

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone, on Tuesday 6 September 2022

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: K. Argyle, A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs L. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson, Mrs J. Hood,
T. Kelt, J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and S. Walley

Officers: L. Trigg and R. Mincher

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, I. Fordham, M. Green, M. Hatton, J. Hickling, P. Leason
and R. Townsend

GP23/064 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: M. Green, J. Hickling and R. Townsend

GP23/065 **Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Mrs K Dawson declared a personal interest in minutes GP23/072 and
GP23/056 (c)

Councillor J Davies declared a personal interest in minute GP23/073 (c)

GP23/066 **Requests for Dispensations**

None

GP23/067 **To receive the report of the County Councillors**

County Councillor Mrs J. Hood

The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs Hood to address the Committee.

Councillor Hood thanked Councillor Walley for his comprehensive list of blocked
gullies following her request for information at the last meeting of this Committee.
She also informed the Committee that a list had been received from Councillor
Fordham. This information will be passed to the Highways Department for them
to act upon.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP23/068 **To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

There was no report on this occasion.

GP23/069 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP23/070 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 2 August 2022 (Minute Numbers GP23/047 – GP23/063), be approved as a correct record.

GP23/071 **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on 16 August 2022, Minute Numbers TTP23/008 – TTP23/016.

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the draft minutes
 - ii. To approve the recommendations contained in Minute number TTP23/014.
- b) Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 16 August 2022, Minute Numbers ENV23/011 – ENV23/019.

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the draft minutes
- ii. To approve the recommendations contained in Minute number ENV23/017.

GP23/072 **Grants to Local Organisations – Free Use of Community Centres**

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's report*, which recommended limiting the granting of ongoing or extended periods of free use of community centres to the Stone Station only.

A question was raised about whether any application for the use of the community centres as "warm hubs" in the future would be subject to this policy, if agreed. It was confirmed that it would apply, but that any such application would be brought to the Committee for consideration.

It was further clarified that approval of this policy would not mean that the Station was now available for free use. Normal charging policies would continue to apply at the Station as set out in the Clerk's report unless a request for ongoing free or reduced charges was approved by the Committee under the grant aid process.

RESOLVED:

- a) The granting of free or significantly discounted use of the Council's community centres via the Grant Aid process is limited to the Station Community Centre only.

* 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.

- b) The limit of £500 within the grants policy should not apply to free or significantly discounted use of the Station Community Centre.
- c) The grants policy should be updated accordingly.

GP23/073 Grants to Local Organisations

Grant applications had been received from three organisations, but none of them met the Council's criteria for the reasons set out on the agenda:

- a) **Stone (Staffs) & District U3A – Replacement of IT equipment used for classes.**
A proposal to waive the criteria related to the level of reserves in this case was not seconded, so the application was not considered further.
- b) **Stafford and Stone Canoe Club – Equipment for Junior Paddlers.**
RESOLVED: To waive the criteria related to the level of reserves and award a grant of £477.56.
- c) **1st Stone Scout Group – Free use of FJC (approx. £4,000 pa).**
RESOLVED: To waive the criteria related to the level of reserves and agree to the free use of the Stone Station Community Centre for a period of 12 months.

GP23/074 External Auditor Appointment

The Committee considered the correspondence from Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA)* attached to the agenda asking the Council whether it wished to continue to be included within the SAAA central auditor appointment arrangements for the next five year period from the current financial year to 2026-27.

The Town Clerk strongly recommended that the Council should continue with these arrangements.

RESOLVED:

To continue with the SAAA central auditor appointment arrangements for the next five year period to 2026-27.

GP23/075 Members' Motion under Standing Order 4

Councillor Steve Walley proposed that:

“Whilst attending the Norbury Canal Festival, I was introduced to the coordinator of the Roving Canal Traders Association. One of the key aims of the RCTA is to hold waterside events that provide opportunities for roving canal traders. The RCTA were holding such an event at the Norbury festival which featured a number of barges operating a floating market, selling a selection of products, many of which were locally produced. The coordinator of the event was interested in exploring the possibility of holding such an event at Stone canal side. Holding these events requires coordination with other regional RCTA events in addition to the logistics of getting all the barges to the town. The RCTA require the blessing of town/parish councils before they will enter into any formal discussions or carry out site visits to assess the practicalities of holding an event. Holding a floating market at Stone canal side would be a great way to make more of the towns canal heritage,

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encourage more local residents to get onto the canal and attract new visitors to the town.

I would ask the Council to request that the Town Clerk approaches the RTCA to explore the possibility of holding a floating market at Stone canal side during 2023”

The exploration of this proposal was supported by the Committee, but a number of issues were discussed that would need to be resolved before such a market could be held. This included the level of activity currently on the canal and the number of independent and reserved moorings in the area. It was suggested that a discussion be held with the holiday let business in the area.

RESOLVED:

To support the exploration of this proposal, and ask the Town Clerk to report back to the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee.

GP23/076 Stone Heritage Steering Group

- a) The resignation of Councillor Mrs L Davies from the Steering Group was noted.
- b) RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor J Davies to the Steering Group vacancy.

GP23/077 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 31 July 2022.

GP23/078 Update from Working Groups:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Mrs Hood reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had not met.

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place.

Engagement with Young People

Councillor Mrs Dawson informed the Committee that the group had not met.

GP23/079 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 next meeting of the Liaison Group would be on 26th October 2022.

Stone ATC

Councillor Davies informed the Committee the next meeting was due on 13th September 2022.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that a meeting of Age Concern Stone & District had taken place on 2nd September 2022, which had included

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consideration of the accounts, the introduction of new volunteers, and the work involved with requests for assistance.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt reported that the next meeting was planned for 26th September 2022.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillors Mrs Hood, Kelt and Kenney reported that a Plot walkabout had taken place on a very hot 14th August 2022, but that there had been no meeting since the last report.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that no meeting of Stone Community Hub Liaison Group had taken place.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Green was not present at the meeting to give 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 had taken place.

GP23/080 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

GP23/081 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 2 August 2022, Minute Numbers GP23/047, GP23/062 and GP23/043 be approved.

GP23/082 Heritage Centre

The Committee Chairman and the Town Clerk reported on progress with regard to the letting of the contract for works at the Heritage Centre. It was expected that a further report would be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

CHAIRMAN