimated cost of the May 2023 election. No provision has been made for future by-elections, so should any be required the costs would need to be met from reserves.
  - f. The Civic Dinner and Hospitality budget has been increased to include the estimated cost of the Mayor's Stone Heroes award scheme, which was approved at the General Purposes Committee's 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 meeting.
  - g. The Remembrance Sunday and War Memorials budget for 2021-22 originally contained a £5,000 provision for refurbishing the war memorial in Granville Square, held over from the previous year. Following further investigation this now looks unlikely to go ahead, so has been removed from the budget at this stage. The Sub-Committee will need to make an appropriate recommendation to the General Purposes Committee if it wishes to reinstate this provision.
  - h. The Miscellaneous budget includes the cost of providing the infrastructure for the Stone Helpline. The budget assumes that the Helpline will continue into the foreseeable future.
  - i. Other budgets have been provided at broadly current levels, plus inflation.
6. As reported to the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> December, the standstill budget is just the starting point for the budget process. Members will want to review this standstill budget and 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.

7. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the standstill budget and any areas of growth or savings which they would want to be taken into account in setting the budget for 2022-23 and future years.

#### **Potential Budget Changes**

8. With only £1,000 spent this year to date, the Sub-Committee may wish to review the level of Grants budget to be recommended to the General Purposes Committee due to the current low level of take-up by eligible organisations.

#### **Recommendations**

9. Members are asked to recommend their proposed budget for consideration by the General Purposes Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

## Introduction

1. The previous meeting of the Management Sub-Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 considered its policy for the payment of grants to larger organisations, and asked the Town Clerk to come forward with proposals based on experience of previously agreed grant applications.
2. This report contains those proposals.

## Proposals

3. The current grants policy is attached to today's agenda. Following an analysis of previous applications and taking into account the discussions at previous meetings, the following revised criteria are proposed. It should be borne in mind that these criteria are guidelines, and that the Council would still be able to make grants outside these criteria in exceptional circumstances providing they were still in compliance with the law.
4. Criteria 1 – The Organisation:
  - a. A properly constituted organisation, and,
  - b. Non-commercial and not predominantly funded via taxation, and,
  - c. Not a political or primarily a lobbying organisation, and,
  - d. Provide a service or services which benefit the residents of the Town Council's area.
5. Criteria 2 – Geographical:
  - a. Based in Stone, or,
  - b. A Stone branch of a larger organisation, or,
  - c. A larger organisation undertaking a project which predominantly benefits Stone.
6. Criteria 3 – Financial:
  - a. Annual turnover less than £100,000, and,
  - b. Available reserves no greater than 12 months turnover, and,
  - c. Grant maximum £500 per annum.

7. Notes:

- a. For the purposes of Criteria 2 above and paragraph b below, “Stone” should be interpreted to include nearby areas that could be considered to be part of “Greater Stone” and not limited strictly to the Town Council boundaries.
- b. Where a grant is for a local branch of a national organisation, or for a local project, it should be clear that any grant paid would be used exclusively in Stone, not as part of spending over a wider area such as, say, Stafford Borough.

**Conclusions**

8. This report has suggested revised criteria for the Council’s grant aid programme which are designed to focus grants on local charitable organisations which benefit the Stone Town area.

**Recommendations**

9. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the proposals in this report as the basis of a revised Grant Aid Policy for the 2022-23 financial year.

## Notes for Grant Applications

Stone Town Council has a sum of money which is available for local organisations to bid against for grant aid. In order to ensure that these funds are distributed as fairly and effectively as possible, the Council has determined a set of guidelines against which applications will be considered. These guidelines are set out below.

### Qualifying Criteria

In order to be considered for a grant from Stone Town Council, applicants must be a properly constituted organisation and meet the following conditions:

1. They provide a service or services which benefit the residents of the Town Council's area.
2. They must not be political or primarily a lobbying organisation.
3. They have fully completed the Council's application process by the advertised deadline, which will include:
  - a. Completion of the standard application form,
  - b. Provision of the most up to date set of accounts for the organisation available at the date of the application deadline, where applicable,
  - c. Details of how any grants provided to the organisation in previous years have been spent.
  - d. Where the Council appoints a member to the organisation's management committee or similar body, a statement of support from that member in relation to the grant application.

### Limits on the Level of Grants Available

In order to consider competing demands fairly, the Council will expect to award grants only at the July and February meetings of its General Purposes Committee, though it may be prepared to vary this in cases of extreme emergency.

The Council will aim to distribute grants widely, and to those applicants presenting the greatest need. To this end, other than in very exceptional circumstances, grants will be awarded:

1. Up to a maximum of £500 per organisation in any financial year.
2. To organisations holding less than 12 months' net expenditure (excluding grants) in reserves. The definition of reserves in this case excludes reserves which are legally earmarked to specific spending and cannot be used to support the proposals for which grant aid has been sought.

Where an application would exceed these limits, organisations are still invited to apply to the Council, but will need to explain in the "exceptional request" section of the application form why the Council should treat it as an exception. Similarly, any emergency applications for meetings other than July and February should complete this section to explain why the request would not wait until the following meeting.

### Application Process

In order to be considered at the July or February meetings, fully completed applications will need to be received at the Council's offices at 15 Station Road, Stone, ST15 8JP no later than three weeks in advance of the published date of the meeting.

Applications can also be emailed to [clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk) in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. Copies of the form in either format are available on request to this address, and can be downloaded from the Council's website at [www.stonetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.stonetowncouncil.gov.uk).

For further help and information please contact the Town Council at the above address, or telephone 01785 619740.

Grant recipients should note that whilst they are welcome to acknowledge any grant from the Town Council, the payment of a grant does not create a partnership and the organisation still retains full responsibility for their activities.