



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

15 Station Road
Stone
ST15 8JP

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

18 May 2022

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in **the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 24 MAY 2022 at 7:05pm**, or on the rising of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee, if later.

Please find the agenda set out below.

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

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

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations Received.**
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 Environment Sub-Committee held on 15 March 2022, Minute No's ENV22/031 – ENV22/038 (attached)

5. **Covid-19 Commemoration**

To receive an update.

6. **Crown Meadow Improvements**

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

7. **Environmental Issues Checklist**

To ask the Environmental Issues Working Group to prepare a policy checklist to support committees and sub-committees when considering environmental issues and ensuring compliance with Council Policy.

8. **Environmental Issues Working Group**

- a) To note the resignation of a co-opted member
- b) To consider future membership of the group

9. **Updates**

- a) Energy audits at the Frank Jordan Community Centre and the Stone Station Community Centre
- b) Recycling and single use plastics audit at the Town Council office

10. **Reports of Working Groups**

- Environmental Issues Working Group

To consider the attached notes and article on Environmental Matters

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 at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 15 March 2022

PRESENT: Councillor P. Leason in the Chair and
Councillors: T. Kelt, R. Kenney and J. Powell

Officers: L Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

By Chairman's Invitation: Councillor Mrs J. Hood

ABSENT: Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs K. Dawson, M. Hatton and
R. Townsend

ENV22/031 Apologies

Councillors: Mrs K. Dawson

ENV22/032 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

ENV22/033 Representations from Members of the Public

None

ENV22/034 Minutes of Previous Meeting

- a) The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on the 18 January 2022 (Minute Numbers ENV22/021 – ENV22/030), were approved as a correct record.

The General Purposes Committee noted Minute Number GP22/154 (d) which reads:

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.

- b) The Minute Number ENV22/027 was considered by the Sub-Committee and approved with understanding that the word 'hedge' had been incorrectly used and should have been documented as 'hedgerow'.

RECOMMENDED: That the General Purposes Committee considers the amended recommendation originally proposed at Minute number ENV22/027 as follows:

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

ENV22/035 Covid-19 Commemoration

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that he and Councillor Mrs Hood would be meeting separately with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor (over the next number of days) to discuss the specific positioning of the tree planting on Crown Meadow (somewhere near to the Peace Pole) for the Covid-19 Commemoration.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the outcome of the meetings will be reported to the General Purposes Committee.

ENV22/036 Crown Meadow Improvements

- a) The Sub-Committee noted the update on the work being undertaken by the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contractor.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that in the tree re-planting row of the update (which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting) 'hedge' should read 'hedgerow'.

The Sub-Committee noted that the anticipated completion date for the tree re-planting would be after the anticipated date of March 2022 as some of the work first required approval by the General Purposes Committee.

- b) The Sub-Committee noted the update on the Sub-Committee's budget proposals (Minute Number ENV22/026).

ENV22/037 Merger of Working Groups

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that the Single Use Plastics Working Group and the Environmental Issues Working Group had always met together and most members of each working group were the same people.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the merged working group would be a new one but with the terms of reference of both of the old groups. The co-opted member would have to be co-opted again by the Environment Sub-Committee and also approved again by the General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Single Use Plastics Working Group and the Environmental Issues Working Group merge into one group called the 'Environmental Issues Working Group'.

RECOMMENDED: That the current co-opted member of the Single Use Plastics Working Group be co-opted to the new combined group.

ENV22/038 Reports of Working Groups

The Chairman invited Councillor Kelt to address the Sub-Committee.

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

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that he would provide a verbal update to cover both working groups as the issues were merged.

Councillor Kelt reported that he had attended the first meeting of the Stafford Environment Panel on Microsoft Teams. He confirmed that the terms of reference were agreed, joint Chairmen had been elected, and work streams defined. The next meeting will be held on 28 March 2022 (which Councillor Kelt will be unable to attend).

