



**Town Clerk**

Les Trigg

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15 Station Road  
STONE  
ST15 8JP

27 February 2023

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** will be held in St Michael's Suite at the **Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 7 MARCH 2023 at 7:05pm**, or on the rising of the Council meeting, if later.

The agenda is set out below, and I trust you will be able to attend.

Les Trigg  
Town Clerk

**AGENDA**

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Requests for Dispensations Received**
4. **To receive a report from County Councillors representing Stone Town**
  - County Councillor Mrs J. Hood
  - County Councillor I. Parry
5. **To receive a report from Borough Councillors representing Stone Town**
6. **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.

**7. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

- a) To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 7 February 2023, Minute No's GP23/148 – GP23/171 (attached).

**8. Minutes of Sub-Committees**

There are no draft Sub-Committee minutes.

**9. Review of Standing Orders**

To undertake a review of the Council's Standing Orders (attached to the electronic version of the agenda) which were circulated to the previous meeting of this Committee.

The document has been reviewed by the Town Clerk who is not proposing any changes.

**10. Review of Financial Regulations**

To undertake a review of the Council's Financial Regulations (attached to the electronic version of the agenda) which were circulated to the previous meeting of this Committee.

The document has been reviewed by the Town Clerk who is not proposing any changes.

**11. Police and Fire Commissioner**

To consider inviting the Staffordshire Police and Fire Commissioner, Ben Adams, to a meeting to discuss anti-social behaviour, crime and policing within Stone.

**12. Review of Staffordshire County Council Divisions**

To consider a Boundary Commission for England review of division boundaries for Staffordshire County Council.

For information on the Review, please see the following link: [Staffordshire County Council | LGBCE Site](#)

**13. Members' Motion under Standing Order 4**

**Councillor Jill Hood**

*'I am aware that Stone Town Council has neither made nor been invited to make representation regarding Schedule 17 applications submitted to the Staffordshire County Council in late January, regarding HS2 lorry routes along the entire length of HS2 Phase 2a within Staffordshire. The CA3 area specifically will impact the Stone Town Council area.*

*I propose that the Council asks Councillors, on behalf of our residents in every ward, to question the proposed routes with a view to minimising disruption to our town, and to submit their comments to the Town Clerk to put to the consultation.'*

14. **Members' Motion under Standing Order 4**

**Councillor Steve Walley**

*'I've been contacted by a resident of Trent Close in Stone who has witnessed a number of near misses when bikes and other canal users leave the towpath at Trentside clinic and filter onto Trent Close. There is a lack of visibility of motorists who are coming from Trent Close and it has been reported to me that the bikes often leave the towpath very quickly. This area gets quite busy and is also included on the national cyclists route, so I believe its only a matter of time before someone is injured or worse. There is already a very small sign in the grass but I would propose that we need a bigger sign to make sure we have done everything in our power to warn cyclists of the danger'.*

*Proposal: 'That the Town Council determines responsibility for the current sign and encourages the owners to install a larger one, which would be more visible to cyclists'.*

15. **Town Council Payments**

To receive a list of payments made by the Council during the period 1 to 30 November 2022 and 1 to 31 January 2023.

16. **Update from Working Groups:**

- a) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- b) Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group
- c) Engagement with Young People

17. **To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings as a representative of the Town Council**

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group – J. Davies  
Stone ATC – Town Mayor & J. Davies  
Age Concern Stone & District – Cllrs J. Davies and C. Thornicroft  
Stafford & Stone Access Group – Cllr T. Kelt  
Stone Common Plot Trustees – Cllrs: Mrs L. Davies, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, R. Kenney and C. Thornicroft  
Stone Community Hub Liaison Group – Cllrs: Mrs L. Davies, Mrs J. Hood & J. Powell  
SPCA Executive Committee – Cllr M. Green  
Stone Traders' Group Directors Meeting – J. Davies, I. Fordham, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and S. Walley (Councillors attend on a rotating basis)

18. **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.**

19. **Confidential Minutes**

To approve the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 7 February 2023, Minute Numbers GP23/148, GP23/169, GP23/170 and GP23/171 (attached).

20. **Heritage Centre**

To consider an update on the Stone Heritage Centre building works tendering process and the appointment of a main contractor for this work.

21. **Frank Jordan Centre**

To consider a proposal from the Stone Community Hub regarding potential changes to its use of the Frank Jordan Centre.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the General Purposes Committee meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of the scheme are displayed in the Council's notice boards and website.

# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 7 February 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and  
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, Mrs J. Hood, T. Kelt, P. Leason, J. Powell,  
C. Thornicroft, R. Townsend and S. Walley

Officers: L. Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

**ABSENT:** Councillors: K. Argyle, Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs L. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson, I. Fordham,  
M. Green, M. Hatton and J. Hickling

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**GP23/148     Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: Mrs L. Davies, Mrs K. Dawson,  
I. Fordham, M. Green and J. Hickling

**GP23/149     Declarations of Interests**

None

**GP23/150     Requests for Dispensations**

None

**GP23/151     To receive the report of the County Councillors**

**County Councillor Mrs J. Hood**

The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs Hood to address the Committee.

Looked after children

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that as a County Councillor and Corporate Parent, she had been invited to attend a meeting of 'The Voice Project' which gives looked after children (whether adopted, fostered or living in a residential home) an opportunity to talk about how their care is going, including how their health plans should progress.

She said it was lovely to meet the two young people who attended the session. They were delightful and it was incredible to see how they were flourishing with the high-quality care they were receiving. She said she was very proud that in Staffordshire young people were looked after until they were 25 years of age (rather than the standard 18 years, which was the case in most other parts of the country).

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that 1300 children were currently being looked after in Staffordshire, many coming from challenging backgrounds. She asked that looked after children living in Stone are welcomed, and called for Councillors to spread the word that there was a shortage of foster carers in

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\* 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.

Staffordshire and the County Council were looking to appoint new recruits – young and mature.

**County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

**GP23/152      To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

There were no reports from Borough Councillors on this occasion.

**GP23/153      Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**GP23/154      Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 13 December 2022 (Minute Numbers GP23/128 – GP23/147, be approved as a correct record.

**GP23/155      Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 15 November 2022 (Minute Numbers TTP23/027 – TTP23/036), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers TTP23/032 and TTP23/033 be adopted.

The recommendations contained in Minute Number TTP23/035 were considered as part of Minute Number GP23/158 (agenda item 11).

- b) Estates Sub-Committee held on 17 January 2023 (Minute Numbers EST23/028 – EST23/035), that the draft minutes be noted.

The recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number EST23/032 were considered as part of Minute Number GP23/158 (agenda item 11).

**GP23/156      Environment Sub-Committee – Budget 2023-24 to 2025-26**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk\* (which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting) examining the requirements for the Environment Sub-Committee budget 2023-24 to 2025-26.

The General Purposes Committee had needed to consider the Environment Sub-Committee's budget because it had not been possible for an earlier meeting of the Sub Committee to take place.

The Committee reviewed the standstill budget and the amounts included for each service. It also considered other costs and savings when setting the budget for 2023-24 and future years.

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\* 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.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that a number of items in the current year's budget required consideration along with consideration of the forward year's budget 2023-24.

