



Stone

Town Council

Town Clerk
Les Trigg

15 Station Road
Stone
ST15 8JP

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

17 January 2023

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 24 JANUARY 2023 at 7:00pm** for consideration of the matters itemised in the following agenda.

I trust you will be able to attend.

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 November 2022, Minute No's ENV23/020 – ENV23/028 (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) and to consider any variations required.

7. **Budget 2023-24 – 2025-26**

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

8. **Reports of Working Groups**

- Environmental Issues Working Group

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 St Michael’s Suite at the Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone, on Tuesday 15 November 2022

PRESENT: Councillor R. Townsend in the Chair and
Councillors: K. Argyle and Mrs K. Dawson and T. Kelt

Officers: L Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

By Chairman’s Invitation: A. Best, J. Davies and Mrs J. Hood

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs A. Burgess, M. Hatton, R. Kenney, P. Leason and J. Powell
(Mayoral Engagement),

ENV23/020 Apologies

Councillors: R. Kenney and J. Powell (Mayoral Engagement)

ENV23/021 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

None received

ENV23/022 Representations from Members of the Public

None

ENV23/023 Minutes of Previous Meeting

- a) The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on the 16 August 2022 (Minute Numbers ENV23/011 – ENV23/019), were approved as a correct record.

ENV23/024 Covid-19 Commemoration

The Chairman updated the Sub-Committee on the Covid-19 Commemoration project.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that he and the Deputy Town Clerk had attended a site visit with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor who had confirmed that he was planning to source a species of tree that required minimum maintenance and didn’t grow too big. The cherry trees that had originally been suggested were thought not to be the most suitable variety.

It had been proposed that approximately six to eight trees (depending on the size and type chosen) are planted in a semi-circle shape on ground located to the right

of the peace pole.

The Chairman reported that a quotation was also awaited for the refurbishment of the vintage bench. He said that once the costings were clear the budget would be evaluated to see whether a surplus of funds would cover the cost of a commemorative plaque.

The suggested orientation for the commemoration was that the bench and plaque face outwards towards Crown Meadow.

ENV23/025 Crown Meadow Improvements

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that Crown Meadow was regularly discussed at the monthly review meetings with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor. At the last meeting it was reported by the contractor that he had had a number of issues with machinery and other matters which had caused delays to the progress of work. Assurances were given that the work on Crown Meadow would be completed over the winter period and certainly by the end of the financial year.

The Chairman referred the Sub-Committee to the Crown Meadow Improvements report which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

He advised the Sub-Committee that a quotation for a new path and replacement steps in the area of Workhorse bridge had not included a ramp which was needed to make the area completely accessible. An estimate for work that included a ramp had now been requested.

The Sub-Committee suggested that consideration be given to the installation of bollards to prevent vehicular access. It was also suggested that the ramp may be used inappropriately and not the purpose intended leading the Sub-Committee to agree that this point required consideration.

The Chairman suggested the proposal to install a new information board on the Crown Meadow side of the river Trent be postponed due to the additional cost of the ramp.

It was also suggested that the installation of signage relating to the Westbridge Park development linking to Crown Meadow be delayed pending the Borough Council's renovation work on Westbridge Park.

The Chairman suggested that a quotation be obtained for moving two benches on Crown Meadow which due to ground erosion were getting ever closer to the river, with a significant drop close by.

ENV23/026 Members' Motion Under Standing Order 4

Councillor Andrew Best proposed that:

“Salary sacrifice schemes can offer benefits to both employees and employers by allowing the purchase of certain Government approved items by reduction to salary, rather than the employee meeting the cost from their net income. In these cases, the employee saves the income tax, National Insurance and pension contributions that they would otherwise have paid on the salary sacrificed (though pension and some other benefits are also correspondingly reduced) and the employer saves their contributions to National Insurance and pensions.

Once such scheme is the Bike to Work Scheme, details of which are available at <https://www.bike2workscheme.co.uk>. I feel this scheme would help some but not all Council employees and it’s a great “Green” incentive that helps the environment.

