

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 8 February 2022

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

Officers: L. Trigg

ABSENT: Councillors: M. Green, J. Hickling, P. Leason and S. Walley

GP22/147 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: M. Green and S. Walley.

GP22/148 **Declarations of Interests**

Councillor R. Townsend declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 (Minute Number GP22/156) – Grant aid to local organisations: Aston Lodge Residents Association.

GP22/149 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP22/150 **To receive the report of the County Councillors**

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

Councillor Hood reported on a meeting she held with County Highways in the High Street regarding the traffic position and also commented on the misleading notices in the town.

She informed the Committee that in future, County Councillors will be informed of road closures in their area and updated Walton Councillors that the bus gate cameras will be installed within four weeks.

The Committee were also informed that Stone will lose some of its trains to London from December. Councillor Hood said that she had the details, and encouraged members to write to the Stone MP, Sir Bill Cash, about this issue.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP22/151 **To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

There was no report on this occasion.

* 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.

GP22/152 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP22/153 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 25 January 2022 (Minute Numbers GP22/139 – GP22/146), be approved as a correct record.

GP22/154 Minutes of Sub-Committees

- a) Estates Sub-Committee held on 4 January 2022 (Minute Numbers EST22/018 – EST22/027), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers EST22/022 and EST22/027 be adopted.
- b) Management Sub-Committee held on 4 January 2022 (Minute Numbers MAN22/024 – MAN22/030), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers MAN22/028 and MAN22/029 be adopted.
- c) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 4 January 2022 (Minute Numbers TTP22/026 – TTP22/035), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP22/034 be adopted.
- d) Environment Sub-Committee held on 18 January 2022 (Minute Numbers ENV22/021 – ENV22/030), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers ENV22/025, ENV22/026 and ENV22/030 be adopted. The Sub-Committee were asked to reconsider minute ENV22/027 and the recommendation was consequently not agreed at this stage.

GP22/155 Annual Review of Risk Management

The Committee received the report* of the Town Clerk and considered the annual review of the Council's Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Risk Register.

The Town Clerk confirmed that there were very few changes required as a result of the review except for additions relating to the risks presented by Covid-19.

It was requested that the risks related to Covid-19 were retained in future assessments, but widened to pandemics in general.

RESOLVED: To accept the Annual Review of Risk Management.

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GP22/156 **Grant Aid to Local Organisations**

The Committee considered the following requests for a grant:

ASTON LODGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Committee considered the grant application received from Aston Lodge Residents Association requesting £500 to purchase a strimmer, a hedge cutter and appropriate PPE for the purposes of maintaining the many unadopted footpaths and their borders on Aston Lodge estate.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Aston Lodge Residents Association.

STONE & DISTRICT STROKE CLUB

The Committee considered the grant application received from Stone & District Stroke Club requesting £500 to subsidise specialist coach hire for two planned club outings which form an important part of the club's work.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone & District Stroke Club.

STONE & DISTRICT SWIMMING CLUB

The Committee considered the grant application from Stone & District Swimming Club requesting £500 to pay for the necessary training and development of swim teachers. The donation will assist the Club in bridging the gap created by the loss of financial support from a local sponsor.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone & District Swimming Club.

GP22/157 **Meeting Schedule for 2022-23**

The Committee considered a proposed programme of meetings and events* for the period May 2022 to April 2023.

It was suggested that the changes made to dates of meetings in December 2021 and January 2022 had resulted in a better programme, and that this should be repeated in future years.

RESOLVED: To approve the circulated schedule of meetings and events dates, with the sub-committee meetings planned for 20th December 2022 moved to 17th January 2023 and the General Purposes Committee meeting planned for 17th January 2023 moved to 24th January 2023.

GP22/158 **Fishing Rights on the River Trent**

The Committee considered a letter from Bibby's Stone & District Angling Club requesting the Town Council extend the current five-year free lease which ends on 15 June 2022, to support the Club.

A letter from the Secretary of the Angling Club and Memorandum of Agreement regarding fishing on the River Trent at Stone had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED: To agree to extend with the agreement for a further five years.

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GP22/159 **High Street Traffic Safety**

The Committee considered the recent awareness campaign by Stafford Borough policing team urging drivers to avoid driving down the High Street and any actions to be taken by the Town Council.

A copy of the Staffordshire Police press release “Drivers Urged to Avoid Stone High Street” had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

Concerns were expressed by Councillors about the use of the High Street as a “rat-run” by drivers, creating a genuine safety risk that had resulted in a significant number of complaints from residents.

The Police have now explained the rules to drivers that they found using the High Street, and are now ready to take enforcement action.

Councillors expressed the view that public safety is the first priority when compared with driver convenience.

Reference was made to problems being caused due to the new takeaway at the bottom of the High Street causing congestion and risks to public safety, and the comments that the Town Council had made on the planning application to try to prevent this.

RESOLVED:

To support the Police, and to ask them to publish a further press release explaining the rules and advising the public of forthcoming enforcement action.

To write to Highways to ask them to take due regard of congestion caused on the High Street when considering planning applications, and whether they are prepared to police it using their enforcement officers.

GP22/160 **Boundary Commission Review - Public Hearings**

The Committee considered the appointment of a Councillor to speak on behalf of the Council at the Boundary Commission public hearing.

An extract from the Boundary Commission’s website had been attached with the agenda for the meeting along with the link to the full content.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that whilst only one Councillor can speak on behalf of the Council, this does not preclude other Councillors from speaking at the hearings in a private capacity.

RESOLVED: That Councillor I Fordham be appointed to speak on the Council’s behalf at the Boundary Commission public hearing.

GP22/161 **Town Council Payments**

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 November to 31 December 2021.

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GP22/162 Update from Working Groups:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

It was reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had not met.

Heritage Centre Steering Committee

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that a meeting of the Steering Group would be held within the next two weeks.

Engagement with Young People

Councillor Mrs Davies advised the Committee that the Group had met and were still exploring the way forward.

GP22/163 To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings of local organisations and outside bodies as a representative of the Town Council

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that the minutes of the October meeting of the Liaison Group were attached to the agenda, and demonstrated the wide range of issues being considered. The Group had since met during January, with key issues discussed being access to school transport for over 16s and the development of the Stone Heritage Centre.

Stone ATC

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that a number of new Committee members had joined, that they were looking to set up a new indoor rifle range, and that they were planning to apply for a stall on Stone market for recruitment purposes.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that following publicity in the Gazette a number of new volunteers had joined, and that it was now hoping to restart activities such as hospital transport, coffee mornings and the lunch club.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place since the last report.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that no meeting had been held since the last report.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Mrs Davies advised the Committee that no meeting had been held since the last report.

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 and closed session of the Town Council meeting had taken place.

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GP22/164 **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.

GP22/165 **Confidential Minutes and Recommendations of Sub-Committee**

- a) Estates Sub-Committee meeting held on 4 January 2022, Minute Numbers EST22/018, EST22/026 and EST22/027.

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the draft minutes
- ii. To approve the recommendations contained in Minute Number EST22/027.

CHAIRMAN