The Committee considered a written budget proposal\* made by the Environment Sub-Committee Chairman in respect of the Environment Sub-Committee budget, which was distributed at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To accept the following items for consideration as part of the budget report later on the agenda:

1. The standstill budget set out in the Town Clerk's report is accepted, after making the adjustments set out below:
2. Provision of £2,000 is made for the investigation and, if necessary, removal of asbestos at Newcastle Road allotments.
3. Allotment fees be increased by 10% from April 2023.
4. At the Crown Meadow, the planned one-off works on Scrape 2 (£2,200) and the new information board (£1,500) should be halted, but additional annual funding should be provided for the removal of willow saplings (£500) and for grass cutting and collection in Scrape 1 (£500).
5. The unspent balance on the Environmental Initiatives budget should be reduced by £3,000 in the current year.
6. As a result of the above, the Sub-Committee's budget would be changed as follows compared to the standstill budget:

	£	
2022-23	6,700	Reduction
2023-24	3,000	Increase
2024-25	1,000	Increase
2025-26	1,000	Increase

RESOLVED: That the outstanding items for the current financial year, referred to in paragraph 5.a of the Town Clerk's report, be approved. This consisted of felling of the 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).

#### **GP23/157      Management Sub-Committee – Budget 2023-24 to 2025-26**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk\* (which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting) examining the requirements for the Management Sub-Committee budget 2023-24 to 2025-26.

The General Purposes Committee had needed to consider the Management Sub-Committee's budget because it had not been possible for an earlier meeting of the Sub Committee to take place.

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\* 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.

The Committee reviewed the standstill budget and the amounts included for each service. It also considered other costs and savings when setting the budget for 2023-24 and future years.

The Committee considered a written budget proposal\* made by the Management Sub-Committee Chairman in respect of the Management Sub-Committee budget, which was distributed at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To accept the following items for consideration as part of the budget report later on the agenda:

1. That the standstill budget set out in the Town Clerk's report is accepted, after making the adjustments set out below:
2. That the low take-up of grants by outside bodies is reflected in a budget reduction of £3,000 in the current year and £4,300 per annum from 2023-24.
3. Usage of the Stone Helpline has reduced to a very low level. It is therefore proposed that this facility should now be drawn to a close.
4. An amount is included in the standstill budget for a proposed Stone Heroes award scheme. As this scheme has not yet commenced, it is recommended that this provision is removed.
5. Filling of the post of Events and Marketing Officer has been delayed. The saving from this delay has been removed from the budget, less an amount to fund re-advertising costs.
6. The next General Purposes Committee will be considering the provision of badges to be presented to past Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Consorts. It will be a decision for that Committee whether to support the proposal, but provision has been made for this in the current year, funded by a reduction in the Civic Regalia budget in future years.
7. As a result of the above, the Sub-Committee's budget would be reduced as follows compared to the standstill budget:

	£
2022-23	4,900
2023-24	7,770
2024-25	7,070
2025-26	7,070

**GP23/158      2023-24 Budget Recommendation to the Council**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk\* (which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting) examining the budget and precept level for the financial year 2023-24 for recommendation to the Council.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that having considered the recommendations from all Sub-Committees, it was now necessary for the Committee to recommend an appropriate budget to the Council on 14 February 2023.

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The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the key budget issue was the extreme levels of inflation being forecast and its effect on both costs and the increases that would need to be made in charges for services (referencing paragraph 10c in the report).

He said that he would prefer reserves to be maintained at six months of typical spending, but accepted that with the forecast level of inflation this was difficult to achieve in the short to medium term. For this budget his recommendation was therefore that reserves could be reduced to three months of spending as a minimum, whilst looking to reinstate the value of reserves as soon as there was an opportunity to do so. The estimate for the end of the current year was that the Council would have around 3.8 months' spending in reserves.

The Town Clerk asked the Committee to consider whether it agreed the standstill budget proposed, the adjustments that needed to be made bearing in mind the recommendations of the Sub-Committees, and the Council Tax and precept levels to be recommended at to the Council.

The Committee considered a written budget proposal\* made by the Chairman in respect of the budget to be recommended to the Council, which was distributed at the meeting.

The Chairman advised the committee that the proposals represented a Council Tax increase for Town Council purposes of £1.64 for a Band D property in 2023-24 - around 3 pence a week.

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Council that:

1. The Town Council's standstill budget for 2023-24 to 2025-26 should be as set out in the Clerk's report supplemented by the following additions/amendments:
  - a. Estates:
    - i. Fees and charges at Community Centres to be increased by 25%, with a 10% discount for community groups and similar non-business usage.
    - ii. Maintenance to be ceased on bus shelters where no bus route is served, with a view to removing these shelters once funding becomes available.
    - iii. No further spending to be undertaken on the Joules Clock due to the prohibitive cost.
    - iv. The unspent building maintenance provision of £10,000 in the current year to be removed from the budget.
  - b. Environment:
    - i. A provision of £2,000 to be made for the investigation of the possible presence of asbestos at Newcastle Road allotments.

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\* 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.

- ii. The planned one-off works on Scrape 2 (£2,200) and the new information board (£1,500) should not be undertaken, but additional annual funding should be provided for the removal of willow saplings (£500) and for grass cutting and collection at Scrape 1 (£500).
  - iii. The unspent balance on the Environmental Initiatives budget should be reduced by £3,000 in the current year.
- c. Tourism and Town Promotion:
  - i. An additional budget of £2,000 should be provided in 2023-24 for the King's Coronation Celebrations.
  - ii. The events budget should be reduced by £2,000 per annum from 2024-25.
- d. Management:
  - i. The unspent sum of £3,000 should be removed from the Grants budget in the current year, and a reduction of £4,300 per annum made in subsequent years.
  - ii. Having served its purpose admirably, the Stone Helpline is now little used and can no longer be financially justified. The service should therefore be ceased, which is estimated to produce a saving of £900 in 2023-24 and with a further saving of £1,200 in each subsequent year.
  - iii. The proposed Stone Heroes Awards Scheme has not been implemented. Budget provision of £1,300 per year can therefore be removed from the current year onwards.
  - iv. There has been a delay in filling the Marketing and Events Coordinator post, which will save £1,400 in the current year and £1,000 in 2023-24, net of the costs of re-advertising. This should be removed from the budget.
  - v. A provision of £800 should be made for the purchase of Consort's badges, subject to a reduction of £270 per annum from the Civic Regalia budget. This is to provide a contingency to allow separate consideration of this item by the Committee.
- e. General Purposes:
  - i. The inflation provision should be reduced by £310 in 2023-24, £590 in 2024-25 and £610 in 2025-26 to reflect the impact of the above changes.

- 2. As a consequence of the above, the 2023-24 Council Tax for this Council's purposes should be £58.15 for a Band D property, an increase for the year of £1.64, with indicative Council Tax levels of £59.84 and £61.58 for the

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following two years. This would result in a precept on Stafford Borough Council for 2023-24 of £369,163. Local Council Tax Support Grant of £21,552 would be added to this.

The Committee thanked the Town Clerk for his work and guidance on the budget recommendations.

The Committee also thanked the Chairman of each Sub-Committee for working together in this challenging economic environment and to have amicably agreed reductions in their budgets.