I recommend that the Sub-Committee asks the Town Clerk to consult with staff to ascertain if there would be any interest in such a scheme and, if so, bring back a full report to the Sub-Committee setting out the implications for the Council.”

The Town Clerk confirmed that there would be no cost implications in respect of the Council adopting the Bike to Work Scheme other than administration, and there were small potential savings. Under the Staffordshire County Council pension scheme pension contributions would continue to be payable at the same rate by employer and employee. The employee taking part in the scheme would however make savings on income tax and national insurance, and the Town Council would save employer national insurance contributions.

RECOMMENDED: That a Bike to Work Scheme be supported by the Town Council and offered to employees interested in signing up.

ENV23/027 Speaker on Environmental Matters

The Sub-Committee considered the paper from Councillor T. Kelt (which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting).

The Town Clerk reminded the Sub-Committee that the item had been brought forward from the previous meeting as Councillor Walley had not been available.

The Chairman invited Councillor Kelt to address the Council.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that rather than deferring the item again (as Councillor Walley hadn’t been able to attend the meeting) he would speak on Councillor Walley’s behalf.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that Councillor Walley had connections with an expert on environment and biodiversity who was willing to run environmental events for invited guests, and the Crown Wharf had indicated it would be willing for their conference facility to be used with no charge. The event could be advertised by ALBOS although other means of publicity could be used.

Councillor Kelt proposed the Sub-Committee asks Councillor Walley to approach

his contact to confirm their willingness to deliver the events and obtain costings for potential venues to take the matter to the next stage.

Some Councillors stated that they did not support the proposal as environmental matters was a bigger issue than the Council could tackle, and more progress would be achieved by working with the County and Borough Councils than by this Council going its own way.

County Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Sub-Committee that she would be pleased to arrange a meeting with County officers on the issue.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council does not support the progression of environmental talks with the expert proposed by Councillor Walley.

ENV23/028 Reports of Working Groups

Environmental Issues Working Group

Councillor Townsend advised the Sub-Committee that the Environmental Issues Working Group had not met.

Councillor Townsend invited Councillor Kelt to update the Sub-Committee on some of the work he had been involved in.

Councillor Kelt reported that he had attended meetings of the Stafford Panel under environmental matters and raising awareness groups.

The activities and work going on include:

- The use of plastics on allotments
- Biodiversity workshops, of which there have been a number
- Repair cafés in Stafford – these are organised events where residents can bring items that can be repaired and reused. They are well attended by repairers and residents with different items being presented and most repairs successful.

There is a need to recruit volunteer repairers with the required skills and volunteer helpers to deal with the administration. They also need a suitable venue, insurance, advertising and access to equipment that repairers may need.

- Veolia visits – which would be better done through the Borough Council's Waste Management Group, inviting attendants from the Town Council when there are suitable dates.
- Non-recyclable items and what to do with them – going through item by item and publicising the information to the community.

The group has separately been looking at Stafford Borough Council's Local Plan 2020-2040 consultation.

Councillor Kelt suggested the Town Council consider the setting up of a Repair Café in Stone and it was agreed that the idea be explored by the Environmental Issues Working Group.

Councillor Kelt has also followed up on the Carbon Balloon but is awaiting a response from the County via the Borough Council.

