



**Town Clerk**

Les Trigg

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STONE  
ST15 8JP

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7 February 2024

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2024 at 7:00pm** for consideration of the matters itemised in the following agenda.

Les Trigg  
Town Clerk

**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. **To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 5 December 2023, Minute Numbers C24/072 – C24/078 (attached)**

**5. To receive the draft minutes and decisions of the under mentioned Committees:**

- a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023, Minute Numbers GP24/135 – GP24/150 (attached)
- b) Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023, Minute Numbers PC24/043 – PC24/048 (attached)
- c) Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 16 January 2024, Minute Numbers PC24/049 – PC24/054 (attached)
- d) General Purposes Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024, Minute Numbers GP24/151 – GP24/170 (attached). The recommendations included in minute GP24/163 will be considered as part of agenda item 6 below.

**6. To consider the Council's Budget for 2024-25 to 2026-27 and to set the Precept and Council Tax for the Year**

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

**7. Local Government Transparency Code 2015  
Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

Information for Quarter ending 31 December 2023 (attached).

**8. Six Month Attendance Rule**

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

**9. To receive the forthcoming Civic Announcements (attached).**

**10. To receive the Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements (attached).**

**11. 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.**

**12. Confidential Minutes**

- a) To receive the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 5 December 2023, Minute Numbers GP24/135 and GP24/150 (attached).
- b) To receive the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 6 February 2024, Minute Numbers GP24/151, GP24/161 and GP24/162 (attached).

Members of the public are welcome to attend the Town Council 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.

Please access the Council Chamber from the rear of the building.

# Stone Town Council

## Minutes of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 5 December 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillor J. Davies in the Chair and  
Councillors: A. Best, J. Battrick, L. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt, B. Kenney,  
R. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell, C. Thornicroft and  
R. Townsend

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

**ABSENT:** Councillors: A. Burgess, K. Dawson and A. Mottershead

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### **Prayers**

Before the meeting began Reverend Jim Cartlidge led prayers.

### **C24/072    Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: A. Burgess, K. Dawson and  
A. Mottershead

### **C24/073    Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None received.

### **C24/074    Representations from Members of the Public**

None

### **C24/075    Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 7  
November 2023 (Minute Numbers C24/062 – C24/071), be approved as a  
correct record.

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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.

**C24/076     Committee Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) The draft minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7 November 2023 (Minute Numbers GP24/118 – GP24/134), were noted.
- b) The draft minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 7 November 2023 (Minute Numbers PC24/037 – PC24/042), were noted.

**C24/077     Civic Announcements**

The Civic Announcements, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

The Town Mayor drew the Council's attention to the Civic Carol Service on Sunday 10 December 2023 at St Michael & St Wulfad's Church.

The Town Mayor informed the Council that Stone Choral Society and Cantiamo Chamber Choir would be performing at Christ Church on 20 December 2023.

**C24/078     Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements**

The Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's reports of engagements, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

The Town Mayor informed the Council that he had attended the funeral of David Cumming, who had been the town's highly respected parade marshal over many years. The funeral had gone extremely well and was taken by Councillor Mrs Davies in her capacity as Lay Reader of the Church of England. A Grenadier Guard Bandsman had travelled up from London to sound the Last Post which was a fitting goodbye to David and much appreciated by his family.

The Town Mayor highlighted the fantastic turnout to the Remembrance Sunday commemoration despite the terrible weather which was a tremendous token to the spirit and strength of the community. Thanks were given to the Royal British Legion and Town Council staff for their support with the arrangements for the day.

**TOWN MAYOR**

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# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 5 December 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and  
Councillors: A. Best, J. Battrick, L. Davies, J. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt,  
B. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell, R. Townend and  
C. Thornicroft

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

**ABSENT:** Councillors: A. Burgess, K. Dawson and A. Mottershead

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### **GP24/135    Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: A. Burgess, K. Dawson and  
A. Mottershead

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

### **GP24/136    Declarations of Interests**

None

### **GP24/137    Requests for Dispensations**

None

### **GP24/138    To receive the report of the County Councillors**

#### **County Councillor Jill Hood**

The Chairman invited Councillor Hood to address the Committee.

#### High Street Signage

Councillor Hood asked Town Councillors whether they had noticed the huge 'No  
Entry' sign at the top of the High Street which had been installed following a High  
Street walkabout with Officers from the Highways Department.

#### Newcastle Road

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that Newcastle Road was now pothole  
free as the Highways Department had repaired all defects in the road's surface.

#### **County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

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**GP24/139     To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

Councillor Leason advised the Committee that he had attended a recent meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee where a report had been given by the people who empty bins. He said that everything was satisfactory and offered to make available the related statistics.

Councillor Leason said a meeting had taken place with the Fire Brigade who gave a report on the types of incidents attended in Stone from 23 April to the end of October. He informed the Committee that there had been 26 false alarm callouts caused by equipment and 11 false alarms caused by people ringing in. None were malicious. 8 special service calls had been made as the fire brigade now assist uninjured people who have falls. No road traffic accidents had been attended in Stone.

Councillor Fordham advised the Committee that the statistics (referred to by Councillor Leason above) included Veolia making 4.2 million collections across the Borough (in the year ending March 2023) with 99.95% of these successfully completed. There was an improvement plan to try to reach 100%. The collections constituted 37,000 tonnes of waste material.

Councillor Fordham said that air quality had been discussed with the 28 monitoring points across the Borough indicating that levels were within the Government's guidelines for particulates and nitrous dioxide.

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that she and Councillor Fordham had been contacted by a County Officer who explained how the Community Change Fund could be used. The fund comes directly from crime (such as speeding and parking fines) and groups and organisations can apply if their project has a connection with anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Hood made a call to Town Councillors for toys and in particular footballs to be donated for Afghani children (of all ages) who are staying at Swynnerton.

The Chairman advised the Committee that Cabinet on Thursday evening (7 December) were considering the acquisition of the Guild Hall Shopping Centre.

**GP24/140     Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**GP24/141     Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7 November 2023 (Minute No's GP24/118 – GP24/134), be approved as a correct record.

