

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 4 July 2023

PRESENT: Councillor J. Davies in the Chair, and
Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, K. Dawson, T. Kelt, B. Kenney, P. Leason,
J. Metters and R. Townsend

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Best, A. Burgess, I. Fordham, J. Hood, R. Kenney, A. Mottershead,
J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

At the start of the meeting the Town Mayor, Councillor J Davies, was elected to take the chair (for the meeting) as neither the Committee Chairman nor Vice-Chairman were able to be present.

GP24/034 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: A. Best, A. Burgess, I. Fordham, J. Hood, R. Kenney, A. Mottershead, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Where a reason for absence is given, this reason was approved for the purposes of Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

GP24/035 Declarations of Interests

None

GP24/036 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP24/037 To receive the report of the County Councillors

County Councillor Jill Hood

Councillor Hood was not available on this occasion to give her report.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP24/038 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

Councillor Leason advised the Committee that he had nothing to report at this time.

GP24/039 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

GP24/040 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 6 June 2023 (Minute Numbers GP24/020 – GP24/033) be approved as a correct record.

GP24/041 **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 20 June 2023 (Minute Numbers TTP24/001 – TTP24/008), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP24/005 be adopted.

The recommendation contained in Minute Number TTP24/005 was considered as part of Minute Number GP24/052 (agenda item 19).

- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 20 June 2023 (Minutes Numbers ENV24/001 – ENV24/011), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number ENV24/009 be adopted.
- c) Estates Sub-Committee held on 20 June 2023 (Minutes Numbers EST24/001 – EST24/007), that the draft minutes be noted.
- d) Mayor's Charity Sub-Committee held on 20 June 2023 (Minutes Numbers MC24/001 – MC24/006), that the draft minutes be noted.

GP24/042 **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: St Michael's Community Hall**

Amount Requested: £500

Reason: To contribute towards the costs of replacing the roof. This is a long-term project, and any grant will be ring fenced for this specific project. The project is in its very early stages, as guidance is needed from the Conservation office at Stafford Borough Council.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to St Michael's Community Hall, earmarked to be used towards the replacement of the hall roof, and to be returned to the Council if not used for this purpose.

The following organisations did not meet the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated, but a proposer and seconder came forward in each case to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant.

* 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.

- a. **Organisation: Stone Community First Responders**
Amount Requested: £500
Reason: To contribute toward the purchase of a new compact multi-function patient monitor.
i. Level of reserves. (Note: The reserves are expected to be needed to replace the First Responders' vehicle)

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Stone Community First Responders.

- b. **Organisation: Stone Community Speed Watch Group**
Amount Requested: £1,350
Reason: To purchase and install small, permanent, metal Community Speed Watch signs on existing signs on every road into Stone to educate drivers that the town is a Community Speed Watch area, that volunteers may be present and that speed limits should be adhered to.
i. Request over £500
ii. No accounts available due to nature of organisation

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Stone Community Speed Watch, to be paid when total funding for the project has been secured and an order for the Speed Watch signs is ready to be placed.

- c. **Organisation: Stone Dominoes Football Club**
Amount Requested: £500
Reason: To support the funding of the revived Stone Dominoes men's first team which has been set up and will be running from this season. This will include items such as new home kit, new away kit, training kits, matchday t-shirts, jackets and coats, league fees and referee fees etc.
i. No accounts are available as the proposal relates to a new team.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Stone Dominoes Football Club.

- d. **Organisation: Futures2gether**
Amount Requested: £470
Reason: To support the costs of offering clients the opportunity to take part in multi sports sessions provided by Coaches from Stoke City Football Club.
i. Level of reserves

RESOLVED: To defer consideration of the grant application from Futures2gether pending further information on whether the project will be able to go ahead if the Town Council's support is not forthcoming.

GP24/043 Complaints Procedure

The Committee considered the updated complaints procedure* which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the only changes to the policy were those reflecting the abolition of the Management Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council's updated Complaints Procedure.

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GP24/044 Grievance Procedure

The Committee considered the updated Grievance Procedure* which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the only changes to the policy were those reflecting the abolition of the Management Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council's updated Grievance Procedure.

GP24/045 Disciplinary Procedure

The Committee considered the updated Disciplinary Procedure* which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the only changes to the policy were those reflecting the abolition of the Management Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council's updated Disciplinary Procedure.

GP24/046 Past Consort Badges

The Committee considered potential new designs for 'Past Consort' and 'Past Deputy Consort' badges, brought forward from the Committee Meeting on 7 February 2023 (Minute Reference: GP23/163).

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that prior to the current arrangements where the Mayor Making Ceremony formed part of Civic Sunday, the Town Council used to purchase gifts in recognition of the work done by the Consorts in accompanying/supporting the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor. As this no longer took place the suggestion was made by the former Town Mayor that the Council give a commemorative badge annually to the outgoing consorts as a thank you for their work and a reminder of their year in office. This was agreed by the Committee in February but alternative designs, considered more suitable for wearing by both ladies and men, were requested be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that he had undertaken additional research into the options available. He had found it difficult to find reasonable alternatives at around the same price as the one previously presented, and that there seemed to be no middle ground between badges in this price range and the current Past Mayor's badges which were around £250 each. He said that he had given a target budget of £150 to the Town Council's current supplier of 'Past Mayor' badges but they were unable to provide a quality item that represented good value for that figure.