#### **GP23/159      Grants to Local Organisations**

The Committee considered requests for grant aid from local organisations.

The following organisations met the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy:

a. **Organisation: Stone Choral Society**

**Amount Requested:** £250

**Reason:** To assist in determining the feasibility and popularity of a series of talks/masterclasses (running until June) which would if successful be able to run again.

RESOLVED: To decline the award of a grant to Stone Choral Society due to the limited funds remaining in the budget for 2022-23.

b. **Organisation: Stone Outward Division Rangers**

**Amount Requested:** £500

**Reason:** To support the costs of an increased annual subscription fee and to access activities provided by the Division.

RESOLVED: To decline the award of a grant to Stone Outward Division Rangers due to the limited funds remaining in the budget for 2022-23.

c. **Organisation: Stone Lions Club**

**Amount Requested:** £500

**Reason:** Prostate testing

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Stone Lions Club.

The following organisation did not meet the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy and no proposer/seconded came forward to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant:

a. **Organisation: Windmills Charity**

**Amount Requested:** £1,000

**Reason:** To support Memory making sessions and activities.

**Eligibility Criteria not met:**

- i. Amount of grant requested.
- ii Level of reserves.

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**GP23/160      Review of Standing Orders**

The Committee undertook to review the Council's Standing Orders\* which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. The document had been reviewed by the Town Clerk, who had not proposed any changes or revisions to its content.

RESOLVED: To defer consideration of the revised Standing Orders until the next meeting of the Committee in accordance with normal practice.

**GP23/161      Review of Financial Regulations**

The Committee undertook to review the Council's Financial Regulations\* which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. The document had been reviewed by the Town Clerk, who had not proposed any changes or revisions to its content.

RESOLVED: To defer consideration of the revised Financial Regulations until the next meeting of the Committee in accordance with normal practice.

**GP23/162      Meeting Schedule for 2023-24**

The Committee considered a proposed programme of meetings and events\* for the period May 2023 to April 2024.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the meetings over December 2023 and January 2024 had been arranged to repeat the way they had been organised this year which seemed to have worked better in respect of budgetary timeframes.

RESOLVED: To approve the circulated schedule of meetings and events dates which included incorporating the Mayor Making ceremony into the Civic Sunday Church Service on 9 July 2023.

**GP23/163      Past Consort Badges**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk\*, which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting, considering whether outgoing Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Consorts should be presented with 'Past Consort' and 'Past Deputy Consort' badges at the end of their term of office.

The Town Clerk circulated a sample Past Consort badge design for Councillors to consider which had been costed at round £80 when purchasing a minimum quantity of five of each design. He said that if supported, an additional budget of £800 would be needed in the current year for the purchase of an initial stock of badges, which had been provided for in the budget recommendations to Council considered earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council should purchase and present 'Past Consort' and 'Past Deputy Consort' badges annually to commemorate their year in office but that alternative designs, considered more suitable for wearing by ladies and men, are brought back to the Committee for consideration.

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\* 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.

**GP23/164      Review of Staffordshire County Council Divisions**

The Committee considered a Boundary Commission for England review of division boundaries for Staffordshire County Council.

A link to information on the Review had been provided with the agenda for the meeting. The Committee noted that the closing date for consultation responses was 20 March 2023.

The Committee also noted the invitation from Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association to attend a briefing (on Thursday 16 February 2023) on the review of Division Boundaries in Staffordshire and Councillors were invited to join the online Teams session.

RESOLVED: That the Boundary Commission for England's Review of Staffordshire County Divisions be brought forward to the next meeting of the Committee.

**GP23/165      Town Council Payments**

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

**GP23/166      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 an update would be given by the Town Clerk in the confidential section of the agenda.

**Engagement with Young People**

No meeting had taken place.

**GP23/167      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 a good meeting of the Liaison Group had taken place on 25 January 2023 which had been well attended by local councils including Fulford Parish Council, one of the larger parishes in the area.

The notes for the Liaison Group meeting in October 2022 had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The next meeting of Stone Area Parish Liaison Group would be held after the parish elections in May 2023.

**Stone ATC**

Councillor Davies informed the Committee that a meeting of the Air Cadets Welfare Committee had taken place on 31 January 2023 and the Squadron were doing very well with 34 cadets which was an excellent number. The Annual General Meeting (previously postponed) would be taking place on 20 March 2023.

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He said the current Commanding Officer was moving to a new role and a new Commanding Officer will soon be appointed.

**Age Concern Stone & District**

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

**Stafford & Stone Access Group**

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that the next meeting of the Access Group would be held on 20 February 2023.

**Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that no meeting of the Stone Common Plot Trustees had taken place.

**Stone Community Hub Liaison Group**

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

**SPCA Executive Committee**

Councillor Green was not available to provide a report.

**Stone Traders Group Directors' Meeting**

Councillor Mrs Hood advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that he had received some dates for meetings of Stone Traders Group Directors' and would be circulating the details to the nominated Councillors.

**GP23/168      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.

**GP23/169      Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 13 December 2022, Minute Numbers GP23/128, GP23/145, GP23/146 and GP23/147 be approved.

**GP23/170      Confidential Minutes and Recommendations of Sub-Committees**

- a) Estates Sub-Committee Meeting held on 17 January 2023, Minute Numbers: EST23/028, EST23/034 and EST23/035.

RESOLVED: To note the minutes of the Sub-Committee.

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\* 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.

**GP23/171      Heritage Centre**

The Committee considered an update on the Stone Heritage Centre building works tendering process and the appointment of a main contractor for this work.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that he was currently awaiting a report from the Council's mechanical and electrical engineering consultant.

**CHAIRMAN**

# Stone

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## Town Council



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### Standing Orders

### Related to Council Business

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September 2021



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# 1 GENERAL

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- 1.1 These standing orders govern the conduct of the business of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2 Should there be a clash between the provisions of this document and those within other documents which prescribe the activities of the Council, the order of precedence shall be:
  - a. National Legislation
  - b. The Council's Standing Orders (this document)
  - c. All other documents
- 1.3 All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting. *(NOTE: Where a standing order incorporates a mandatory statutory requirement, the requirement and the circumstances in which the requirement applies is indicated in brackets following the relevant standing order below. This does not indicate that the application of the standing order is limited only to those circumstances, but just indicates the extent to which the standing order can be suspended by this provision).*
- 1.4 A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10 below.
- 1.5 The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a Councillor as soon as possible after they have delivered their acceptance of office form.
- 1.6 The decision of the chairman<sup>2</sup> of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

# 2 RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

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- 2.1 Items on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- 2.2 A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- 2.3 A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer will be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- 2.4 If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder.

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<sup>1</sup> All references to "the Council" in this document shall also be considered to refer to the General Purposes Committee for functions which have been delegated to that Committee.

<sup>2</sup> All references to "Chairman" and "Vice-Chairman" shall be considered to refer to the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor in respect of a full Council meeting.