**GP24/142     Minutes of Sub-Committees**

There were no sub-committee minutes.

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**GP24/143     Budget 2024-25 to 2025-26**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk\* (which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting) commencing the process of examining the budget and precept level for the financial year 2024-25 for recommendation to the Council.

The Town Clerk reminded the Committee of the budget process which begins with the Committee's consideration of the overall position of the Council followed by each sub-committee considering the details of their budgets and any changes they might want to make. The budget details for all sub-committees would then be brought back together at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee for determination of the budget recommendation to the Council.

The Council in February will determine the budget and precept to be requested from Stafford Borough Council.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the figures in the report set the scene for the budget preparation. They were based on a standstill position and represented the continuation of the Council's existing activity and policies.

The Town Clerk drew the Committee's attention to the major budget issue of high inflation, particularly energy, which he said was well contained within the provision that had been made in the budget last year. He said there was an unspent forecast for the current year (of around £27,000) but this could change as the current financial year progressed.

The Town Clerk said that he had identified a few things that the Council was considering in the service elements relating to benches in the Market Square and Christmas trees in the town. He had allocated the inflation contingency but needed approval for this as well as needing specific guidance to the sub-committees in respect of considering their budgets.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the standstill budget position for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 and the issues related to setting the precept, and:

- a. Authorises the reallocation of the inflation contingency, in accordance with the figures in the Town Clerk's report.
- b. Asks each sub-committee to consider its financial needs for the next three years and report back to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee with its budget proposals.
- c. Agrees to consider its own budgets at the next meeting of this Committee.
- d. Did not give any specific instructions to sub-committees to which they would need to have regard while preparing their proposed budgets.

**GP24/144     National Pay Award 2023-24**

The Committee considered the report\* of the Town Clerk (which had been

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circulated with the agenda for the meeting) on the outcome of the 2023-24 national pay award negotiations for local government staff and its impact on the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council accepts the recommendations of the Town Clerk and adopts the new salary levels for staff for 2023-24, as set out in the report.

**GP24/145     Heritage Centre**

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

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that he had been informed verbally that the grant application for the Heritage Centre, administered by Stafford Borough Council on behalf of the Government, had been approved and was currently awaiting the formal agreement to sign. The award was worth £40,000 and would allow improved facilities and displays to be installed.

He said that a condition had been placed on the grant that required at least 500 visitors to visit the Heritage Centre before the end of 2024.

**GP24/146     Town Council Payments**

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

**GP24/147     Update from Working Groups:**

**Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group**

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

**Engagement with Young People**

Councillor Dawson was not available to provide a report.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stone Town Council**

Councillor Davies informed the Committee that he had been discussing the anniversary with the Heritage Centre Manager with a view to bringing the opening of the Heritage Centre and anniversary together. He said one of the exhibitions could be a retrospect of Stone Town Council.

**GP24/148     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 the next meeting will take place in January 2024.

**Stone ATC**

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that a welfare meeting of Stone ATC had taken place on 14 November where he learned that the Squadron continued to have excellent numbers with a waiting list of young people wishing to join. He said that the financing of the various projects seemed to be going well and the turnout of the Air Cadets, Army Cadets, Scouts, Guides etc on Remembrance Sunday was

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extremely good and they were all a credit to the town.

**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 a meeting would be taking place next week.

**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.

**SPCA Executive Committee**

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

**Stone Traders Group Directors' Meeting**

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

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

**GP24/149     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.

**GP24/150     Staffing Matters**

The Committee considered the confidential report\* of the Town Clerk (which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting).

RESOLVED: To approve the recommendations of the Town Clerk as detailed in the report.

**CHAIRMAN**

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# Stone Town Council – Planning Consultative Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 5 December 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillor T. Kelt in the Chair, and  
Councillors: A. Best, J. Battrick, J. Davies, L. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood,  
B. Kenney, R. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell, C. Thornicroft  
and R. Townsend

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

**ABSENT:** Councillors: A. Burgess, K. Dawson and A. Mottershead

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**PC24/043      Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: A. Burgess, K. Dawson and  
A. Mottershead

**PC24/044      Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Councillor R. Kenney advised the Committee that as a member of Stafford  
Borough Council's Planning Committee, he would not speak or vote on the  
planning applications listed on the agenda.

**PC24/045      Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**PC24/046      Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 7  
November 2023 (Minute Numbers PC24/037 – PC24/042), be approved as a  
correct record.

**PC24/047      Planning Applications**

**Application Number** – 23/38165/POTH

**Applicant** – Mrs R. Domb

**Location** – 2 Granville Square, Stone

**Development** – Change of use from commercial premises to 4 No. apartment  
dwellings and associated refuse and cycle stores

**Observations:** Although the Town Council does not object to the use of the  
upstairs of premises in the town for residential purposes, there are

insurmountable challenges with this development proposal and objections are raised for the following reasons:

- The access to the four units via two narrow staircases remains a hazard in the event of fire and would be problematic during alterations/renovation and when bringing in furniture.
- There is nowhere to store refuse bins outside the premises.

The proposal to store bins and bicycles on the first floor, to be carried up and down the stairs, is not practical or sustainable. Neither is there anywhere suitable or safe to store the bins while awaiting collection.

**Application Number** – 23/38381/LBC

**Applicant** – Mrs & Mrs Howells (BHG Developments)

**Location** – Land at St Johns Church, Granville Terrace, Stone

**Development** – Removal of Condition 12 (Windows) on application 21/35101/LBC – retention of unauthorised works to the church and erection of a two-storey rear extension (following demolition of existing single-storey extension) to convert the building into five residential units.

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 23/38249/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr Nawrot

**Location** – 29 Uttoxeter Road, Stone

**Development** – Two storey side/rear extension including creation of new vehicular access to allow parking in front curtilage. Replacement of side hedgerow.

**Observations:** The Town Council has no objections to the two-storey side/rear extension but is unhappy about the lack of clarity on removal of the mature hedgerow (the loss of which would give cause for concern) and asks for additional information.

