



**Town Clerk**

Les Trigg

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15 Station Road  
Stone  
ST15 8JP

9 January 2024

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 16 JANUARY 2024 at 7:10pm**, or on the rising of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee, if later.

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

Les Trigg  
Town Clerk

Councillors: R. Townsend (Chairman), T. Kelt (Vice Chairman), J. Battrick, A. Burgess, K. Dawson, B. Kenney, J. Metters, J. Powell and N. Powell

**AGENDA**

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest, Declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and Requests for Dispensations.**
3. **Representations from Members of the Public**

To consider representations from members of the public on items to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Sub-Committee held on 24 October 2023, Minute No's ENV24/021 – ENV24/029 (attached)

5. **Environment Sub-Committee Works Update**

To receive an update on the work being undertaken by the Council's Grounds Maintenance contractor (update attached) and to consider any variations required.

6. **Budget 2024-25 – 2026-27**

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

7. **Reports of Working Groups**

- Environmental Working Group

Will any Councillors who wish to speak at this meeting, but are not members of the Sub-Committee, please inform the Chairman before the start of the meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the Environment Sub-Committee Meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of this scheme are displayed on the Town Council's noticeboards and website.

The Council Chamber is accessed from the rear of the building.

# Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 24 October 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Townsend in the Chair and  
Councillors: A. Burgess, T. Kelt, B. Kenney, R. Kenney and J. Powell

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

By Chairman's Invitation: No Councillors

**ABSENT:** Councillors: J. Battrick, J. Davies, K. Dawson, J. Metters and N. Powell

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### **ENV24/021 Apologies**

Councillors: J. Davies, K. Dawson and N. Powell

### **ENV24/022 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received.

### **ENV24/023 Representations from Members of the Public**

None

### **ENV24/024 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on the 15 August 2023 (Minute Numbers ENV24/012 – ENV24/020), were approved as a correct record.

### **ENV24/025 Environmental Sub-Committee Works Update**

The Chairman gave updates on the following items:

#### Asbestos Removal

This item was carried forward for discussion later in the agenda.

#### Crown Meadow

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Covid-19 Orchard Opening on Crown Meadow on Tuesday 10 October 2023 had been successful.

The footbridge from Westbridge Park to Crown Meadow was scheduled for its annual clean up and repaint which hopefully would be done before the end of the year.

The work on Scrape One to cut back grasses to allow new growth and diversity was to be scheduled later in the season.

The removal of willow saplings in Scrape One had been delayed because of the late season growth. A small volunteer group was ready and waiting to carry out the task.

The grounds maintenance contractor was now moving to a quiet period of routine work and should be able to schedule the willow removal soon.

#### Walton Roundabout

Now that the County Highways improvement works on Walton roundabout were finished the Grounds Maintenance Contractor would be able to schedule replanting and maintenance of the existing trees and shrubs.

#### Town Borders

Arrangements will be made for a walkabout and inspection of the town borders with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor to see what needs to be done to remove overgrowth and plant some new shrubs.

#### Lock Gate

Restoring the lock gate will be revisited after being held up by the Covid-19 pandemic and the improvements to Walton Roundabout.

#### Hedgerow

The planting of a new hedgerow running from Angler's carpark to the corner of the wooden fence to meet the hedgerow already planted has been planned and budgeted. The hedgerow will consist of a mix of five British species.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that there was an opportunity to talk to the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) next week about whether financial or other help was available for the project.

### **ENV24/026 Asbestos Policy**

The Chairman updated the Sub-Committee on the removal of asbestos at the Newcastle Street allotments.

He informed the Sub-Committee of a survey undertaken on the asbestos sheeting which showed that it was very low risk to health because it was low risk material and located outdoors. The report concluded that the Council were under no obligation to remove it with urgency although it was wise to remove it when resources allowed. It also recommended that further surveys be undertaken annually to keep the position under review.