- 2.5 The mover of a motion shall have a right to reply, not exceeding five minutes, at the conclusion of the debate immediately before the motion is put to the vote. No further debate shall take place once this right to reply has been exercised.
- 2.6 An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- 2.7 If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the amendment becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- 2.8 An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- 2.9 A councillor may make an amendment to their own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall require the consent of the seconder.
- 2.10 Subject to standing order 2.11 below, if there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, in the order directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- 2.11 In exceptional circumstances, several amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- 2.12 A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- 2.13 The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- 2.14 Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 2.15 Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
- a. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
  - b. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
  - c. to make a point of order;
  - d. to give a personal explanation; or
  - e. in exercise of a right of reply.
- 2.16 During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- 2.17 A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting, whose decision shall be final.
- 2.18 When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:

- a. to amend the motion;
- b. to proceed to the next business;
- c. to adjourn the debate;
- d. to put the motion to a vote;
- e. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
- f. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
- g. to exclude the public and press;
- h. to adjourn the meeting; or
- i. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.

- 2.19 Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that sufficient information is available to make a sound decision, the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- 2.20 Excluding motions moved under standing order 2.18 above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed five minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

### 3 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

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- 3.1 No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- 3.2 If these person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- 3.3 If a resolution made under standing order 3.2 above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

### 4 MEETINGS GENERALLY

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- 4.1 Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost. *(Mandatory: Council only)*
- 4.2 Public notice of the time and place of meeting shall be given by posting it outside the Council's offices at least three days before the meeting. The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning. *(Mandatory: Council. For committees, the minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the*

*day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting. There are no mandatory requirements for sub-committees)*

- 4.3 Meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.  
(Mandatory: Council and Committees)
- 4.4 Subject to standing order 4.3 above and the provisions of the Council's scheme of public participation, members of the public are permitted to:
- a. Make representations or raise issues at any ordinary Council meeting in relation to the work of the Council.
  - b. Raise issues at any ordinary committee or sub-committee meeting related to items of business on the agenda.
  - c. Present petitions at any ordinary Council meeting on issues within the Council's remit.
- 4.5 Subject to standing order 4.4, no more than two members of the public are entitled to speak at any full Council meeting, and shall each shall speak once only, for not more than 10 minutes. Where more than two members of the public have requested to speak, the Proper Officer shall determine which requests shall have preference, based on their relevance to the meeting, the urgency of the matter to be raised and the time that the request was received.
- 4.6 In accordance with standing order 4.4 above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a full Council meeting shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question.
- 4.7 In accordance with standing order 4.6 above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response, to a committee or sub-committee for further consideration or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- 4.8 Subject to standing order 4.4, no more than four members of the public are entitled to speak at any committee or sub-committee meeting, and shall each shall speak once only, for not more than three minutes (five minutes if there are two or less speakers). Where more than four members of the public have requested to speak, the Proper Officer shall determine which requests shall have preference, based on their relevance to the meeting, the urgency of the matter to be raised and the time that the request was received.
- 4.9 No response shall be made to a public submission made under paragraph 4.8 above, nor any debate entered into, as the item will be fully debated when the agenda item itself is considered.
- 4.10 A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- 4.11 A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

- 4.12 A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- 4.13 Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- 4.14 The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present. *(Mandatory: Council and Committees)*
- 4.15 Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council. *(Mandatory: Council)*
- 4.16 The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting. *(Mandatory: Council)*
- 4.17 Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting. *(Mandatory)*
- 4.18 The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote. *See standing orders 6.8 and 6.9 below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council. (Mandatory)*
- 4.19 Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, their own vote will be recorded in the minutes. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- 4.20 In addition, any councillor may request that the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.
- 4.21 The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
- a. the time and place of the meeting;
  - b. the names of councillors present and absent;
  - c. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
  - d. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
  - e. if there was a public participation session; and
  - f. the resolutions made.
- 4.22 A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.

- 4.23 No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council, committee or sub-committee are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.
- 4.24 If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- 4.25 A meeting shall not exceed a period of 1.5 hours, nor any group of meetings held on the same evening exceed 2.5 hours without a resolution of the meeting to continue beyond this limit.

## 5 COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

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- 5.1 The council may appoint standing committees or other committees and sub-committees as may be necessary, and:
- a. shall determine their terms of reference;
  - b. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
  - c. shall permit a committee and sub-committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
  - d. shall appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee or sub-committee;
  - e. shall, after it has appointed the members of a committee or sub-committee, appoint the chairman of that committee or sub-committee;
  - f. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
  - g. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
  - h. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
  - i. may dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
- 5.2 Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee or sub-committee may appoint one or more working groups whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the appointing committee or sub-committee.
- 5.3 Notwithstanding any appointments made to sub-committees and working groups under standing orders 5.1d and 5.2 above, the Town Mayor and the chairman of the parent committee shall be ex-officio members of all sub-committees and working groups with full voting rights.
- 5.4 The members of a committee, sub-committee or working group may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.
- 5.5 Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.

## 6 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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- 6.1 In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
- 6.2 In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.
- 6.3 All meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees shall take place at 15 Station Road, Stone, with the first meeting commencing at 7:00pm, unless:
  - a. it is specifically agreed otherwise at a previous meeting, or,
  - b. it is anticipated, prior to the dispatch of meeting notice(s), that there would be a good reason that the meeting(s) should not be held in this or another previously agreed location, wherein the Town Clerk would be authorised to arrange an alternative location for the meeting(s). This includes the calling of an online meeting where permitted by law, or the conversion of a previously planned online meeting to a physical one.
- 6.4 In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.
- 6.5 The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor.
- 6.6 The Town Mayor, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.
- 6.7 The Deputy Mayor, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Town Mayor at the next annual meeting of the council.
- 6.8 In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a successor Town Mayor has been elected. The current Town Mayor shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 6.9 In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a new Town Mayor has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 6.10 Following the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting may include:
  - a. In an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
  - b. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
  - c. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
  - d. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;



- e. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
- f. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- g. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- h. Appointment of any new committees;
- i. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- j. Review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
- k. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- l. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- m. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
- n. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;
- o. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- p. Review of the council's complaints procedure;
- q. Review of the council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998;
- r. Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press/media; and
- s. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council.

## 7 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

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- 7.1 The Town Mayor may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.
- 7.2 If the Town Mayor does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.
- 7.3 The chairman of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- 7.4 If the chairman of a committee or a sub-committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee or a sub-committee.

## 8 PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

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- 8.1 A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least six councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- 8.2 When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 8.1 above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

## 9 VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

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- 9.1 Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

## 10 MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

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- 10.1 A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- 10.2 No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least ten clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice, the day of the meeting, Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays.
- 10.3 The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 10.2 above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- 10.4 If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 10.2 above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least ten clear days before the meeting.
- 10.5 If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

- 10.6 Subject to standing order 10.5 above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- 10.7 Should any urgent business arise between scheduled meetings of the Council or any standing committee or sub-committee, the Proper Officer will call a special meeting to deal with the issue.
- 10.8 Where urgent planning business occurs between ordinary meetings of the Council's Planning Consultative Committee, the Proper Officer shall circulate details of the business to Members, asking for comments. Where the view of Members is clear, and where no Member has requested that a special meeting of the Planning Consultative Committee should be arranged to discuss the business, those views shall be conveyed to the Borough Council by the Proper Officer following consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Consultative Committee or other appropriate Member(s) in the absence of the Chairman.
- 10.9 Where any matter is so urgent that it is not reasonable to call a special meeting with the legally required notice periods, the Council's Proper Officer is authorised to take any decision on behalf of the Council which can legally be delegated by the Council to an officer. Before taking such a decision, the Proper Officer shall take reasonable steps to consult with Council Members, and shall report the decision and the reason for its urgency at the next ordinary meeting of the Council or one of its committees if the decision would normally have been taken there.