**Application Number** – 23/38289/FUL

**Applicant** – Mr D. Cheadle

**Location** – 100 Newcastle Road, Stone

**Development** – Variation of Condition 4 (no power tools or machinery used within the valeting bays) on application 16/24644/FUL.

**Observations:** The Town Council has no objections subject to the variation of Condition 4 being restricted to the vacuum units.

**Application Number** – 23/38312/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr R. Harper

**Location** – 20 Mount Crescent, Stone

**Development** – Loft conversion with dormers and garden room to replace existing garage.

**Observations:** The Town Council has no objections to the development proposal in principle but verification on the adequacy of the parking is needed.

**Application Number** – 23/38096/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr N. Bennett

**Location** – 99 Meadow Way, Stone

**Development** – Single storey rear & side extension and new external material finish

**Observations:** The Town Council has no objections to the rear and side extension but expresses concern about changes to the external appearance of the property.

**PC24/048**

**To note the following items considered under delegated powers where no objections were forwarded to Stafford Borough Council due to no Member asking for the item to be considered by a special meeting of the Committee.**

None

**CHAIRMAN**

# Stone Town Council – Planning Consultative Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 16 January 2024

**PRESENT:** Councillor T. Kelt in the Chair, and  
Councillors: A. Best, J. Battrick, J. Davies, I. Fordham, B. Kenney, R. Kenney,  
J. Metters, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

**ABSENT:** Councillors: A. Burgess, L. Davies, K. Dawson, J. Hood, P. Leason, A. Mottershead,  
J. Powell and N. Powell

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**PC24/049      Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: L. Davies, K. Dawson, J. Hood,  
P. Leason, A. Mottershead, J. Powell and N. Powell

**PC24/050      Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Councillor R. Kenney advised the Committee that as a member of Stafford  
Borough Council's Planning Committee, he would not speak or vote on the  
planning applications listed on the agenda.

Councillor I. Fordham advised the Committee that as a reserve member of  
Stafford Borough Council's Planning Committee, he would not speak or vote on  
the planning applications listed on the agenda.

**PC24/051      Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**PC24/052      Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 5  
December 2023 (Minute Numbers PC24/043 – PC24/048), be approved as a  
correct record.

**PC24/053      Planning Applications**

**Application Number** – 23/38438/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr & Mrs K. Hanvey

**Location** – 1 Cedars Drive, Stone

**Development** – Demolition of existing rear conservatory and timber lean to shed; construction of a new rear single storey flat roof extension; includes also some interior alterations and adaptations.

**Observations:** The Town Council noted that planning permission had already been awarded on this planning application even though an extension to the consultation close date had been granted by the case officer to 17 January 2024.

An enquiry about the procedure is thus made as the Town Council had no role to play as consultee on this occasion.

**Application Number** – 23/38368/FUL

**Applicant** – Mr & Mrs A. Howells

**Location** – Land at St Johns Church, Granville Terrace, Stone

**Development** – Removal of Condition 6 (windows) on application 21/35049/FUL  
– Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of permission 19/31557/FUL

**Observations:** The Town Council makes no comments on this planning application.

**Application Number** – 23/38320/ANX

**Applicant** – Mr Grocott

**Location** – 2 Trentwood Cottages, Newcastle Road, Stone

**Development** – Outbuilding to form a single residential annex, ancillary to the existing dwelling.

**Observations:** The Town Council supports the comments made by the specialist organisations and has no objections to the development proposal subject to their recommendations being satisfied by the applicant.

**Application Number** – 23/37647/FUL

**Applicant** – Mr S. Collett

**Location** – The Bridge, 1 Oulton Road, Stone

**Development** – Demolish the one and two storey extension and garage. Rebuild the ground floor and the first floor to match the existing layout. Proposed extension of the pubs car park area.

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 23/38287/FUL

**Applicant** – Mr D. Cheadle

**Location** – 100 Newcastle Road, Stone

**Development** – Removal of Condition 3 (power tools or machinery), 5 (plant and machinery), 6 (opening hours) and 7 (car wash and valeting) on 13/18949/FUL

**Observations:** The Town Council objects to this planning application on the grounds that noise nuisance will be generated which is detrimental to neighbourhood amenity.

**Application Number** – 23/38373/HOU  
**Applicant** – Master F. Khoneizer  
**Location** – 14 Lyndhurst Grove, Stone  
**Development** – infill of existing carport

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 23/38355/FUL  
**Applicant** – Mr J. Adams  
**Location** – Land between 3 and 5 Park House Drive, Stone  
**Development** – Change of use of land to residential to be included with the curtilage of 4 Westover Drive, together with new boundary fence and gates and access.

**Observations:** The Town Council objects strongly to this planning application which appears to involve a land grab of green space for the purpose of development for profit.

**Application Number** – 22/36505/REM (amended plans)  
**Applicant** – Mr C. Jaram  
**Location** – Land Adjacent to Lichfield Road, Stone  
**Development** – Application for approval of reserved matters on application 18/27783/OUT – assess, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.  
**Amendments** – The applicant has addressed the objection raised by the Arboricultural Officer and reduced the height of the fence to the main highway.

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 22/36231/OUT (amended plans)  
**Applicant** – Hitachi Energy UK Limited  
**Location** – Stonefield Works, Oulton Road, Stone  
**Development** – Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site for residential development of up to 130 dwellings, public open space and associated works (all matters reserved except for access)  
**Amendments** – Number of dwellings has reduced from 130 to 114 dwellings. The case officer has requested additional plans from the agent to assist neighbours and the Town Council showing areas of open space, garden sizes for the proposed dwellings and separation distances from neighbours.

**Observations:** The Town Council wishes to repeat its observations made in response to the original plans (letter dated 6 October 2022):

The Town Council raises the following points in respect of this development proposal:

- The Borough Council is asked to carefully consider whether or not advertisement of the site has been proven to meet planning requirements and is satisfied that the developer has done enough marketing to justify a change of use from business to housing land.



