

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

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

PRESENT: Councillor I. Fordham in the Chair
(agenda items 1 to 6 (to Minute Number GP24/123)),

and Councillor Kenney in the Chair
(from agenda item 7 (Minute Number GP24/124)), and

Councillors: A. Best, J. Battrick, K. Dawson, J. Davies, J. Hood, T. Kelt, B. Kenney,
P. Leason, J. Metters, J. Powell (from agenda item 7 (Minute Number GP24/124)),
and C. Thornicroft

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, L. Davies, R. Kenney (absent from agenda item 1 to 6 (to Minute Number GP24/123)), A. Mottershead, J. Powell (absent from agenda item 1 to 6 (to Minute Number GP24/123)), N. Powell and R. Townsend

GP24/118 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: A. Burgess, L. Davies, R. Kenney (who was absent to agenda item 6 (Minute Number GP24/123) to attend a Borough Council meeting), A. Mottershead, J. Powell (who was absent to agenda item 6 (Minute Number GP24/123) to attend a Borough Council meeting), N. Powell and R. Townsend

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

GP24/119 Declarations of Interests

None

GP24/120 Requests for Dispensations

None

GP24/121 To receive the report of the County Councillors

Council Councillor Jill Hood

The Chairman invited Councillor Hood to address the Committee.

The Voice Project

Councillor Hood informed the Committee that she had been a Corporate Parent since joining the County Council in 2017, and last night had been delighted (as one of three County Councillors) to attend an evening with looked after children at their end of year 'Voice Project'.

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The County Councillors were shown some of the work the young people had been doing (in running their own council) and some of the work the Corporate Parent Committee members had influenced (such as health checks).

Councillor Hood said the work was most impressive and the children were a credit to the foster parents who looked after them.

County Councillor I. Parry

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP24/122 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that on 18 October the Stone Borough Councillors were invited to Westbridge Park to view (and have a go on) the children's play area and sunken garden which was informally opened on the following day. She said it was wonderful to see the children using the park and its equipment.

On 28 October the Stone Borough Councillors were invited to the opening of the Stafford Market Square which went on all day with lots of entertainment.

Councillor Hood expressed to the Committee the highlight of her Borough Councillor role which was being invited to Alleyne's School to meet with Andy Whitehall (who had been Stone's Community Policeman for a great number of years) and now runs a boxing club from the old art classroom. She gave an example of why the boxing club was needed for young people who can go there to relax and let off steam, and she spoke about Andy's deep understanding of the effects of trauma, its causes, and his commitment to offering trauma training to all school staff.

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that she had attended the House of Bread Food Bank and appealed to Councillors for donations of items that may be of use to service users who were down on their luck.

GP24/123 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP24/124 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3 October 2023 (Minute No's GP24/094 – GP24/109), be approved as a correct record.
- b) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 17 October 2023 (Minute No's GP24/110 – GP24/117), be approved as a correct record.

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GP24/125 Minutes of Sub-Committees

RESOLVED:

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on 17 October 2023 (Minute Numbers TTP24/017 – TTP24/025), that the draft minutes be noted.
- b) Estates Sub-Committee meeting held on 17 October 2023 (Minutes Numbers EST24/015 – EST24/022), that the draft minutes be noted.
- c) Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 24 October 2023 (Minutes Numbers ENV24/021 – ENV24/030), that the draft minutes be noted.

GP24/126 HS2

An update on the current HS2 position and its effects on Stone area had been delivered by Trevor Parkin of Stone Railhead Crisis Group before this meeting began.

GP24/127 Budget Monitoring Report – September 2023

The report* of the Town Clerk was noted.

GP24/128 Heritage Centre

The Committee considered an update from the Town Clerk on the Heritage Centre project.

The Town Clerk introduced the Heritage Centre Manger, Paul Castrey (who was sitting in the public gallery), to Councillors.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the old fire station building had been returned to the Town Council from the contractor and Paul had spent some time looking at snagging issues.

The Town Clerk said there had been no outcome on the Rural England Prosperity Fund grant application from Stafford Borough Council yet, but he had answered a number of questions the grant administrators had asked.

He said the Collection Working Group tasked with considering potential exhibits to the Heritage Centre had recently met.

GP24/129 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 30 September 2023.

GP24/130 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

Councillor Leason reported on a useful meeting where he and the Heritage Centre

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Manager had met with some Canal people who may be willing to lend artifacts to the heritage centre. One of the people was a digital expert who had worked at the Imperial War Museum.

Engagement with Young People

Councillor Dawson advised the Committee that she had tried to contact the schools and had been given some names but has heard nothing since. She has a phone call arranged with the Town Clerk to discuss the next steps.

50th Anniversary of Stone Town Council

Councillor Davies informed the Committee that it was early days yet but the Stone Choral Society, when they have their Summer Concert next year, hope to perform a commissioned piece called 'Stone Circles' in the new theatre as part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations.

Councillor Davies is speaking to various other people about different ideas which it was hoped would be delivered in conjunction with heritage centre activities.

GP24/131 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 face-to-face meeting of the Liaison Group took place on 1 November 2023 and County Highways representatives had attended to talk about highway repairs and maintenance. The Chairman and Chief Executive of Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association had also been present.

He said the meeting had been very useful for an exchange of views and to connect County highways officers and parish representatives.

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that the meeting was also a useful forum for discussion of other issues and attendees benefited from the advice of the Town Clerk. He invited Town Councillors to attend and meet colleagues from the surrounding Stone areas.

Stone ATC

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that he had attended a welfare meeting of the Stone ATC a couple of weeks ago and the high demand for cadet placements had resulted in a waiting list. He said the organisation was doing extremely well with some good new civilian instructors and general helpers and the enthusiasm amongst the cadets was extremely good.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that Age Concern Stone & District had not met.

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt informed the Committee that there had been no meeting.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that the Trustees had not met.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place, but the

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AGM would be held on 16 November 2023 at the Frank Jordan Centre. She said that she would like to arrange a meeting between the Town Council and the Hub.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that he had been elected to the Executive Committee and had attended the AGM on 30 October 2023.

The CEO discussed finances and how they could be bolstered with options put forward such as increasing subscriptions and promoting and increasing training income.

The Chair of Health and Wellbeing addressed the meeting and said it was their intention to visit each area and speak to Councillors about health and wellbeing within the Council itself and the wider population.

The feeling was expressed that all councillors should undergo some form of training. The take up of training was considered low overall and variable through a councillors four-year term with the suggestion made that training should be mandatory.

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that a representative of Staffordshire University had delivered an interesting talk about the changing landscapes within local politics. They had discussed several options on the way local government could go in the future, particularly in light of the financial issues being faced by some larger councils.

Stone Traders Group Directors' Meeting

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that there had been no meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that no further notifications had been received.

The meeting was temporarily suspended and then reconvened after the Planning Consultative Committee meeting and confidential section of the Town Council meeting had taken place.

GP24/132 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.

GP24/133 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 17 October 2023, Minute Numbers GP24/110, GP24/115, GP24/116 and GP24/117 be approved.

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GP24/134 **Confidential Minutes Sub-Committees**

- a) Estates Sub-Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2023, Minute Numbers: EST24/015, EST24/021 and EST24/022.

RESOLVED: To note the minutes.

CHAIRMAN