Chairman

Stone Town Council - Enviro Report - Works in Progress

Dept	Job Description	Details	Current Status	Carry Over Budget	Approved Budget	Spend to Date	Total Forecast Cost	Anticipated Date of Completion
Allotments	Clear overgrown plots	Clear 15/16, Rotavate 9	15/16 Completed	400		400	400	Completed
Allotments	Mount Road -Plot 10	Clear wooden clothes and tubs. Rotavate. Leave strip in middle for path / partition between A & B	Cleared. Large plot divided into 10a and 10b and new tenants cultivating					Completed
Allotments	Mount Road - 8A(i)	Rotavate	Cleared and rotavated. Ready for a new tenant to take over					Completed
Allotments	Newcastle Road 2A	Removal of bath tub and table and any general waste.	Completed. New tenant cultivating the plot. Some asbestos panels to be removed.					Completed
Allotments	Newcastle Road	Provide skip for general tidy up of all plots	Completed					Completed
Allotments	Newcastle Road	Investigate and confirm if any works required on dangerous tree reported by tenant on plot 3	Tree does not pose a current danger. However, needs to be monitored and should be removed when funds allow.					Jan 23
Crown Meadow	Scrape 2 - exit to Westbridge Park / next to the woodland	Dig out area to create a shallow pond and plant wildflowers. Cut a new path around the scrape	The Env Comm has proposed that work on Scrape 2 is halted as part of the Council's need to reduce the overall budget. Mick to not carry out any invoiceable work on Scrape 2 until further notice.	0		0	2,200	Work postponed until further notice
Crown Meadow	Tree Re-planting	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. Mick ordering plants to establish the hedgerow. Meeting needed with Mick to confirm if the plan is to plant a hedgrow the full length of the wooden fence, on the eastern side of the fence. Check if the hedge is planned to be a mix of species to enhance ecology and biodiversity. Additional funding of £500 may be available.	750	500	0	1,250	By Spring 2023
Crown Meadow	Amphitheatre Path	Provide an 80m path with a ramp rather than steps (from Trent Close side) Site visit 18/10/22: Mick said that the current quote is for an 80m path and refurbishment of the steps down to Crown Meadow and does not include a ramp down to CM.	To be completed. Consider extending the new path 10 metres further to link up with existing disabled access ramp on Trent Rd at Workhorse Bridge. Mick has agreed to install a new path from the disabled ramp opposite the bridge over to the steps down to CM and to include some paving materials to be installed around each bench on the amphitheatre field.	1,425		0	1,425	Jan / Feb 2023

Stone Town Council - Enviro Report - Works in Progress

Dept	Job Description	Details	Current Status	Carry Over Budget	Approved Budget	Spend to Date	Total Forecast Cost	Anticipated Date of Completion
Crown Meadow	Amphitheatre Steps / Ramp	For disabled access to CM we need a ramp adjacent to the the steps. However, MP proposed an alternative position for a ramp to the right of the car park gateway into the meadow. This will keep the earthworks simpler and less expensive. There is a layer of stones beneath the undergrowth where the bands used to enter from the car park.	Create ramp down to CM as well as the replace steps. Consider revised proposal for improved disabled accessibility at next enviro-sub meeting. The proposal for a ramp is cancelled because the width available at the steps is not sufficient to be compliant. Mick will refurbish the existing steps with railway sleepers. Path and steps will be completed within the agreed budget of £2000 + £1425.		2,000			Jan / Feb 2023
Crown Meadow	Plant Remembrance Orchard	Plant 8 cherry trees on Crown Wharf Meadow	Site visit 18/10/22: supply issue with recommended trees. MP will discuss with his suppliers to source varieties that do not grow too large so that future maintenance is easy. Awaiting news from Mick. A Vintage bench has been sourced which MP will refurbish for £400. Mick has offered to supply and install a wooden plinth for the plaque. STC to source the plaque but this cannot proceed until the cost of the trees and planting is known from Mick.		1800	0	1800	Jan to March 2023
Crown Meadow	Purchase and install info board		Original artwork to be reviewed by Enviro Comm. Quotes to be obtained for metal boards as per common plot. This proposal has now been cancelled and the budget returned to reserves.		1500	0	1500	Cancelled
Crown Meadow	Amphitheatre split tree		Unless it becomes dangerous, leave until after birds have nested. Split tree will be reomed in January 2023		640	0	640	Jan 23
Grounds Maint	Walton Roundabout - re-planting		MP says has been too dry but MP assures work will be completed soonest in this FY.		600	0	600	TBC
Grounds Maint	Town Borders - re-planting		MP says has been too dry but assures that it will be completed soonest in this FY.		600	0	600	TBC
Grounds Maint	Repair Lock Gate		Canals Trust contacted about lockgate to refurb. MP aims to resolve soonest in this FY.		400	0	400	TBC when lockgate available
Grounds Maint	SCRAPE 1 - closer to amphitheatre, middle of meadow, by canal	To cut back grasses in Scrape 1 to encourage new growth and diversity. Cut back a third of the area on a three year rotation. Strim and remove.	Bill Waller recommends Sep 2023 for the first third to be cut. Discuss and agree method with Mick.		1,000	0	1,000	Carry Over to 23/24 budget
Grounds Maint	Repair and re-site vandalised bench and scout bench	MP proposes to refurbish bench and re-site from secluded spot to more open and visible site to reduce ASB and vandadism..	Scout Bench to be removed and stored for possible future refurbishment. No funds are available at this time to refurbish vadalised benches. Mick is not required to remove, refurbish or relocate.					On hold