- The existing flood risk on Oulton Road is high and a housing development of this size will put further strain on drainage in the area.
- Although not listed, the buildings have special architectural and historic value and are held dear to the people of the town. The Town Council would like to see the site developed sympathetically with retention of the character buildings, incorporating them into a mix of property types rather than demolition in favour of new build homes that are the same as others in the town.
- Despite the planning application being outline in nature, a large number of residents have expressed concerns about the negative impacts of the proposal. The loss of employment, damage to residential amenity, impact on character and appearance of the area, impact on highways and traffic and increased flood risk have all been cited. These reserved matters should be noted by the Borough Council for future consideration.
- Concern was expressed that a further significant number of additional houses now under consideration had not been included in the Local Plan for the Borough, as Stone cannot be expected to continue accepting windfall sites of 130 homes (now 114) and similar, with no provision for appropriate infrastructure.

**PC24/054**

**To note the following items considered under delegated powers where no objections were forwarded to Stafford Borough Council due to no Member asking for the item to be considered by a special meeting of the Committee.**

**Application Number** – 23/38377/HOU

**Applicant** – Mr J. Phelan

**Location** – 81A Navigation Loop

**Development** – Porch extension to front.

**Observations:** No objections

**Application Number** – 23/37417/COU (amended plans)

**Applicant** – Dr Amit Jilka

**Location** – Warehouse, 11 Abbey Street, Stone

**Development** – Conversion of existing warehouse facilities comprising warehouse facilities to ground floor. Dental surgeries to the first and second floor with access from no 9 Abbey Street.

**Amendment** – The plans have been amended in line with the Conservation Officer's comments.

**Observations:** The Town Council has no objections to the amended plans subject to the planning conditions being met by the applicant.

**CHAIRMAN**

# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 6 February 2024

**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and  
Councillors: A. Best, J. Battrick, J. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt, P. Leason,  
A. Mottershead, N. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townend

Officers: L. Trigg, R. Edwards and T. Williams

**ABSENT:** Councillors: A. Burgess, L. Davies, K. Dawson, B. Kenney, J. Metters and J. Powell

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### **GP24/151    Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: L. Davies, K. Dawson, B. Kenney,  
J. Metters and J. Powell.

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

### **GP24/152    Declarations of Interest and Declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**

Councillor A. Best declared a personal interest in agenda item 11e (Minute  
Reference: GP24/161d).

Councillor J. Hood declared a personal interest in agenda item 11a (Minute  
Reference: GP24/161a).

### **GP24/153    Requests for Dispensations**

None

### **GP24/154    To receive the report of the County Councillors**

#### **County Councillor Jill Hood**

The Chairman invited Councillor Hood to address the Committee.

#### Tree Planting

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that she had persuaded Persimmon to  
plant the missing trees on land near to their development off the Eccleshall Road  
and to lay a gravel path where the natural path had been made by residents. At  
present there are steps with no disabled access.

Councillor Hood said she was in talks with the Highways Department about the  
Crossings and officers were looking at funding opportunities through a Section 106  
agreement.

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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.

**County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

**GP24/155    To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

Councillor Fordham advised the Committee that Stafford Borough Council had approved its budget for 2024-25. He said that it was a positive budget providing the opportunity for improved services for residents and investment in the regeneration of town centres.

Councillor Hood advised the Sub-Committee that she and the Leader of the Council had visited a Stafford Borough Council scheme that would house six rough sleepers/homeless persons, offering them safety, security and multi-agency services including alcohol and substance addiction. It was hoped the scheme would, in the longer term, support their access into work and permanent accommodation.

She said she was proud of the officers who were giving people the opportunity to get off the streets.

**GP24/156    Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**GP24/157    Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023 (Minute Numbers GP24/135 – GP24/150), be approved as a correct record.

**GP24/158    Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 16 January 2023 (Minute Numbers TTP24/026 – TTP24/036), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Numbers TTP24/031 and TTP24/032 be adopted.

The recommendation of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP24/033 was considered as part of Minute Number GP24/159 (agenda item 9).

- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 16 January 2024 (Minute Numbers ENV24/030 – ENV24/036), that the draft minutes be noted.

The recommendation of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number ENV24/035 was considered as part of Minute Number GP24/159 (agenda item 9).

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- c) Estates Sub-Committee held on 16 January 2024 (Minute Numbers EST24/023 – EST24/030), that the draft minutes be noted.

The recommendation of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number EST24/027 was considered as part of Minute Number GP24/159 (agenda item 9).

**GP24/159     General Purposes Committee – Budget 2024-25 to 2026-27**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk\* (which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting) examining the 2024-25 to 2026-27 budget requirements for the specific services managed directly by the General Purposes Committee, including those which had previously been the responsibility of the former Management Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommends for consideration later in the meeting alongside the proposals from Sub-Committees, the adoption of the standstill Committee budget for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27, as detailed in the Clerk's report, with the following amendments:

- a. The salaries budget should be increased by £900 in the current year and £3,600 in each subsequent year from 2024-25 to provide for the costs agreed in confidential minute GP24/150.
- b. A provision of £10,000 should be made in 2024-25 for improvements to the Market Square.
- c. The inflation provision should be reduced by £16,000 in the current year.

***At this point in the meeting the Chairman suggested entering a private session to consider the Confidential items on the agenda, before returning to open session for consideration of item 10 (Minute Number GP24/163) and other items listed, as the outcome of these confidential discussions may impact on the Council's budget decisions.***

**GP24/160     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 (Minutes GP24/161 and GP24/162).

**GP24/161     Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023, Minute Numbers GP24/135 and GP24/150 be approved.

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**GP24/162     Confidential Minutes and recommendations of the undermentioned Sub-Committee:**

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee Meeting held on 16 January 2024, Minute Numbers: TTP24/026 and TTP24/036.
  - i. The Committee noted the Confidential Sub-Committee minutes.
  - ii. The Committee considered the provision of Christmas Trees as set out in Confidential Minute TTP24/036.

Committee Members were referred to the Confidential report of the Town Clerk circulated to all Councillors with the agenda for the Sub-Committee meeting on 16 January 2024.

RESOLVED: That the proposal from the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contractor for the installation of Christmas trees for the 2024 and subsequent festive seasons be agreed.