## 11 MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

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- 11.1 The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
- a. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
  - b. to move to a vote;
  - c. to defer consideration of a motion;
  - d. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - e. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - f. to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - g. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
  - h. to require a written report;
  - i. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
  - j. to extend the time limits for speaking;
  - k. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
  - l. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
  - m. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
  - n. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
  - o. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
  - p. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - q. to close a meeting.

## 12 HANDLING CONFIDENTIAL OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION

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- 12.1 The agenda, papers that support the agenda, and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- 12.2 Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

## 13 DRAFT MINUTES

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- 13.1 If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- 13.2 There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 11.1a above.
- 13.3 The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- 13.4 If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the ( ) held on [date] in respect of ( ) were a correct record but that view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- 13.5 Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

## 14 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

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*See also standing order 4.22 above.*

- 14.1 All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- 14.2 Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

- 14.3 Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall not take part in any debate or vote at a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a personal interest, though they would be permitted to take part in a public participation item in the same way as any member of the public.
- 14.4 Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer before the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- 14.5 A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the meeting of the council, committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- 14.6 A dispensation request shall confirm:
- a. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
  - b. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
  - c. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding the remaining time to the next Council election) for which the dispensation is sought; and
  - d. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- 14.7 Subject to standing orders 14.4 and 14.6 above, dispensation requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- 14.8 A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 14.5 above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:
- a. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business, or
  - b. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area, or
  - c. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

## 15 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

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- 15.1 Upon formal written notification from Stafford Borough Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 12 above, report this to the council.
- 15.2 Where the notification in standing order 15.1 above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Town Mayor of this fact, and the Town Mayor shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 15.4 below.
- 15.3 The council may:

- a. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
  - b. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- 15.4 Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office. *(Mandatory)*

## 16 PROPER OFFICER

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- 16.1 The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent or otherwise unable to act.
- 16.2 The Proper Officer shall:
  - a. at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by email (where agreed) or by delivery or post at their residences, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda. *(Mandatory for council and committees. See standing order 4.2 above for the meaning of clear days.);*
  - b. give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them); *(Mandatory for council and committees. See standing order 4.2 above for the meaning of clear days.);*
  - c. subject to standing order 10 above, include on the agenda all motions put forward by councillors unless withdrawn by the councillor themselves at least six clear days before the meeting;
  - d. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in the office *(Mandatory);*
  - e. facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
  - f. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities *(Mandatory);*
  - g. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
  - h. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
  - i. assist with responding to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the council's policies and procedures relating to the same;
  - j. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
  - k. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;
  - l. arrange for legal deeds to be executed; See also standing order 23 below.
  - m. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;

- n. record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority;
- o. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
- p. retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used for the sealing of legal deeds without a resolution to that effect. *See also standing order 23 below.*

## 17 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

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- 17.1 The Town Clerk shall undertake the role of responsible financial officer, unless there is a council resolution appointing a different officer. The council shall appoint an appropriate staff member to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

## 18 ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

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- 18.1 "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England)
- 18.2 All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council's financial regulations.
- 18.3 The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise the Council's income and expenditure compared with the approved budget and an explanation of significant variances.
- 18.4 As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide each councillor with a statement summarising the council's income and expenditure for the year and the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of the annual return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- 18.5 The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices for a year to 31 March. The annual return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June or any other such date as specified in regulations.

## 19 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

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- 19.1 The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
- a. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
  - b. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;

- c. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - d. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - e. procurement policies (subject to standing orders 19.3 to 19.8 below).
- 19.2 Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly for fitness of purpose.
- 19.3 The letting of contracts by the Council must be in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, or subsequent replacement/supplementary legislation.
- 19.4 Contracts below the value of £25,000 are outside the scope of standing orders, but may be governed by the provisions within the Council's financial regulations.
- 19.5 Contracts above the value prescribed in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 of £189,330<sup>3</sup> or £4,733,252<sup>3</sup>, which have "detailed and complex" requirements will be undertaken in partnership with the Borough or County Council, who will be able to ensure that these complex regulations are adhered to.
- 19.6 Between these two figures, the Council may:
  - a. Advertise the contract or otherwise offer it on the open market. In this case the provisions of the 2015 regulations apply, and the contract must also be published on the "Contract Finder" website.
  - b. Offer the contract to a closed list of contractors, whereby the provisions of the 2015 regulations do not apply.
  - c. Offer the contract to its "preferred contractor" identified for that area of work, where the 2015 regulations regarding advertising on the "Contracts Finder" website would also not apply.
- 19.7 Subject to any additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works under standing orders 19.6a and 19.6b above where the value is anticipated to exceed £60,000 shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
  - a. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - b. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - c. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and/or other manner that is appropriate (standing order 19.6a only);
  - d. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - e. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;

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<sup>3</sup> September 2021 values. These figures may vary from time to time.



- f. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

19.8 Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value, or any, tender.

## 20 STAFFING MATTERS

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- 20.1 The Town Clerk shall act as employer for of the Council's paid employees and voluntary staff.
- 20.2 All written records in respect of staffing matters shall be kept confidential and secure. Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records if so justified.
- 20.3 Appointments, dismissals, performance, disciplinary issues and grievances shall be considered in accordance with the Council's Staffing Guidelines.

## 21 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

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- 21.1 Requests for information held by the council shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 21.2 Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee. The said committee shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 22 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

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- 22.1 Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

## 23 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

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*See also standing orders 16.2l and 16.2p above.*

- 23.1 A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- 23.2 Subject to standing order 23.1 above, the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.

## 24 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

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- 24.1 No Councillor shall purport to represent the Council, or make any suggestion that they have the authority to make a binding decision on behalf of the Council, unless previously authorised by a properly minuted resolution.
- 24.2 Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
- a. inspect any land and/or premises which the council has a right or duty to inspect; or
  - b. issue orders, instructions or directions.

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## Town Council



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## Financial Regulations

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September 2021

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# 1 GENERAL

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- 1.1 These regulations govern the conduct of the financial activities of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council or the General Purposes (GP) Committee<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2 Should there be a clash between the provisions of this document and those within other documents which prescribe the activities of the Council, the order of precedence shall be:
  - a. National Legislation
  - b. The Council's Standing Orders
  - c. Financial Regulations (this document)
  - d. All other documents
- 1.3 The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.4 The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
  - a. for the timely production of accounts;
  - b. that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
  - c. to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
  - d. identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.5 These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.6 Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7 Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Town Clerk shall be the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), and as such shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

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<sup>1</sup> All references to "the Council" in this document shall also be considered to refer to the General Purposes Committee for functions which have been delegated to that Committee.

The terms “Town Clerk” and “RFO” are, however, used separately throughout this document to allow for a situation where this may not be the case.