The Town Clerk outlined the possible options which included not introducing Consorts badges, choosing one of the badges circulated when the item was discussed in February, or purchasing badges to the value of the current Mayors and Deputy Mayors badges. The latter option would require additional money to be earmarked in the budget.

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The Town Clerk circulated the sample Past Consort badge designs (previously circulated) for Councillors to view and consider again which had been costed at around £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 year.

The Committee considered the round/circular (St Ives sample) badge, made with the Council's crest and colours with pin fastener, to be the most appropriate design (and much better than the traditional bouquet of flowers).

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk purchases the St Ives sample, customised to Stone Town Council's requirements as 'Past Mayor's Consort' and 'Past Deputy Mayor's Consort' badges.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council's award of Past Consort badges would be implemented from last year's mayoralty.

GP24/047 Heritage Centre

The Committee considered an update on the Heritage Centre.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the building works were now close to completion and a meeting of the Heritage Centre Steering Group had been arranged to take place on Monday 10 July. The meeting involved a visit to the Heritage Centre to view the work that had been done.

GP24/048 Covid-19 Reflection Orchard

The Committee considered the plaque for the Covid-19 Reflection Orchard which had been referred from Environment Sub-Committee on 20 June 2023 (Minute Number ENV24/005).

A picture image* of the proposed plaque was issued to Town Councillors at the meeting.

Councillor Townsend provided details of the plaque's specification which was made of bronze and designed/made by a British manufacturer to be durable, weather resistant and priced within budget.

The plaque would be mounted on a wooden plinth to be made free of charge by the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contractor. The plinth will sit on the floor rather than on a post.

Councillor Townsend advised the Committee that the proposal included a corresponding plaque on the bench that would say how the orchard came about.

The Chairman thanked everyone who had been involved in the project for their work in bringing it to fruition.

RESOLVED: That the proposed plaque, as illustrated, be approved for purchase.

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RESOLVED: That authority be given for the words for the bench plaque to be agreed by the Town Clerk in consultation with Councillor Townsend.

GP24/049 Town Mayor's Charity

The Committee considered possible uses for a long-standing unallocated sum of money in the Town Mayor's Charity account totalling £1,161.68.

This item had been referred to the Committee from the Town Mayor's Charity Sub-Committee on 20 June 2023 (Minute Number MC24/005).

The Committee considered that as the sum had originally been raised for charitable purposes, it should still be used in that way. It concluded that a suitable organisation in need of financial support was Crown Wharf Theatre.

RESOLVED: That two theatre seats be purchased at Crown Wharf Theatre (at a cost of £500 each) with the surplus sum being awarded to the Theatre as a donation.

GP24/050 Sex Establishment Policy

The Committee considered a Stafford Borough Council consultation on Sex Establishment Policy. A letter from the Licensing Manager had been attached to the agenda for the meeting along with a copy of the draft Sex Establishment Venue Licensing Policy 2023 (attached to the electronic version of the agenda).

RESOLVED: That Town Councillors individually send any comments they wish to make on the Sex Establishment Venue Licensing Policy 2023 to the Town Clerk within a week of the consultation deadline (of 26 July 2023) and that the Town Clerk drafts a response for circulation to Councillors before submission to Stafford Borough Council.

GP24/051 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 31 May 2023.

GP24/052 50th Anniversary of Stone Town Council

The Committee considered the setting up of a working group to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Stone Town Council on 1 April 2024, referred from the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee on 20 June 2023 (Minute Number TTP24/005).

RESOLVED: That a 50th Anniversary of Stone Town Council Working Group be set up and that the Town Clerk invites Councillors to express an interest in becoming a member, before confirmation at the next meeting of the Committee.

GP24/053 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

The Chairman advised the Committee that a meeting of the Steering Group would take place on Monday 10 July 2023.

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Engagement with Young People

Councillor Dawson advised the Committee that a meeting of the Working Group had taken place on 3 July 2023 with an in-depth discussion about the role of the Student Advisor. She said that she would be arranging to meet with the Town Clerk in the next few weeks with a view to compiling a report for consideration by the General Purposes Committee.

GP24/054 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 meeting would be arranged to take place at the end of the month.

Stone ATC

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that he had no report but would endeavour to give an update at the next meeting of the Committee.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft was not available to give a report.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that a regular meeting of Stafford & Stone Access Group had taken place as well as the Annual General Meeting. He said that most of the discussion was around the financial situation which appeared reasonably stable.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Townsend and Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that they had not been able to attend the most recent meeting held on Sunday 2 July 2023.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

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

SPCA Executive Committee

Mr M. Green was not available to give a report.

Stone Traders Group Directors' Meeting

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that Councillor Hood had attended the last meeting of Stone Traders Group Directors.

The meeting was suspended and then reconvened after the Planning Consultative Committee meeting had taken place.

GP24/055 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.

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GP24/056 **Confidential Minutes and recommendations of Sub-Committees:**

- a) Estates Sub-Committee Meeting held on 20 June 2023, Minute Numbers: EST24/001, EST24/006 and EST24/007.

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

CHAIRMAN