***Upon completion of these Confidential items the Committee returned to open session and the press and public were invited to return.***

**GP24/163     Budget 2024-25 to 2026-27 for recommendation to the Council**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk\* (which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting) alongside the budget proposals from Sub-Committees and from this Committee.

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Council that:

- 1. The Standstill Budget included in the Clerk's report to this meeting should be adopted with the following amendments:
  - a. Environment:
    - i. A provision of £3,350 in 2024-25 for work at the Anglers' Car Park, plus £500 per annum subsequently for ongoing maintenance.
    - ii. The inclusion of £2,800 in 2024-25 for works on Scrape 2, with a provision of £500 per annum in subsequent years for the ongoing maintenance of Scrape 1 and Scrape 2.
    - iii. An increase in Allotment fees of 10% for 2024-25, which should produce additional income of £100 per annum.
  - b. Tourism and Town Promotion:
    - i. A one-off increase of £5,000 in the events budget for 2024-25 to provide for a late summer music event.
  - c. General Purposes:

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- i. The salaries budget should be increased by £900 in the current year and £3,600 in each subsequent year from 2024-25 to provide for the costs agreed in confidential minute GP24/150.
  - ii. A provision of £10,000 should be made in 2024-25 for improvements to the Market Square.
  - iii. The inflation provision should be reduced by £16,000 in the current year.
- 2. As a consequence of the above, the 2024-25 Council Tax for this Council's purposes should be £61.00 for a Band D property, an increase for the year of £2.85, with indicative Council Tax levels of £63.99 and £67.13 for the following two years. This would result in a precept on Stafford Borough Council for 2024-25 of £393,644. Local Council Tax Support Grant of £23,740 would be added to this.

#### **GP24/164     Grants to Local Organisations**

The Committee considered requests for grant aid from local organisations. Before consideration, the Town Clerk reminded the Committee that £1,500 remained within the Grants budget.

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

- a.    **Organisation: 1<sup>st</sup> Oulton Scout Group**  
**Amount Requested: £300**  
**Reason:** To purchase an outdoor cooking shelter, a stainless-steel table and a couple of electric cookers to enable cooking on camp.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £300 to 1<sup>st</sup> Oulton Scout Group.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that Alleyne's Academy did not meet the Council's approved grants criteria and was moved to the section below (item c).

- b.    **Organisation: Stone Lions Club**  
**Amount Requested: £500**  
**Reason:** Prostate screening

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

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.

- c.    **Organisation: Alleyne's Academy**  
**Amount Requested: £390**  
**Reason:** To purchase a gazebo for the girls' go-kart team.  
**Ineligible due to:**
  - i. Turnover is over £100,000

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- ii. Predominantly funded from taxation

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £390 to Alleyne's Academy.

d. **Organisation: Christ Church First School**

**Amount Requested:** £240

**Reason:** To purchase portable halogen hobs for an extra-curricular cookery club

**Ineligible due to:**

- i. Turnover is over £100,000
- ii. Predominantly funded from taxation

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £240 to Christ Church First School.

The following organisation did not meet the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated, but no proposer or seconder came forward to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant. The application was therefore not considered due to its ineligibility.

e. **Organisation: De Caversmill Theatre Company**

**Amount Requested:** £500

**Reason:** To support the costs involved in entering the local 'One Act Play Festival' which gives cast members the opportunity to experience Competition Acting.

**Ineligible due to:**

- i. Level of reserves
- ii. Not Stone based or predominantly benefiting Stone residents.

**GP24/165     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.

**GP24/166     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.

**GP24/167     Stone Heritage Centre - Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

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The Town Clerk advised the Committee that following approval of the Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant in December 2023 the award (totalling £40,000) had been paid into the Council's bank account giving the Council the means to fit out the Heritage Centre to a higher standard than the original budget would have provided.

There were a number of undertakings requiring that: the award is spent by the end of the year, at least 500 visitors attend the centre by 31 December 2024, a plaque is installed in recognition of the award and the budget originally earmarked for the project is used in addition to the grant.

RESOLVED: That the Council accepts the Rural England Prosperity Fund award (to be added to this year's budget with any unspent value rolled over to the new year) and authorises the Town Clerk to place orders/pay invoices in respect of the grant funded purchases for the Heritage Centre.

**GP24/168     Town Council Payments**

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

**GP24/169     Update from Working Groups:**

**Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group**

Councillor Kenney advised the Committee that the Group had met (on 5 February 2024) to discuss the fitting for the Heritage Centre. He said the meeting had given an exciting insight into the history and heritage held in Stone. He said the people supporting the work of the steering group were extremely knowledgeable and will add much value to the development of the Heritage Centre.

**Engagement with Young People**

Councillor Dawson was not available to provide a report.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stone Town Council**

Councillor Davies informed the Committee that the marking of the Town Council's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary would align nicely with developments at the Heritage Centre.

**GP24/170     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 soon.

**Stone ATC**

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that a welfare meeting of Stone ATC was taking place this evening.

**Age Concern Stone & District**

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

**Stafford & Stone Access Group**

Councillor Kelt informed the Committee that a recent meeting had taken place and was attended by County Highways officers. The next meeting will take place on 4 March 2024.

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**Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Townsend advised the Committee that the next meeting would be held on 22 February 2024.

**Stone Community Hub Liaison Group**

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

**SPCA Executive Committee**

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

**Stone Traders Group Directors' Meeting**

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that she had attended a very positive meeting where Mr Stant, the current Chairman, was to be put forward to stand again.

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that the group currently had 42 members with new members coming on board. The Traders Group had discussed extending the membership to businesses beyond the High Street but decided not to.

The Group had expressed its disappointment that the new no entry sign at the top of the High Street was not deterring traffic from entering. Councillor Hood said that a highways officer had made it very clear that the rules which restricted access included Saturdays and Sundays.

The Group had asked for the Town Council's diary of events which she anticipated will be available at the beginning of March 2024.

**CHAIRMAN**

### Introduction

1. This report considers the setting of the Town Council's Budget for 2024-25, with indicative figures for the following two years.