Councillor Kelt reported on a productive meeting of the Working Groups where the next steps were agreed as community engagement. The meeting was attended by the Stafford Borough Council Climate Change Officer who has confirmed the Borough Council's agreement to provide bins free of charge (as many as are needed) for the collection of non-recyclable waste. There will be a need to agree the non-recyclable items to be collected and the number of bins required.

The Working Group discussed a stall at the Farmer's Market (possibly in May) to publicise the Group's activity and promote interest.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that he had attended the No Planet B Stafford Green Art Exhibition which was interesting with good ideas from local schools.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that he had sought agreement from the Editor of the Stone & Eccleshall Gazette for the publication of an article on environmental matters, which he hoped could become a regular two-page feature. He suggested that the article could be documented as having been written by him, either as an individual or as a Council representative.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that if an article was written in the name of the Council, or in the name of a particular role within the Council, it would need to go through Council processes for its approval.

The Sub-Committee agreed that when the article Councillor Kelt was writing had been completed, it should be forwarded to the Town Clerk for consideration.

Chairman

Stone Town Council - Works in Progress

Sub-Committee	Dept	Job Description	Contractor	Details	Current Status	Carry Over Budget	Approved Budget	Spend to Date	Total Forecast	Anticipated Date of Completion
Enviro	Allotments	Clear overgrown plots	MJ Plant	Clear 15/16, Rotavate 9	15/16 Completed	400		0	400	April 22
Enviro	Crown Meadow	Scrape 1	MJ Plant	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	Sep - Nov 22
Enviro	Crown Meadow	Tree Re-planting	MJ Plant	Remove four trees from the middle of the field and re-plant to form a hedgerow to shield the M&S building	A grant applications of £500 to SCC Climate Change Fund has been received. Needs to be spent by June. Mick ordering plants	750	500	0	1,250	Partial planting June 22 to meet funding requirments. Full planting Sep - Oct 22
Enviro	Crown Meadow	Amphitheatre Path	MJ Plant	Provide an 80m path with a ramp rather than steps	To be completed. Supply issues with stones	1,425		0	1,425	Ongoing. Completion date May / June 22
Enviro	Crown Meadow	Plant Remembrance Orchard	MJ Plant	Plant 8 cherry trees on Crown Wharf Meadow	Meeting held to agree location. Supply issue with recommended trees. Need futher advice on suitable varieties. MP will discuss with his suppliers to avoid varieties that are too large		1800	0	1800	Sep - Oct 22
Enviro	Crown Meadow	Purchase and install info board	MJ Plant		Artwork from original board needs to be found to progress order. RM to contact Creative Eye		1500	0	1500	June / July 22
Enviro	Crown Meadow	Amphitheatre split tree	MJ Plant		Unless it becomes dangerous, leave until after birds have nested		640	0	640	July / Aug 22
Enviro	Grounds Maint	Walton Roundabout - re-planting	MJ Plant				600	0	600	Aug /Sep 22
Enviro	Grounds Maint	Town Borders - re-planting	MJ Plant				600	0	600	Aug /Sep 22
Enviro	Grounds Maint	Repair Lock Gate	MJ Plant		RM to contact Canals Trust re availability of old lock gate and MP to refurb		400	0	400	May / June 22
Enviro	Grounds Maint	Contingency					1,000	0	1,000	

PAPER FOR ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE 24TH MAY 2022

The accompanying document is a proposed article for the Stone and Eccleshall Gazette on Environment Matters. The purpose of the article is to engender interest in the environment, environmental degradation and reversing environmental damage and to gauge expressions of interest and to canvass names and contact details. It is intended that environmental action groups be set up by the community independent of the town council although the council may facilitate their creation but thereafter the groups should be self-sustaining and should not call on the council for financial support.

The article identifies two means of public engagement, stalls on the town markets and social media. Both have been discussed and agreed at previous working group and sub-committee meetings and have been discussed with the office but have not been formally accepted. However, a budget figure was agreed in the past two years and this coming year, which was mainly for public engagement. This paper addresses this issue. The article also gives contact details for the Town Council office to provide a vehicle for recording expressions of interest.