- 1.9 The Town Clerk and/or RFO may delegate items ascribed to them within this document to another employee, but will still remain accountable to the Council for those items.
- 1.10 The RFO;
- a. acts under the policy direction of the council;
  - b. administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
  - c. determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
  - d. ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
  - e. maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
  - f. assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
  - g. produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.11 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.12 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- a. entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
  - b. a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
  - c. wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.13 The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- a. procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
  - b. procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;

- c. identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
  - d. procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
  - e. measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.14 The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular, any decision regarding:
- a. setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
  - b. approving accounting statements;
  - c. approving an annual governance statement;
  - d. borrowing;
  - e. writing off bad debts;
  - f. declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
  - g. the consideration of any report from the Council's internal or external auditors,
- shall be a matter for the full council only.
- 1.15 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.
- 1.16 In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

## 2 ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

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- 2.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2 The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts

shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 2.3 The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.4 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.5 The internal auditor shall:
  - a. be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
  - b. report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
  - c. to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
  - d. have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.6 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
  - a. perform any operational duties for the council;
  - b. initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
  - c. direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.7 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.8 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.9 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any report from internal or external auditors.



### 3 ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

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- 3.1 The Council's budget shall be prepared on an "Income and Expenditure" basis.
- 3.2 The GP Committee shall consider a report of the RFO setting out the prospects for the following three years' capital and revenue budgets no later than January each year. Each Sub-Committee shall be asked to formulate its proposed budget for the next three years based on policy guidelines determined by the GP Committee, and to submit these proposals to the Committee for further consideration.
- 3.3 After considering the Sub-Committees' proposals, the GP Committee shall determine a balanced and affordable budget to be recommended to the Council for the following three financial years.
- 3.4 The Council shall review the GP Committee's recommendations not later than the end of February each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year and determine indicative precepts for the following two years.
- 3.5 The annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

### 4 BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

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- 4.1 The Town Clerk is authorised to seek tenders/quotations, place orders and make payments in accordance with the approved annual budget, the Council's policies, and these Financial Regulations. Where the annual budget identifies specific items for which no expenditure should be incurred without the express approval of the Council, the Clerk should refer proposed spending for approval before that spending is incurred. In all other cases, the Clerk is authorised to proceed without specific approval.
- 4.2 The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a budget monitoring statement comparing actual expenditure against that planned for each approved budget head.
- 4.3 The Town Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure. Where there is no available budget, the Clerk shall, wherever possible, discuss the issue with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee or, in their absence, the Vice Chairman or Town Mayor before incurring the expenditure. Where no or insufficient budget provision existed, the Town Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.4 In general, unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Where a budget has been agreed by the Council as a "rollover budget", then unspent amounts may be rolled-over into the subsequent financial year by making

use of a rollover reserve. This provision may also be used on a one-off basis for specific items, subject to agreement of the Council.

- 4.5 All expenditure and income of the Council shall be included within its revenue account unless a specific Council resolution has determined that it shall be treated as capital. Once such as resolution has been passed, no expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any such capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained, to meet the full projected costs of the project.
- 4.6 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.7 Changes in earmarked reserves, other than the rollover reserve, shall require approval by council.
- 4.8 Notwithstanding the provisions above, all expenditure and income related to the Town Mayor's charity will, in the interests of transparency, be accounted for by the use of a specified reserve account for each Town Mayor.

## 5 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND PAYMENTS

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- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed.
- 5.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk. The Clerk shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received or carried out in accordance with the needs of the Council.
- 5.3 The RFO shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetic accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The Clerk shall settle invoices promptly.
- 5.4 All cash received must be banked intact.
- 5.5 No petty cash account shall be maintained.
- 5.6 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance, pension contributions or other reasons, should be made from the Council's bank account.
- 5.7 A schedule showing payments from the Council's bank accounts shall be prepared by the RFO and presented:
  - a. To the Council on a quarterly basis in respect of payments over £250, and,
  - b. To the General Purposes Committee at each ordinary meeting.

- 5.8 For the purposes of the schedules referred to in paragraph 5.7 above:
- a. Staff salary and related payments should not be included, but total figures for a period should be made available to any Member on request. Details of payments to individual employees will only be made available in accordance with paragraph 6.4 below.
  - b. Payments in respect of the Mayor's Charity Fund will not be included, but should be made available to any Member on request.
- 5.9 The Council acknowledges that the commitment to make a payment occurs at the time an order is placed or similar arrangement made, not at the time a payment itself is made. It does not, therefore, consider that excessive controls on payments which may hamper the efficient operation of the Council need to be applied, providing that adequate controls over ordering and reporting are in place in accordance with these regulations.
- 5.10 Payments may be made by way of cheque, direct debit, bank transfer, purchasing card, PayPal, internet banking, BACS or CHAPS, provided that:
- a. All cheques shall be signed by two individuals included within the bank mandate, at least one of which shall be a Member of the Council and not more than one shall be an officer.
  - b. Transfers between Council bank accounts may be authorised by the RFO.
  - c. Payments via purchasing card can be made by a single authorised officer, and are limited to £1,000 in any single transaction, with a maximum of £5,000 outstanding at any one time.
  - d. Electronic payments and direct debits, including payments via PayPal and internet banking, can be made by a single authorised officer, but the supporting paperwork should also be signed by a second officer. All such payments should be included within the report to the General Purposes Committee required by regulation 5.7b above, subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 5.8 above.
- 5.11 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted. Officers authorising payments will be required to follow these same arrangements in respect of pecuniary or other interests.

## 6 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

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- 6.1 As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.

- 6.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 6.3 Once an employee's salary and conditions has been determined by the Council or an authorised Appointments Panel and a contract of employment has been signed, no changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council, except where required for the payment of overtime, absence cover, incremental progression or similar matters.
- 6.4 Payments to individual employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall not be open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a. by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
  - b. by the internal auditor;
  - c. by the external auditor; or
  - d. by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 6.5 Any termination payments beyond those required by law shall require the approval of the Council.

## 7 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

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- 7.1 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 7.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the council in the first instance, though the renewal and extension of existing leases may be authorised by the Town Clerk providing that there is provision within the Council's budget and that he/she is satisfied that the arrangement represents value for money for the Council.
- 7.3 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 7.4 The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

- 7.5 All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 7.6 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 7.7 Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 above.

## 8 INCOME

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- 8.1 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 8.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied by the Council shall be considered annually by the council as part of the budget process, and notified to the RFO who shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 8.3 The council will undertake a full review of all fees and charges periodically, following a report of the Clerk.
- 8.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 8.5 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 8.6 A record shall be maintained by the RFO of the amounts making up the total of each paying-in slip.
- 8.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 8.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 8.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 8.10 Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the

Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting (see also Regulation 15 below).

## 9 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

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- 9.1 An official order number shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Details of orders shall be retained.
- 9.2 All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction.
- 9.3 A Member may not specify the use of a particular supplier, issue an official order or make any contract (verbal or written) on behalf of the council.
- 9.4 The RFO shall satisfy themselves as to the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of an order.

## 10 CONTRACTS

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- 10.1 Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to the following items:
  - a. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
  - b. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
  - c. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
  - d. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
  - e. for additional audit work of the external auditor;
  - f. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price: and
  - g. In circumstances where continuity of supplier is considered by the RFO to offer greater benefits to the Council than retendering.
- 10.2 Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015

("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations<sup>2</sup>.