The Town Clerk had a copy of the survey available at the meeting for Sub-Committee members to view.

The Chairman said the Town Council could now feel more comfortable that the asbestos can be removed gradually within budget and that monies had been set aside to do as much as possible with the opportunity to come back to Council if additional resources were needed.

In the interim the Office had drafted a revised tenancy agreement that expressly stated asbestos was not permitted on the allotment sites.

## **ENV24/027 Reports of Working Groups**

### Environmental Working Group

The Chairman invited Councillor Kelt to address the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Kelt provided an update on a Climate Expo held at Keele which involved several talks, exhibitions and keynote speaker, Chris Packham. He said there was lots of advice about how to proceed with what appeared to be retractable environmental issues such as 'we are too small but are interested in looking at things like communal energy' etc.

The Stafford Climate Panel had met (since the last Sub-Committee meeting), but the planned sustainable fashion show has not gone ahead. There was a discussion about a potential forum for businesses and traders to look at what can be done (by them) to make themselves more sustainable. Councillor Kelt said that he was trying to contact the Secretary of Stone Traders Association to talk about how to take the idea forward. Another discussion took place on local community-based energy production which was in its early stages.

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that a set of Council Climate Action Score cards had been published by the Climate Emergency Action Group. The score cards were for the monitoring of a Council's (County and Borough) progress against its action plan, assessed using a variety of soft evidence, some self-reporting and taking genuine evidence from the press and other official documents. He said that Stafford Borough scored 30% which was average.

The Panel had agreed with the Borough that they would assist with monitoring and advising on where best to place their actions. There were several categories and the categories they have some control over such as transport and waste reduction had produced the worst score of 2% and 8%. The scores are helpful in showing the way forward and highlighting where investigations need to be undertaken to improve.

The Sub-Committee expressed the wish to invite Borough representatives to Stone Town Council to find out more about their current environmental activities. Knowing about the work they do might allow the Town Council to support the programmes and disseminate them out into the community.

The Chairman suggested inviting representatives to the Sub-Committee where the translatable elements into Town Council activities could be taken forward to the General Purposes Committee.

Councillor Kelt said that he would have the opportunity to network at a meeting he will be attending in a couple of weeks.

**ENV24/028 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 item of business.

**ENV24/029 Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee, held on 15 August 2023, (Minute Numbers ENV24/012 and ENV24/020), be approved as a correct record.

**Chairman**

**Stone Town Council - Environment Sub Committee Report - Work in Progress**

Dept	Job Description	Details	Current Status	Approved Budget	Est Date
Allotments	Asbestos Removal	Remove and dispose of asbestos. Repair allotment borders.	Asbestos survey confirmed issues as low risk and require monitoring. Arrange to have pile removed from plot 2A by MP and use specialist to dispose. Raised borders on plot 13 to be dug out and replaced with sleepers as budget allows.	2000	Commence Nov23 - Jan24
Crown Meadow	Open Remembrance Orchard	Install bench and plaques	Plaques received. Mick to collect and affix to bench and podium. Open event 10/10/23. Work completed.	0	Oct-23
Crown Meadow	Bridge Cleaning and painting		MP to complete, ideally in time for Westbridge Park re- opening. MP confident it will be completed in budget year.	525	Jan-Mar 24
Crown Meadow	Scrape 1	Cut back grasses to encourage new growth and diversity. Cut back a third of the area on a three year rotation. Strim and remove.	Bill Waller recommends Sep 2023 for the first third to be cut. Discuss and agree method with Mick. Job delayed by late flowering in scrape. Currently too wet to tackle this job.	1000	TBC
Crown Meadow	Scrape 1	Additional funding for willow sapling removal	Work completed with Staffs Wildlife Trust volunteers	500	Nov-23
Grounds Maint	Walton Roundabout - re-planting		Weather dependent	600	Jan-Mar 24
Grounds Maint	Town Borders - re-planting		Weather dependent	600	Jan-Mar 24
Grounds Maint	Re-install Lock Gate	Replace damage lock gate on Walton Roundabout	Canals Trust to source lockgate or MP to manufacture.	400	Jan- Apl 24
Environmental Initiatives	New hedgerow	Eastern part of meadow to Angler's Car Park	Plant in Winter 2023. Approaching CPRE for support from their Hedge Heroes campaign. Meeting with Project Manager has taken place. Possible funding tbc.		TBC
Environmental Initiatives	Balance of Carry Over			1350	

## Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to determine the level of budget for services under its control that the Sub-Committee wishes to recommend to the General Purposes Committee.

## Background

2. The General Purposes Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 considered the standstill budget for 2024-25 and indicative figures for the next two years based on a number of assumptions contained within the report.
3. The standstill budget was prepared on the basis that all Council services will continue at broadly their current level. Inflation has not, however, been included in Sub-Committee budgets beyond 2023-24. A separate estimate of inflation beyond this date has been made across the whole of the Council and will be considered by the General Purposes Committee.
4. The figures for this Sub-Committee<sup>1</sup> on the above basis are:

<b>Actual</b>		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>2022-23</b>		<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
21,473	Grounds Maintenance	27,210	23,100	22,000	22,000	22,000
5,521	Crown Meadow Improvements	2,085	4,900	2,000	2,000	2,000
-1,178	Allotments	230	-100	100	100	100
-	Environmental Initiatives	1,190	1,190	-	-	-
<b>25,816</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,715</b>	<b>29,090</b>	<b>24,100</b>	<b>24,100</b>	<b>24,100</b>

5. . In respect of these figures, Sub-Committee Members should note that:
  - a. The Grounds Maintenance forecast for the current year includes the regular contracted works, replanting the town borders and Walton roundabout (£1,200), replacing the Walton Roundabout "Lock Gate" (£400), re-siting two benches for health and safety reasons (£690) and the removal of a wind damaged tree (£990). The 2024-25 budget figure includes regular maintenance (£20,000) plus a contingency for unforeseen events (£2,000).

<sup>1</sup> The figures presented in this report contain small variations from those presented to the General Purposes Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 due to updated information



- b. The Crown Meadow Improvements budget includes annual provision for bridge cleaning/painting (£525), weed control (£309), willow removal (£500) and works on scrape 1 (£500), with a small additional contingency provided from 2024-25 onwards. The 2023-24 forecast also includes the new hedgerow (£1,560), cutting back scrape 1 (£1,000) and plaques for the orchard (£475).
  - c. The Allotments budget for 2024-25 and subsequent years includes provision for water charges (£900), general/asbestos/grounds maintenance (£3,250) and the allotment competition (£250). Against this is set estimated annual income of £4,300.
  - d. The Environmental Initiatives budget is currently unspent, though there is an outstanding commitment for the remaining amount of the budget that is currently in dispute. Any remaining allowance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 can be rolled forward for spending in 2024-25. In line with normal practice, no budget provision has been made beyond the current year. If the Sub-Committee wishes to provide for additional budgets in future years, this will need to be recommended to the General Purposes Committee.
6. As reported to the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the standstill budget is just the starting point for the budget process. Members of the Sub-Committee will want to review this standstill budget and the amounts provisionally included. In addition, there are likely to be other areas where the Sub-Committee will want to undertake new developments or stop/change the things that they are doing now.
7. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the standstill budget and any areas of growth or savings which they would want to be taken into account in setting the budget for 2024-25 and future years.

### **Potential Budget Changes**

- 8. The Council's grounds maintenance contractor has been asked to review items that, based on his experience of undertaking the work, the Council need to consider for inclusion in next year's budget. Any such items will be reported to the meeting.

### **Recommendations**

- 9. The Sub-Committee is asked to recommend their proposed budget for consideration by the General Purposes Committee.