NB. The article may be subject to editorial change, when submitted.

There is also an option to invite an expert to give a talk on environmental matters if a suitable venue can be arranged. See email below from Councillor Whalley:

“I have a business contact who is one of the landscape industries leading voices on the environment and biodiversity. He writes regular features for industry magazines and chairs industry debates on the subject.

He is based in Surrey but was born and raised in Alexandra St. He would be more than willing to come to Stone and do a talk on what residents can do to increase biodiversity. I know that Crown Wharf have a large upstairs function room that is free of charge to use. Could be a great way to help kick start the town councils environment drive.”

The sub-committee must decide if this is an approach worth pursuing.

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

What is the environment? It is where we live and what surrounds us, the air that we breathe, the weather we enjoy, the rivers, the countryside, the buildings and the animals and plants in our neighbourhood. Our activities are constantly changing and degrading the environment. The population of the country is increasing and people need houses and jobs, to be provided where they live, requiring constant residential and commercial development, and infrastructure like roads and towns and provision of heating and power and food to our homes. Typically, this involves replacement of natural green space with buildings; it involves converting fuel into energy; it requires supply of materials and services to where we live and work and agriculture to grow our food; and it requires transport to move us around.

Climate change - It is clear that the climate is gradually changing. Depending on our age, we can remember past weather patterns being different from those we are currently experiencing. We are now having warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, floods and drought and wildfires, earlier springs and summers, and more violent storms happening more frequently. Most experts agree that these changes are due to human activity. It is estimated that a 1.5 degree average temperature increase from pre-industrial levels is the tipping point between survivable and catastrophic change and we are currently 1.1 degrees above those levels and forecast to hit 2.7 degrees by the end of the century at current rates *. The drivers for climate change are the emission of “greenhouse gasses” (CO², methane and others), into the atmosphere and this comes from internal-combustion-based transport, many manufacturing processes and from burning fossil fuel to generate heat and power for our homes. Meat production and consumption is also a major producer of methane.



Flooding due to heavy rainfall

Waste – Modern living creates waste. Our lifestyle has become more disposable so we buy cheap and often and when we no longer have use for things, we throw them away. Most of the items we purchase, including food, is wrapped and a lot of packaging is plastic based and this also goes for the items themselves. Often, we dispose cleanly in our bins, which are collected regularly by the Borough Council. Often, we use the correct dedicated bin: green for general waste, brown for garden waste and blue for recyclable, e.g. glass and plastic. But sometimes we just throw litter on the wayside,

or misuse the council bins. This means the town and, more visibly, the countryside is blighted with unsightly litter, and the possibility of reusing waste is reduced. Litter-picks are all well and good after the event but do not address the key issue. The collected waste could be recycled into new product, or it could be burnt to generate energy which is useful but can emit CO² or it could be buried in landfill which is not good because the burial site becomes noxious and unfit for any other purpose.



Dumped trolleys despoiling Scotch Brook

Pollution – We would all like to breathe clean air and to have clean open water nearby and to have a clean area to live. Unfortunately, our love of the motor car and convenient travel poisons the air with the products of combustion. Manufacturing processes generate smoke and other noxious gases. Rivers and lakes have become convenient places to dump unwanted materials – “out of sight is out of mind”. The water companies are responsible not only to provide us with clean water but also to remove our waste water comprising overruns from taps, used sink, bath and shower water and the contents of our toilets. Sewage is treated and removed from the natural environment. However, in extreme circumstances companies are allowed to dump untreated sewage into the river system and the sea affecting, even killing, the animals that live there but also ruining open water as a leisure asset. We are also personally responsible for water pollution through cleaning and cosmetic products that are washed away from our sinks and which contain harmful products for wildlife. Food production requires use of artificial and natural fertilizer to increase yields and herbicides and pesticides to control weeds and pests. These pollute the land and run off into the rivers polluting the water.