- 10.3 The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive (which may change from time to time)<sup>3</sup>.
- 10.4 Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- 10.5 All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 10.6 Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to the requirements of Standing Orders related to procurement<sup>4</sup> and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 10.7 When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- 10.8 Where the Clerk has determined that there is a benefit to the Council to let a contract in association with one or more other partners, or to make use of another authority's facilities such as the County Council's e-tendering system, the requirements of these regulations shall be replaced by the requirements of the regulations of the lead body for the letting of the contract.
- 10.9 When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 but in excess of £3,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph 10.1 above the Clerk or RFO shall, where possible, obtain 3 quotations. Below this figure, the Clerk or RFO shall seek to obtain the best overall value for money for the

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<sup>2</sup> The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

<sup>3</sup> Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts £189,330
- b. For public works contracts £4,733,252

<sup>4</sup> Standing Order 19 based on the version effective from September 2021 which was current at the time of preparing this document. This reference may change in subsequent versions of standing orders.

Council after taking into account cost, quality of service and availability, and shall strive to obtain one or more estimates for the work/service to be performed.

- 10.10 The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 10.11 Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

## **11 PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)**

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- 11.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 11.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 11.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Council and notified to the Contractor in writing before any work has begun, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision as a result.

## **12 STORES AND EQUIPMENT**

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- 12.1 Where the Council operates a system of stock control, or holds a supply of equipment for the use of a number of people, the Town Clerk shall be responsible for the arrangements for the care and custody of these stores and equipment.
- 12.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 12.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 12.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.



## 13 ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

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- 13.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 13.2 No tangible moveable property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 13.3 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.5 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

## 14 INSURANCE

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- 14.1 Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.
- 14.2 The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 14.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 14.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 14.5 All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council, or duly delegated committee.

## 15 CHARITIES

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- 15.1 Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

## 16 RISK MANAGEMENT

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- 16.1 The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 16.2 When considering any new activity, the Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

## 17 SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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- 17.1 It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 17.2 The council may, by resolution, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that the advice of the RFO regarding the risks and implications has been considered prior to the suspension. Details of the suspension must be recorded in the minutes, and must include a record of the advice of the RFO if the council has chosen not to follow it.

\* \* \*

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## Stone Town Council - Payments

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The table below lists payments made by the Council in the period identified, for the Committee's information.

The table includes payments by cheque, direct debit, PayPal, payment card, telephone banking and online banking. It excludes salary and related payments, payments from the Mayor's Charity, and transfers between the Council's bank accounts. All amounts exclude VAT.

Payment Date From : 01/11/2022

Payment Date To : 30/11/2022

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
01/11/2022	68292	Prism Solutions	Line Rental	46.69
01/11/2022	68292	Prism Solutions	Line Rental	44.45
01/11/2022	wp-INV00087784	Water Plus	Water Usage STN Sep/Oct 2022	81.00
01/11/2022	wp-INV00089055	Water Plus	Water Usage - Mount Rd - Sep / Oct 22	26.25
03/11/2022	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates Mkt Sq Nov 2022	35.00
03/11/2022	18102022	Open Spaces	Open Spaces Subscription 01/11/22 to 31/10/23	45.00
03/11/2022	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates FJC Nov 2022	434.00
03/11/2022	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates STN Nov 2022	225.00
04/11/2022	000002747	Printdesigns LTD	3 x Switch In Banners	155.10
04/11/2022	INV-0776	Current Electrical & Property Services	Marquees set up - Oct 2022	1,035.00
07/11/2022	23833	Stone Gazette Ltd	Gazette Ad Christmas Lights Switch On 2022	350.00
07/11/2022	V02044182188	EE	EE mobile phone	12.00
07/11/2022	I0923632U	Lexis Nexis	Arnold Baker Local Council Admin 13th Ed	164.99
07/11/2022	V02044182188	EE	EE mobile phone	12.00
08/11/2022	wp-INV00143963	Water Plus	Water Usage NR Sep / Oct 2022	11.47
08/11/2022	987588463	British Gas	Elec Standing Charges Sep / Oct 22	19.43
09/11/2022	3671572	British Gas	Feeder Pillar 1 30 High St Elec standing charges	8.52
09/11/2022	484589	ASPLI Safety Ltd	Road Closure Metal Signs x 4	147.88

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## Stone Town Council - Payments

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
09/11/2022	INV-1417	IG Stage Hire	Hire of mobile trailer stage and face light 50%	375.00
10/11/2022	12617	Cress Security	Annual Intruder Alarm System Service / Maint Contract	92.00
10/11/2022	Inv1339	The Secret Kitchen	Remembrance Sunday Buffet 2022	710.00
11/11/2022	3682214	British Gas	Elec - 61 High St - Oct 2022	25.01
11/11/2022	45459	Panda Press (Stone) Ltd	Remembrance Day Order of Service 2022	219.00
11/11/2022	wp-INV00317333	Water Plus	FJC Re-billing Water Usage July to Nov 2022	212.13
11/11/2022	wp-INV00317333	Water Plus	FJC Re-billing Water Usage July to Nov 2022	212.13
11/11/2022	wp-INV00317333	Water Plus	FJC Re-billing Water Usage July to Nov 2022	212.13
13/11/2022	118236241	Stone in Bloom	100 x Christmas Trees and use of lights	2,000.00
14/11/2022	SINV00578296	J G Fenn Ltd	12 x No waiting bollards	150.00
14/11/2022	SINV00578492	J G Fenn Ltd	Batteries x 126 for Christmas tree lights	88.20
14/11/2022	7070291322	Stafford Borough Council	Road Closure for Remembrance Sunday 2022	121.23
14/11/2022	INV175532366	Zoom Video Comm Inc	ZOOM Subscription Nov/Dec 2022	47.96
14/11/2022	SINV00578490	J G Fenn Ltd	Batteries x 174 for Christmas trees	139.20
14/11/2022	038179	MEB Total Ltd	6 Month Emergency Light Testing FJC	102.57
14/11/2022	7070291320	Stafford Borough Council	Road Closure for Remembrance Sunday Parade 2022	121.23
14/11/2022	SINV00577116	J G Fenn Ltd	1 x A3 Copier Paper	10.86
14/11/2022	SINV00577115	J G Fenn Ltd	Milk pots plus A4 books x 5	19.93
14/11/2022	SINV00578491	J G Fenn Ltd	Casio desktop calculator	9.20
14/11/2022	7070291321	Stafford Borough Council	Road Closure Christmas Lights 2022	121.23
14/11/2022	13687	All Print Equipment Ltd	Photocopier Usage Oct 2022	13.10
14/11/2022	13112022	Steve's Sound Systems	PA hire Armistice Day & Remembrance Sunday 2022	280.00
15/11/2022	45515	Panda Press (Stone) Ltd	Christmas Cards - with mayor	115.00
15/11/2022	45514	Panda Press (Stone) Ltd	Christmas Cards - no mayor 2022	96.00
17/11/2022	512	Hazzard Promotions	Hire of sound system for lights switch on 2022	350.00

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## Stone Town Council - Payments