### Background

2. At a series of meetings during January and February 2024, the General Purposes Committee and its Sub-Committees considered their potential budgets for 2024-25 to 2026-27. As a result of this consideration, the General Purposes Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 recommended a budget for approval by the Council.
3. The budget proposed by the General Purposes Committee is set out at Appendix A. It can be summarised as follows:

| <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>       |
| 8,758          | Estates                                 | 65,790         | 46,400          | 16,800         | 16,800         | 16,800         |
| 25,816         | Environment                             | 30,715         | 29,090          | 30,150         | 25,000         | 25,000         |
| 38,148         | Tourism & Town Promotion                | 47,000         | 43,700          | 46,400         | 41,400         | 41,400         |
| 238,987        | General Purposes                        | 619,209        | 598,780         | 347,130        | 356,110        | 377,930        |
| 192,774        | Earmarked Reserves                      | -305,564       | -305,564        | -              | -              | -              |
| <b>504,483</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>                            | <b>457,150</b> | <b>412,406</b>  | <b>440,480</b> | <b>439,310</b> | <b>461,130</b> |
|                | Planned Contribution to (from) Balances |                |                 | -23,096        | 3,564          | 9,024          |
|                | Precept Required (incl LCTSG)           |                |                 | <b>417,384</b> | <b>442,874</b> | <b>470,154</b> |
|                | Band D Council Tax Equivalent           |                |                 | 61.00          | 63.99          | 67.13          |

4. The Council is not required to accept the above budget, and is free to set the Council Tax at whatever level it thinks appropriate. The rest of this report does, however, assume the acceptance of the proposed budget, and a number of the comments made below may need to be reconsidered if the budget changes.

## **Robustness of Budget**

5. In setting its budget and precept, the Council must determine:
  - The estimated expenditure for the year.
  - Such allowances as it considers appropriate for contingencies.
  - Such financial reserves as the Council considers appropriate to raise or utilise in the year.
  - Such reserves as are sufficient to meet any revenue account deficit from any earlier year.
6. These issues have been considered as part of the budget setting process so far, and have resulted in the proposed budget under consideration today.
7. The Clerk's role, as Responsible Financial Officer, is to advise members on the robustness of their plans, and in particular the adequacy of their reserves (balances) to meet possible future issues.
8. Excluding the reserves earmarked for the Neighbourhood Plan and rollovers, the recommended budget projects that the Council will be holding a reserve of £185,673 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. As can be seen from the table in paragraph 3 above, the three-year budget proposed by the General Purposes Committee would result in movements in these balances as follows:

|               | <b>Budgeted<br/>Contribution to<br/>(from) Balances<br/>£</b> | <b>Estimated<br/>General Fund<br/>Balance<br/>£</b> | <b>Number of<br/>Months Net<br/>Expenditure</b> |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| 31 March 2023 | -   | 185,673   | -   |
| 31 March 2024 | 23,096  | 162,577   | 4.3   |
| 31 March 2025 | -3,564  | 166,141   | 4.4   |
| 31 March 2026 | -9,024  | 175,165   | 4.5   |

9. I would normally recommend that a Council the size of Stone Town Council should hold a general reserve equivalent to around six months' net expenditure, unless there is a good, financially sound reason not to do so. Where balances are lower than this amount, there should be a plan to return them to this level, and an understanding by Councillors of the increased financial risk to the Council and the potential need for mitigations until the reserves are reinstated.
10. Due to the extreme challenges posed to last year's budget by inflation, however, I recommended to the General Purposes Committee at that time that the level of reserves held should be reduced to the equivalent of no less than three months net expenditure in the short to medium term.
11. The alternatives to the proposed approach would have been to reduce the budget, potentially endangering the delivery of the Heritage Centre and other Council services,

setting the precept/Council Tax at a significantly higher level, or taking out a loan for the capital project.

12. This budget has seen the start of the replenishment of general reserves from that “three-month” level and back towards the recommended “six-month” level. It is estimated that around 4.5 months expenditure will be held in reserve for the duration of this three year budget period.
13. In conclusion, the General Purposes Committee’s recommended use of reserves in these circumstances represents, in my view, a financially responsible approach to setting the Council’s budget. On this basis, I am able to advise the Council that the proposed level of reserves should be adequate to ensure that the Council’s current plans can be reasonably sustained into the future. This will, however, need to be monitored throughout the year and examined very closely when the 2025-26 budget is considered next January/February.

#### **Council Tax Leaflet**

14. The Council also needs to determine the wording to be used on the Council Tax leaflet.
15. The wording for 2023-24 was:

*“Stone Town Council provides services for the people and town of Stone.*

*These services include the provision of community facilities, such as the Frank Jordan and Stone Station community centres, allotment sites at Newcastle Road and Mount Road, and the Crown Meadow Nature Reserve and amphitheatre.*

*The 2023-24 budget, despite having to deal with excessive levels of inflation, especially in respect of energy costs, includes additional funding to provide further improvements at Crown Meadow and support for the King’s Coronation event. This is in addition to the development and operation of a new Heritage Centre within the exciting redevelopment at Crown Wharf.*

*Investing in and working to promote a vibrant town and encourage visitors is a key Town Council priority. In order to support this, the Council organises regular events such as the Town Market and monthly Craft Market together with town centre events such as the Music Festival, Stone by the Sea, the Classic Car event and the St Georges Day celebration. Christmas lights are provided in the High Street and at Walton, with the Council’s annual switch-on event being one of highlights of the town year. The High Street environment is enhanced by the Council’s provision of hanging baskets and bunting along the High Street, and newly refurbished noticeboards and fingerposts throughout the town.*

*The Council provides bus shelters, benches, litter bins and dog bins throughout the area, and takes responsibility for the upkeep of many local amenities and planted areas. It also provides grants and other support to help charitable and community organisations such as the Stone Community Hub, supports various festivals, and Council staff supply regular support and advice to local residents.*

*By considering the impact of every planning application, the Council seeks to develop and conserve the town, and the approval of its Neighbourhood Plan in May 2021 will help the Council to shape and protect the future of Stone for years to come.*

*At its monthly meetings the Council welcomes questions from the public and sets aside time to listen and respond. Assistance with public questions will gladly be given by the Council's staff."*

16. Councillors are asked to consider the wording for the 2024-25 leaflet.

#### **Recommendations**

17. That the Council determines its budget, precept and Council Tax for 2024-25, indicative budgets for 2025-26 and 2026-27, and the wording of the Council Tax leaflet.

