

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber, 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 18 January 2022

PRESENT: Councillor P. Leason in the Chair and
Councillors: Mrs K. Dawson, and R. Townsend

Officers: L Trigg

ABSENT: Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, M. Hatton, T. Kelt, R. Kenney and J. Powell

ENV22/021 Apologies

Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, T. Kelt, R. Kenney and J. Powell

ENV22/022 Declarations of Interest, Requests for Dispensations, and Declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

None received

ENV22/023 Representations from Members of the Public

None

ENV22/024 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on the 19 October 2021 (Minute Numbers ENV22/014 – ENV22/020), were approved as a correct record.

ENV22/025 Covid-19 Commemoration

The Sub-Committee noted the cost of trees at £703.20, and of a bench at between £350 and £1,000. The Council's grounds maintenance contractor has offered to plant the trees and install the bench at no cost to the Council as his contribution to the project.

The question was raised whether a contribution could be made from the Richard Vernon Trust towards the cost of the bench.

RECOMMENDED: That the cost of the Covid-19 Commemoration area be included in the Sub-Committee's budget bid for 2022-23 (See minute ENV22/026 below), and that the Richard Vernon Trust be asked to consider a contribution towards the proposed bench.

ENV22/026 Budget 2022-23 – 2024-25

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk* (issued with the agenda for the meeting) which considered the level of budget that the Sub-Committee may wish to recommend to the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 25 January 2022 for the services under its control.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the standstill budget and the amounts included for each service. It also considered other areas of growth or savings to be taken into account when setting the budget for 2022-23 and future years.

The Sub-Committee considered whether it wished to recommend to the General Purposes Committee any additional sums for inclusion in the budget, including proposals put forward by the Council's grounds maintenance contractor.

The Sub-Committee requested that a meeting be set up with the grounds maintenance contractor for him to show them the proposed improvements and explain why they were being proposed. The Sub-Committee acknowledged, however, that if they did not put forward financial proposals now for inclusion in the budget there would be no funding available. It was therefore agreed to put forward contingency sums for inclusion in the budget, to require further consideration by the Sub-Committee before final recommendation to the General Purposes Committee.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget figures included in the Clerks report are accepted by the General Purposes Committee with the additional budgetary provision in 2022-23 of £1,800 for Covid-19 commemoration, £1,500 for the provision of an additional information board by the bridge, £2,000 for the amphitheatre steps and accessibility ramp, and a contingency of £3,240 for the split tree at the amphitheatre, Walton roundabout lock gate, town border planting, refurbishment/replanting of Walton roundabout and improvements to the scrapes. This contingency would need to be the subject of further consideration by the Sub-Committee before a recommendation is made to go ahead with spending.

ENV22/027 Crown Meadow Improvements

Earlier discussion related to the budget had dealt with the majority of this item, but further discussion took place regarding a potential grant of £500 from the County Council's Climate Change Fund for hedge planting, and the need for repainting of a number of Council benches.

RECOMMENDED: That, subject to receipt of the grant, £500 is spent on hedge planting in accordance with the grant application.

ENV22/028 Reports of Working Groups

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

A verbal update was provided by Councillor Townsend as set out below.
The update covered both working groups, as they had met jointly:

- A proposal will be brought forward to a future Sub-Committee meeting that the two working groups should be merged permanently.
- Arrangements had been made for the working groups to meet with representatives of Stafford Borough on 15th February 2022.
- They were supportive of the proposals re energy audits
- Councillor Kelt had joined Stafford Borough Council's Environment Panel
- A follow up letter should be sent to schools
- The Parish Online mapping software currently being trialled by the Council should be examined for any potential benefits to support environmental work.
- Councillor Burgess had reported on a meeting with Roots in Stafford
- A proposal to take a stall at some Council markets was considered, and it was clarified that a stall could not be sub-let to any third parties.

ENV22/029 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.

ENV22/030 Energy Audits

The Sub-Committee considered a proposal to conduct energy audits at the Frank Jordan Community Centre and the Stone Station Community Centre. It noted that permission had been obtained from the landlords of both properties to undertake the audits, but that their further permission may be required to implement the audits' recommendations.

RECOMMENDED: To proceed with the proposed audits at a cost of £1,200, to be met from the Environmental Initiatives budget.

Chairman