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
18/11/2022	INV-0780	Current Electrical & Property Services	Hire of barriers	244.40
18/11/2022	038202	MEB Total Ltd	Qtr Fire Alarm Testing FJC	56.81
18/11/2022	INV-0780	Current Electrical & Property Services	Temp power for stage	330.00
18/11/2022	INV-0780	Current Electrical & Property Services	Temp power for traders	165.00
18/11/2022	INV-0780	Current Electrical & Property Services	Hire Lighting for marquees	132.00
18/11/2022	17109	Call Handling Services Ltd	Stone Helpline Charges Oct 22	1.21
21/11/2022	17112022	Wish Upon a Princess Parties	Entertainer - Switch On 2022	175.00
22/11/2022	BJ543848	Pitney Bowes	Pitney Bowes	200.00
22/11/2022	17112022	Samantha Lloyd Music	Samantha Lloyd Music	250.00
22/11/2022	713402022245692	Pozitive Energy	Gas Usage FJC Oct 2022	192.00
22/11/2022	713392022244706	Pozitive Energy	Elec Usage STN Oct 2022	171.71
22/11/2022	713412022245692	Pozitive Energy	Gas Usage STN Oct 2022	162.20
24/11/2022	INV000153	Hearts Cross Medical	Medical Cover at Switch On 2022	150.00
24/11/2022	2211041	Crown Highways	Install posts for Walton Christmas Lights 2022	749.75
24/11/2022	713382022246001	Pozitive Energy	Elec Usage FJC Oct 2022	143.99
24/11/2022	713382022246001	Pozitive Energy	Elec Usage FJC Oct 2022	143.99
24/11/2022	743014903/001/11	Virgin Media Business	Broadband Usage 06/11/22 to 05/12/22	50.00
25/11/2022	MEM241497-1	Society of Local Council Clerks	SLCC Membership 2023 Paid 25/11/22	236.00
25/11/2022	166108	Prism Solutions	Prism IT Service Charge Nov 2022	892.65
25/11/2022	4795	Christmas Plus	Walton Shops	510.00
25/11/2022	4795	Christmas Plus	Festoon Crown tp Thai	600.00
25/11/2022	4795	Christmas Plus	Install Festive Display 70%	3,979.50
25/11/2022	INV-0242	Lymestone Brewery	Room Hire, welcome drinks and food	515.42
28/11/2022	VEO1103376	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection - Oct 2022	61.47
28/11/2022	VEO1103375	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection Oct - 2022	73.47

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## Stone Town Council - Payments

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
29/11/2022	116508	B Hygienic Ltd	System 1 Toilet Rolls V2 White for FJC	55.78
29/11/2022	201615202224763	Pozitive Energy	Gas Standing Charges 011022 to 241022	12.36
30/11/2022	959911575	British Gas	Elec Standing Charges 23/10 to 13/11/22 Final bill	14.25
				<u>18,965.85</u>

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## Stone Town Council - Payments

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The table below lists payments made by the Council in the period identified, for the Committee's information.

The table includes payments by cheque, direct debit, PayPal, payment card, telephone banking and online banking. It excludes salary and related payments, payments from the Mayor's Charity, and transfers between the Council's bank accounts. All amounts exclude VAT.

Payment Date From : 01/01/2023

Payment Date To : 31/01/2023

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
03/01/2023	68550	Prism Solutions	Leased Lines Dec 2022	44.45
03/01/2023	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates STN Jan 2023	225.00
03/01/2023	3888631	British Gas	Elec Standing Charges Nov / Dec 2022	14.80
03/01/2023	162381291	British Gas	Elec Supply - Amphitheatre Dec 22	13.79
03/01/2023	wp-INV00674452	Water Plus	Water Usage Charges - updated with actual reading Nov	248.05
03/01/2023	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates FJC Jan 2023	434.00
03/01/2023	432203/01/2023	Society of Local Council Clerks	ALCC Annual Membership 2023	50.00
03/01/2023	SBC Rates	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Rates Mkt Sq Jan 2023	35.00
03/01/2023	wp-INV00672314	Water Plus	Water Supply - Stone Station Nov/Dec 22	134.75
03/01/2023	201615202226558	Pozitive Energy	Gas Standing Charge - Nov 2022	15.27
03/01/2023	68550	Prism Solutions	Leased Lines Dec 2022	46.69
06/01/2023	V02063441299	EE	Mobile Phone Charges Jan 2022	12.00
06/01/2023	V02063441299	EE	Mobile Phone Charges Jan 2022	12.00
06/01/2023	038639	MEB Total Ltd	Annual Gas Fired Service STN and FJC	385.00
09/01/2023	038638	MEB Total Ltd	Replaced Mikrofil on Station boiler	1,870.81
09/01/2023	444008-012	Virgin Media Business	Telephone Rental Charges Nov / Dec 22	87.40
09/01/2023	444008-011	Virgin Media Business	Telephone rental charges Oct/Nov 2022	87.76
09/01/2023	wp-INV00727561	Water Plus	Water Usage - Newcastle Rd Nov / Dec 2022	18.04

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## Stone Town Council - Payments

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
17/01/2023	126360	E On	Highways Lighting Maint & Energy 22/23	961.51
17/01/2023	SI-184134	Mailing room	Franking Machine Rental 01/01/23 to 31/03/23	60.00
18/01/2023	INV184163159	Zoom Video Comm Inc	ZOOM Subscription Jan/Feb 2023	47.96
19/01/2023	713392023269524	Pozitive Energy	Elec Usage STN Dec 2022	180.58
19/01/2023	713382023271648	Pozitive Energy	Elec Usage FJC Dec 2022	155.97
19/01/2023	713412023269915	Pozitive Energy	Gas Usage STN Dec 2022	431.89
19/01/2023	713402023271175	Pozitive Energy	Gas Usage FJC - Dec 2022	514.70
20/01/2023	7070291667	Stafford Borough Council	Office Rental 20/01/23 to 19/04/23	150.00
20/01/2023	201615202327264	Pozitive Energy	Gas standing charges Dec 2022	15.96
20/01/2023	13880	All Print Equipment Ltd	Photocopier Usage - Dec 2022	7.35
24/01/2023	743014903/001/01	Virgin Media Business	Broadband Usage 06/01/23 to 05/02/23	50.00
24/01/2023	wp-INV00891083	Water Plus	Water Usage - FJC - 08/12/22 to 08/01/23	70.42
24/01/2023	ORD508735-1	Society of Local Council Clerks	Clerks Manual 2023	52.30
25/01/2023	4796	Christmas Plus	Dismantle Festive Display for 2022	1,705.50
25/01/2023	169229	Prism Solutions	Prism IT Managed Service Feb 2023	834.78
27/01/2023		Stone Scouts & Guides Brass Band	Payment for Remembrance Sunday 2022 performance	100.00
27/01/2023	444008-013	Virgin Media Business	Telephone Rental Charges - Dec 22 / Jan 23	87.40
30/01/2023	24066	Stone Gazette Ltd	Two page Ad in ST15 2023 Edition	360.00
30/01/2023	VEO1107040	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection - FJC - Dec 2022	72.99
30/01/2023	VEO1107041	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection - STN - Dec 2022	60.99
30/01/2023	3988104	British Gas	Elec Standing Charges 20/12/22 to 09/01/23	8.00
				<u>9,663.11</u>