# Stone Town Council

## Proposed Budget 2024-25 to 2026-27

| Actual<br>2022-23 |   | Budget<br>2023-24 | Forecast<br>2023-24 | Budget<br>2024-25 | Budget<br>2025-26 | Budget<br>2026-27 |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| £                 |   | £                 | £                   | £                 | £                 | £                 |
| -5,820            | Frank Jordan Centre                     | 3,350             | -11,600             | -13,600           | -13,600           | -13,600           |
| 9,498             | Stone Station                           | 44,970            | 39,300              | 12,900            | 12,900            | 12,900            |
| -                 | Stone Heritage Centre (Running)         | 25,000            | -                   | 45,000            | 45,000            | 45,000            |
| -4,144            | Town Market                             | -6,630            | -5,300              | -6,100            | -6,100            | -6,100            |
| 2,766             | Bus Shelters & Street Furniture         | 3,960             | 6,100               | 5,000             | 5,000             | 5,000             |
| 962               | Street Lighting                         | 960               | 1,000               | 1,000             | 1,000             | 1,000             |
| 763               | Dog & Litter Bins                       | 760               | 840                 | 900               | 900               | 900               |
| -                 | Joules Clock                            | -                 | -                   | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| 590               | Town Electricity Supply                 | 1,790             | 760                 | 600               | 600               | 600               |
| -                 | Building Maintenance                    | 10,000            | 10,000              | 10,000            | 10,000            | 10,000            |
| 21,473            | Grounds Maintenance                     | 27,210            | 23,100              | 22,000            | 22,000            | 22,000            |
| 5,521             | Crown Meadow Improvements               | 2,085             | 4,900               | 8,150             | 3,000             | 3,000             |
| -1,178            | Allotments                              | 230               | -100                | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| -                 | Environmental Initiatives               | 1,190             | 1,190               | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| 17,785            | Christmas Lights                        | 26,880            | 24,500              | 23,000            | 23,000            | 23,000            |
| 24,506            | Tourism & Town Promotion                | 26,750            | 24,500              | 29,500            | 24,500            | 24,500            |
| 4,655             | Grants                                  | 4,000             | 4,000               | 4,000             | 4,000             | 4,000             |
| 169,183           | Salaries & Employment Costs             | 208,200           | 206,800             | 226,800           | 225,100           | 225,100           |
| 5,496             | Accommodation                           | 6,770             | 7,770               | 6,770             | 6,770             | 6,770             |
| 6,620             | Insurances                              | 7,000             | 6,700               | 6,700             | 6,700             | 6,700             |
| 25,999            | Administration                          | 40,650            | 40,650              | 32,150            | 32,150            | 32,150            |
| 1,440             | Audit & Legal Fees                      | 1,550             | 1,400               | 1,500             | 1,500             | 1,500             |
| -                 | Town Council Elections                  | 30,000            | 27,790              | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| 2,682             | Allowances - Mayor & Deputy Mayor       | 3,190             | 3,400               | 3,400             | 3,400             | 3,400             |
| 3,359             | Regalia & Presentations                 | 230               | 1,000               | 200               | 200               | 200               |
| 1,613             | Civic Dinner & Hospitality              | 2,000             | 2,500               | 2,500             | 2,500             | 2,500             |
| 2,708             | Remembrance Sunday & War Memorials      | 1,800             | 2,000               | 2,000             | 2,000             | 2,000             |
| 1,677             | Miscellaneous                           | 2,000             | 1,000               | 1,000             | 1,000             | 1,000             |
| -2,515            | Interest                                | -1,500            | -4,900              | -3,300            | -3,300            | -3,300            |
| -                 | Neighbourhood Plan                      | -                 | -                   | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| 4,611             | Stone Heritage Centre (Setup)           | 273,689           | 300,000             | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| -                 | Market Square Improvements              | -                 | -                   | 10,000            | -                 | -                 |
| -                 | General Contingency                     | -                 | -                   | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| -                 | Inflation Contingency                   | 26,130            | 10,130              | 19,870            | 40,550            | 62,370            |
| 11,461            | Concurrent Functions Allowance          | -11,500           | -11,460             | -11,460           | -11,460           | -11,460           |
| 192,774           | Rollover Reserve                        | -305,564          | -305,564            | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| -                 | Neighbourhood Plan Reserve              | -                 | -                   | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| <b>504,483</b>    |   | <b>457,150</b>    | <b>412,406</b>      | <b>440,480</b>    | <b>439,310</b>    | <b>461,130</b>    |
|                   | Planned Contribution to (from) Balances |                   |                     | -23,096           | 3,564             | 9,024             |
|                   | Precept Required (incl LCTSG)           |                   |                     | <b>417,384</b>    | <b>442,874</b>    | <b>470,154</b>    |
|                   | Band D Council Tax Equivalent           |                   |                     | <b>61.00</b>      | <b>63.99</b>      | <b>67.13</b>      |

## **Local Government Transparency Code 2015**

### **Procurement Information**

**1. Invitations to Tender for Contracts Exceeding £5,000**

None

**2. Contracted Agreements Exceeding £5,000**

None

### **Payment Information**

The attached appendix sets out all Council payments for the period over £250, excluding salary and related payments, payments from the Mayor's Charity and transfers between the Council's bank accounts.

## **Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

Decisions that would otherwise have been taken by the Town Council or one of its Committees that have been delegated to an officer:

1. Under a specific express authorisation; or
2. Under a general authorisation to officers to take such decisions and, the effect of the decision is to:
  - a. grant a permission or licence;
  - b. affect the rights of an individual; or
  - c. award a contract or incur expenditure which, in either case, materially affects the Town Council's financial position.

