

Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber
at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 17 January 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs J. Hood in the Chair and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, R. Kenney, P. Leason and C. Thornicroft

Co-opted Member: J. Cook

Officers: L. Trigg and Mrs T. Williams

By Chairman's invitation: No Councillors

ABSENT: Councillors: Mrs K. Dawson, J. Powell and S. Walley

The Chairman welcomed Jon Cook to his first meeting of the Sub-Committee.

TTP23/027 Apologies

Councillors: J. Powell and S. Walley

TTP23/028 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

None received.

TTP23/029 Representations from Members of the Public

None

TTP23/030 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on 25 October 2022 (Minute Numbers TTP23/017 – TTP23/026), were approved as a correct record.

TTP23/031 Calendar of Events 2023

The Sub-Committee considered the Town Council's Calendar of Events and confirmed dates (as far as was possible) for 2023.

The Chairman invited the Sub-Committee to make comments as each event was discussed.

* 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.

- Commemoration of the Death of Flight Lieutenant Stubbs
Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that the arrangements for a Church Service commemorating the 80th anniversary of the death of Flight Lieutenant Richard Noel Stubbs DFC DFM RAFVR on 26 February 2023 at Christ Church, were progressing well.
- Texas Flag Raising, marking Texas State's independence from Mexico
This event is scheduled to take place on Saturday 4 March 2023 at the flagpole in the High Street at noon.
- Anniversary of the death of the Earl St Vincent Commemoration
Councillor Leason confirmed that a commemorative Church Service will be taking place on Sunday 12 March 2023 at 3pm in St Michael & St Wulfad's Church to mark the bicentenary of the Earl St Vincent's death.

He said that a representative of HMS Collingwood will be in attendance at the Service and will lay a wreath. Members of HMS St Vincent Association will also be invited to attend the occasion.

- St George's Day Re-enactment
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the St George's Day Re-enactment Group were keen to perform on Saturday 22 April 2023 and it was hoped that a variety of additional activities/attractions would be added to extend the itinerary, for the enjoyment of children.
- King Charles III Coronation (Saturday 6 May 2023)
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the second meeting of the King Charles III Coronation Working Group had been held (this evening) and lots of ideas were being explored for a celebration in Stone.

The event will take place in the High Street on Sunday 7 May 2023 (the day after the King's Coronation in London), and further details will be announced when confirmation has been received from various groups.

- Floating Market/Waterside Events
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Council was waiting for the Roving Canal Traders Association to make the necessary enquiries (following confirmation of the Town Council's support for a floating market in Stone) on the late May Bank Holiday weekend (provisionally 27, 28, 29 May 2023).
- Stone Carnival
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Clerk had spoken to a member of the Festival Committee who has provided a draft programme.
- Florence Brass Band Concert & Burma Star Commemoration
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Florence Brass Band Concert and Burma Star Commemoration would provisionally be taking place on Sunday 13 August 2023. Stafford Borough Council's Parks Division had been contacted

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with a view to booking Stonefield Park. The event had been so successful in 2022 that everyone was keen to be involved again in 2023.

- Stone by the Sea
The Chairman confirmed the event would run from Wednesday 16 to Saturday 19 August 2023 and Warwick Funfair would again provide the attractions (sand pit and children's rides).
- Classic Car Event
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that she was waiting for confirmation that a Classic Car event could be held in the High Steet in September 2023.
- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 23 November 2023)
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Christmas Lights Switch On would be held a week later this year on Thursday 23 November 2023, to avoid overlap/encroachment on the Remembrance Commemorations.
- Texas Flag Raising, marking the anniversary of Texas joining the Union on 29 December 1848
This event will be held at the flagpole in the High Street on Friday 29 December 2023 at noon.
- Puppet Festival
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that she was still in talks with Pelham Puppets about the holding of a puppet festival in Stone.
- Any other suggested new events for 2023
The Chairman invited new ideas for events in 2023.

Councillor Leason suggested holding a Heritage Week event, where shopkeepers put photographs and adverts in their windows showing the shops as they were many years ago.

Quite a lot of information was available on the history of Stone online to bring back memories for some of the older members of the town.

The Sub-Committee agreed that such a week could be co-ordinated through the Town Council's representatives at Traders Association meetings.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the Heritage Week should be held on the opening week of the Heritage Centre.

The Chairman called for Councillors to assist as stewards at the Coronation celebrations and Children's events in the town during 2023. She said that Stone Lions did a Stirling job in supporting the Town Council but more stewards in number were needed. She was also looking to ask for help from the scouts and guiding movement.