Smoke and other particulates pumped into the atmosphere

Biodiversity – There is growing concern over the adverse effects of our activities on the flora and fauna of the world in reducing biodiversity (see David Attenborough and others). This has a knock-on effect on food supply, competition for water, physical and mental health, and culture. We are reliant on plants for nourishment and clean air and healthy food chains are vital to supply our needs. But development, climate change, and use of pesticides destroys habitats and kills key pollinators and the other species that rely on them.

Green space - Open fields, meadows and woodland are a valuable resource for leisure and health. The requirements of an increasing population with increasing housing needs, and the demand for more commerce and profit, leads to more building and developers find it easier to build on green space than to clean up and redevelop brownfield sites. Natural countryside is a great regenerator of good environment and provides habitats for wildlife and protection against some of the worst effects of climate change like flooding. Covering over land with tarmac and concrete exacerbates these issues by destroying green space and the ability of the land to cope with extreme climate.

What can be done? – The issues described above may seem too big for individuals, and small towns and parishes to even think about addressing. You may think that it is the sort of thing that governments, major companies and international bodies should deal with. But when it comes down to it, many of these problems are caused by individuals directly, or by activities required to maintain their lifestyle or to generate business profit. There are ways that we can help, for instance by:

- Encouraging manufacturers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to introduce carbon capture where possible and to off-set where necessary through such measures as tree-planting.
- Reducing our reliance on fossil fuel by using cars less, moving to other forms of transport and walking and cycling more.
- Moving away from internal combustion of fossil fuels for transport.
- Reducing the ambient temperatures of our homes, and moving away from fossil fuels for heating and power by introducing technology like heat pumps.
- Using low and efficient energy products such as LED lighting and energy efficient white goods.

- Using the planning system to require that new housing aims for net zero in energy use and waste production through insulation, solar panels and waste management systems.
- Encouraging businesses to offer a working from home option to reduce the harmful effects of commuting; homes will require wi-fi access to enable this.
- Reducing our meat consumption.
- Encouraging manufacturers and distributors to reduce unnecessary packaging of goods.
- Avoiding single use plastics for packaging and food containers.
- Encouraging manufacturers to clean up their processes to reduce CO² and particulate emissions and to ensure that their used products and waste can be disposed of without damaging the environment.
- Making our possessions last longer and attempting to reuse or recycle and disposing of waste in an environmentally friendly way.
- Providing recycling and disposal facilities and clamping down on illegal dumping.
- Influencing Water Companies to avoid discharging untreated sewage into rivers.
- Encouraging agriculture to reduce use of artificial fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides and to ensure that they do not pollute waterways.
- Requesting stricter legal protection from illegal pollution activities and stricter enforcement of breaches.
- Protecting green spaces and trees, including roadsides verges and hedgerows.
- Directing new development towards brownfield in preference to green field sites wherever possible.
- Making our houses and gardens wildlife friendly to encourage diversity and encourage pollinating insects.

By acting together, we can put economic and political pressure on organisations to do their bit.

How can I get involved?

Did you know that Stone Town Council have:

- declared a Climate Emergency (along with Stafford Borough and County councils)?
- instituted internal energy and plastic usage audits with a view to getting their own house in order?
- started working together with the borough on environmental matters?
- adopted a policy to ensure that environmental considerations influence their activities and decisions and the awarding of contracts?
- an Environmental Sub-Committee to deal with environmental matters with an agreed budget and have assigned a working group to address specific issues?

However, it is vital that the community gets involved with suggestions and activities because it is you, who will be most affected by environmental changes. In particular, the involvement of the younger generation is important as they will have to live with the consequences of the current climate emergency.

The Town Council's Environment Sub-Committee is planning to introduce public engagement sessions via the various markets and other events in the town and also social media sites, so look out for those. If you want to know more and would like to join or form a community environment action group, contact Stone Town Council to register your interest. Tel: Email:

* NB. The facts and statistics quoted are taken from various national media sources by the author and have not been specifically verified by Stone Town Council.

Tom Kelt