



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

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10 January 2022

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in **the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2022 at 7:00pm** for consideration of the matters itemised in the following agenda.

Please find the agenda set out below.

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: P Leason (Chairman), T. Kelt (Vice Chairman), K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs K. Dawson, M. Hatton and R. Townsend

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Requests for 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**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Sub-Committee held on 19 October 2021, Minute No's ENV22/014 – ENV22/020 (attached)

5. **Covid-19 Commemoration**

To receive an update.

6. **Budget 2022-23 – 2024-25**

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

7. **Crown Meadow Improvements**

To receive an update on the work being undertaken by the Council's Grounds Maintenance contractor (note attached).

8. **Reports of Working Groups**

- Plastic Free Community/Single Use Plastics Working Group
- Environmental Issues Working Group

9. **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.

10. **Energy Audits**

To consider a proposal (attached) for the commissioning of Energy Audits at Stone Station Community Centre and Frank Jordan Centre.

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 Environment 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 on the Town Council's notice boards and website.

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 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 the 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 (as would be the case for 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

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to determine the level of budget for services under its control that the Sub-Committee wishes to recommend to the General Purposes Committee meeting on 25th January 2022.

Background

2. The General Purposes Committee on 7th 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:

Actual		Budget	Forecast	Budget	Budget	Budget
2020-21		2021-22	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
£		£	£	£	£	£
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	-	-	-
18,307	TOTAL	28,725	28,700	18,270	18,780	19,320

5. In respect of the figures above, Members should note:
 - a. The Grounds Maintenance forecast for the current year includes replanting the Walton roundabout (£600) and the town borders (£600). The maintenance of benches and the bridge on Crown Meadow and the annual sum for removal of bullrushes have now been included in this budget, as they are regular maintenance works, rather than the Crown Meadow Improvements budget.
 - b. The Crown Meadow Improvements budget now includes one-off items only, with bench and bridge maintenance and the annual allowance for bullrush removal now

being moved into the Grounds Maintenance budget. The current year forecast includes the cost of one-off work on the amphitheatre paths (£1,425), work on Scrape 1 (£2,200), tree replanting (£500) and plant purchases for hedge (£750).

- c. The Allotments budget for 2022-23 and subsequent years includes provision for water charges (£700), hedge cutting (£140), general/grounds maintenance (£1,065) and the allotment competition (£215). Against this is set estimated annual income of £3,990. Inflation is added to these figures each year.
 - d. The Environmental Initiatives budget is an allowance for agreed spending by the Climate Change and Single Use Plastics working groups. No spending has been undertaken in the year to date, but any remaining allowance as at 31st March 2022 can be rolled forward for spending in 2022-23.
6. As reported to the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 7th 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. The Council's grounds maintenance contractor has been asked to review items that, based on his experience of undertaking the work, the Council need to consider for inclusion in next year's budget. He has asked the Sub-Committee to consider the following items:
 - a. Remove split tree in Amphitheatre (£640)
 - b. Replace Walton Roundabout "Lock Gate" (£400)
 - c. Replace plants/fill gaps in Town Borders (£600)
 - d. Replace plants/refurbish Walton Roundabout (£600)
 - e. Rebuild Amphitheatre steps and add ramp for accessibility (£2,000)
9. In addition, the following items have also been put forward for consideration:
 - a. Covid Remembrance Orchard (£1,200)
 - b. Dig out 50% scrape and remove waste, as advised by Biodiversity Officer (no estimate yet available)
 - c. Purchase and install new information board on meadow (£400 plus cost of board)

Recommendations

10. Members are asked to recommend their proposed budget for consideration by the General Purposes Committee on 25th January 2022.

Crown Meadow - Improvements

Job Description	Details	Current Status	Approved Budget	Spend to Date	Total Forecast Cost	Anticipated Date of Completion
Scrape 1	Dig out area to create a shallow pond and plant wildflowers. Cut a new path around the scrape	Weather dependent and status of flooding. Meadow is currently very wet.	2,200	0	2,200	Dec to Mar 2022
Tree Removal	Removal of Willows and Silver Birch trees from both scrapes	Work Completed - March / April	660	660	660	Completed
Weed Clearance	Top off area by old bridge. Clear weeds and spray	Work Completed - March / April	380	380	380	Completed
Tree Re-planting	Remove four trees from the middle of the field and re-plant to form a hedge to shield the M&S building	Costs cover tree re-planting only. Further investment in plants will be required to create a hedge. Plant costs est £350 - £750. Decision on types and size of plants required. A grant applications of £500 to SCC Climate Change Fund has been made	760	0	760	Ordering of plants for hedge needs to be completed asap to ensure planting can be completed by March 2022
Total			4,000	1,040	4,000	

Crown Meadow - Specific Projects

Job Description	Details	Current Status	Annual Budget	Spend to Date	Total Forecast	Anticipated Date of Completion
Amphitheatre Path	Provide an 80m path with a ramp rather than steps	To be completed. Supply issues with stones	1425	0	1425	March 2022
Crown Meadow Paths	Widening of paths, remove growth and patch stones	Work Completed March / April	1110	1130	1130	Completed
Total			2,535	1,130	2,555	