Stone Town Council - Enviro Report - Works in Progress

Dept	Job Description	Details	Current Status	Carry Over Budget	Approved Budget	Spend to Date	Total Forecast Cost	Anticipated Date of Completion
Crown Meadow	River erosion	River erosion resulting in 2 meadow benches now being closer to the riverbank with obvious danger for public. To be discussed by Env Comm and quote needed.	No funds are available for this job in the current or next fin yr. Mick is not required to remove or relocate the benches					On Hold

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.

Background

2. The General Purposes Committee on 13th December 2022 considered the standstill budget for 2023-24 and indicative figures for the next two years based on a number of assumptions contained within the report.
3. The standstill budget was prepared on the basis that all Council services will continue at broadly their current level. Inflation has not, however, been included in Sub-Committee budgets beyond 2022-23. A separate estimate of inflation beyond this date has been made across the whole of the Council and will be considered by the General Purposes Committee.
4. The figures for this Sub-Committee on the above basis are:

Actual		Budget	Forecast	Budget	Budget	Budget
2021-22		2022-23	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
£		£	£	£	£	£
21,135	Grounds Maintenance	20,140	24,950	23,610	23,610	23,610
-500	Crown Meadow Improvements	13,415	10,960	-	-	-
-2,117	Allotments	-1,470	-1,320	-1,770	-1,770	-1,770
-	Environmental Initiatives	5,750	5,750	-	-	-
18,518	TOTAL	37,835	40,340	21,840	21,840	21,840

5. In respect of the figures above, Members should note:
 - a. The Grounds Maintenance forecast for the current year includes the regular contracted works, repairs at the Anglers Car Park, plus a provision of £3,240 which needs the further approval of the Sub-Committee before proceeding. This sum for approval includes the removal of a split tree at the Amphitheatre (£640), replacement of the Walton Roundabout "Lock Gate" (£400), replacing plants/filling gaps in town borders (£600), replacing plants/refurbishing Walton Roundabout (£600) and work on the scrapes and benches (£1,000).
 - b. The Crown Meadow Improvements budget is intended for one-off items only, therefore there is no budget provision has been made beyond the current year. The

Sub-Committee will need to decide if there are items that it wishes to propose to the General Purposes Committee for inclusion in these future budgets. The current year includes provision for one-off work on the amphitheatre paths (£1,425), amphitheatre steps (£2,000), Covid Remembrance Orchard (£1,800), meadow information board (£1,500), Scrape 1 (£2,200), creation of a hedgerow (£1,250), moving trees (£200) bridge works (£525) and the Jubilee tree planting (£57). With the exception of the Jubilee tree planting, none of this work had been completed at the time of preparing this report.

- c. The Allotments budget for 2023-24 and subsequent years includes provision for water charges (£660), general/grounds maintenance (£1,370) and the allotment competition (£160). Against this is set estimated annual income of £3,960.
 - d. The Environmental Initiatives budget is currently unspent, though there is an outstanding commitment for £1,200 relating to energy audits. Any remaining allowance as at 31st March 2023 can be rolled forward for spending in 2023-24. In line with normal practice, no budget provision has been made beyond the current year. If the Sub-Committee wishes to provide for additional budgets in future years, this will need to be recommended to the General Purposes Committee.
6. As reported to the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 13th 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 2023/24 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. Any such items will be reported to the meeting.

Recommendations

9. Members are asked to:
 - a. Consider whether they wish to approve the outstanding items referred to in paragraph 5.a above for recommendation to the General Purposes Committee..
 - b. Recommend their proposed budget for consideration by the General Purposes Committee.