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TTP23/032 Stone Traders Group

The Sub-Committee considered a proposal from the Stone Traders' Group along with Stone Food & Drink Festival for a programme of events* in 2023.

An email from the Chairman of Stone Traders Group had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The Sub-Committee welcomed the events and the Chairman asked whether Jon Cook would cover their publicity on 'A Little Bit of Stone' and whether Staffordshire Newsletter and the Sentinel could offer their support.

The Chairman appealed for lots of photographs to be taken and uploaded on social media to show people what was going on in Stone and attract more people into the town.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council accepts and welcomes the programme of events put forward by Stone Traders' Group and Stone Food & Drink Festival for 2023.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council waives its charges to Stone Traders' Association and Stone Food & Drink Festival in 2023 for the events held in the High Street.

TTP23/033 Rebekah Refurbishment

The Sub-Committee considered the refurbishment of canal boat 'Rebekah' which was currently in a state of disrepair.

Following previous consideration of this item at the meeting of the Sub Committee on 25 October 2022 (Minute Reference TTP23/024) an email* from Jon Fuller (the owner of the boat) setting out further information, had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the likely costs of £10,000 to £12,000 for the refurbishment of Rebekah were beyond the means of the Town Council at present. He said that it may be possible to get some volunteer help and discounted labour, but this would not reduce the costs of the work significantly.

The Town Council agreed that it was not appropriate for the Town Council to consider paying for the refurbishment and acknowledged Jon Cook's offer of help to crowdfund through 'A Little Bit of Stone'.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Clerk is asked to write to Mr Fuller advising him that the Town Council does not have the funds to refurbish Rebekah, and to ask that due to the boat's poor condition, he arranges for it to be made safe or removed urgently.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council advises Mr Fuller of Jon Cook's offer to support the running of a fundraising campaign for the repair of Rebekah on social media.

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TTP23/034 Market Signage

The Sub-Committee received an update on the replacement of the town's roadside market signs.

The Town Clerk circulated two draft designs* for consideration by the Sub-Committee, pointing out that the Town Council's colours had been incorporated in line with the Sub-Committee's previous request. The first design had a purple flash and incorporated two different typefaces (in the heading and flash) and the second design had a green flash with one consistent font.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council commission new roadside market signs using the first design with a purple flash (and replacing Thursday with Saturday).

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council also replaces the plyboard backing and separate, detachable flash.

TTP23/035 Budgets 2023-24 – 2025-26

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk* (issued with the agenda for the meeting) which considered the level of budget that the Sub-Committee may wish to recommend to the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 7 February 2023 for the services under its control.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the standstill budget and the amounts included for each service. It also considered costs and savings to be taken into account when setting the budget for 2023-24 and future years.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the overall position was that the budget was tight as energy costs had significantly increased. In managing this unprecedented situation, he said he had created a separate energy budget as well as taking inflation out of all individual budgets, putting it into a separate single inflationary budget to enable continual assessment.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the General Purposes Committee was looking to see reductions in individual budgets where possible in an attempt to offset some of the energy cost increases.

A draft proposal made by the Chairman, for the setting of the Tourism & Town Promotion budget for 2023-24 and future years, was circulated at the meeting. The recommendations included retention of hanging baskets, wall mounted Christmas trees with LED lights and Christmas lights in the town.

The Sub-Committee expressed concern about the energy price increases, estimated to be over 250% and the most significant factor in determining this challenging budget.

The Town Clerk said, as a check on the energy inflation estimate, guidance had been sought from the current energy supplier on the likely costs when the current contract came to an end. The information fed back was in line with the projection.

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RECOMMENDED: That the budget figures included in the Clerks report are accepted by the General Purposes Committee with the additional provision of £2,000 in 2023-24 for the cost of a King Charles III Coronation event; and that the events budget is reduced by £2,000 in 2024-25 and subsequent years.

TTP23/036 Reports from Working Groups

The Chairman invited the Working Groups to address the Sub-Committee:

Remembrance Plaques Working Group

Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that he had no new information to report whilst he was waiting for Oak Tree Farm and Councillor Mrs Davies to commence work on the project.

Market Strategy (Market Pricing & Strategy)

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that no meeting of the Market Strategy (Market Pricing & Strategy) Working Group had taken place.

Earl St Vincent Commemoration Working Group

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that the Earl St Vincent Commemoration Working Group had not met.

King Charles III Coronation Working Group

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that the King Charles III Working Group had met on two occasions and was waiting for contacts to come back to them.

Councillor Mrs Hood said that Sunday 7 May 2023 was going to be an exciting day.

Chairman

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