None

Date: 25/01/2024  
Time: 14:00:10

## Stone Town Council - Payments over £250

Page: 1

The table below lists payments over £250 made by the Council in the period identified.

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 : 01/10/2023

Payment Date To : 31/12/2023

| <u>Payment Date</u> | <u>Reference</u> | <u>Supplier</u>               | <u>Description</u>                                   | <u>Amount (£)</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| 03/10/2023          |                  | Stafford Borough Council      | SBC Rates FJC Oct 2023                               | 279.00            |
| 05/10/2023          | 23010            | Simon Meddings Associates Ltd | HC Consultation Meetings x 4 July to Sep 2023        | 795.00            |
| 05/10/2023          | 1000066066       | National Office Furniture     | Stonefield Room - boardroom table and 8 cantilever   | 1,488.00          |
| 06/10/2023          | 41UG031-0007     | Geosphere TA Parish Online    | Parish Online Digital Mapping subscription 23/24     | 600.00            |
| 06/10/2023          | 29095            | G Evans Services Ltd          | Refurb Works - Interim Payment No.4                  | 24,557.18         |
| 09/10/2023          | 1546946          | SUN LEISURE                   | 12 x Protex 50 Wheeled Bags                          | 381.93            |
| 09/10/2023          | 713392023411106  | Pozitive Energy               | STN Elec Usage July 2023                             | 379.27            |
| 09/10/2023          | 713392023411114  | Pozitive Energy               | STN Elec Usage Aug 2023                              | 375.07            |
| 16/10/2023          | 042337           | MEB Total Ltd                 | Purchase and install new radiator in Stonefield Room | 674.61            |
| 17/10/2023          | 186795           | Prism Solutions               | Prism - server migration and configuration           | 1,197.41          |
| 20/10/2023          | STO00083234      | West Midlands Employers       | WMJobs Ad Deputy Town Clerk                          | 340.00            |
| 25/10/2023          | 185622           | Prism Solutions               | Prism IT Managed Service Nov 2023                    | 988.09            |
| 26/10/2023          | INV0853          | The Mill at Stone             | Meals at Trafalgar Event 28/10/23                    | 1,486.46          |
| 27/10/2023          | 5133             | Christmas Plus                | Installation of lamps and clusterline in Adies Alley | 1,580.00          |
| 30/10/2023          | 713392023428763  | Pozitive Energy               | STN Elec Usage Sep 2023                              | 380.54            |
| 31/10/2023          | SIA379926        | Reach Publishing              | Fish4Jobs Ad Stoke & West 22/10/23                   | 250.00            |
| 31/10/2023          | INV17290009      | Sage UK Ltd                   | Sage Payroll Subscription 2023/24                    | 396.00            |
| 02/11/2023          | SIA383773        | Reach Publishing              | Facebook Ad 24-29/10/23                              | 400.00            |



Date: 25/01/2024

Time: 14:00:10

## Stone Town Council - Payments over £250

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| <u>Payment Date</u> | <u>Reference</u> | <u>Supplier</u>                 | <u>Description</u>                                    | <u>Amount (£)</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 02/11/2023          | 713412023430695  | Pozitive Energy                 | Gas Usage STN Sep 2023 Estimated Bill                 | 377.80            |
| 03/11/2023          | 2                | MJ Plant                        | Grounds Maint amphi, CM, MR, Abbey St, old bridge     | 1,682.00          |
| 03/11/2023          | 3                | MJ Plant                        | Marquee set up Sep 2023                               | 910.00            |
| 03/11/2023          | 4                | MJ Plant                        | Marquee set up - October 2023                         | 775.00            |
| 03/11/2023          | 1                | MJ Plant                        | Grounds Maint amphi, CM, MR, Abbey St, old bridge     | 1,682.00          |
| 03/11/2023          |                  | Stafford Borough Council        | SBC Rates FJC Nov 2023                                | 279.00            |
| 07/11/2023          | INV-0810         | Hamp Flooring Ltd               | Install carpet tiles in Stonefield Room               | 840.00            |
| 10/11/2023          | 7070293433       | Stafford Borough Council        | Walton South Ward - Contested Election 2023           | 7,710.38          |
| 10/11/2023          | 7070293430       | Stafford Borough Council        | St Michael's Ward - Contested Election 2023           | 6,531.53          |
| 10/11/2023          | 7070293432       | Stafford Borough Council        | Walton North Ward - Contested Election 2023           | 4,700.07          |
| 10/11/2023          | 7070293431       | Stafford Borough Council        | Stonefield & Christchurch Ward - Contested Election   | 8,844.19          |
| 10/11/2023          | 24683            | Stone Gazette Ltd               | Half Page Ad - Nov/ Dec Gazette                       | 400.00            |
| 13/11/2023          | INV-1000243341   | Christmas Tree World            | Christmas Tree Lights x 40 sets                       | 539.70            |
| 14/11/2023          | 4304             | Net and Cover Services          | Replace velcro straps on sides of marquees            | 836.00            |
| 15/11/2023          | MEM246349-1      | Society of Local Council Clerks | SLCC Membership 2024 Paid 15/11/23                    | 288.00            |
| 15/11/2023          | 042774           | MEB Total Ltd                   | New light fittings Walton Suite & Stonefield Room     | 1,265.20          |
| 16/11/2023          | 13112023         | Stone in Bloom                  | 100 x Christmas Trees and use of lights               | 2,000.00          |
| 18/11/2023          | INV-1543         | IG Stage Hire                   | 50% Trailer Stage and face lights - Christmas Lights  | 375.00            |
| 20/11/2023          | STO00084900      | West Midlands Employers         | WMJobs Ad Deputy Town Clerk                           | 540.00            |
| 22/11/2023          | 2311015          | Crown Highways                  | Installation of poles at Walton shops for Xmas lights | 749.75            |
| 23/11/2023          | 713392023443817  | Pozitive Energy                 | Elec Usage STN - Oct 2023                             | 408.48            |
| 23/11/2023          | 713402023443808  | Pozitive Energy                 | Gas Usage FJC - Oct 2023                              | 308.16            |
| 23/11/2023          | 713382023443811  | Pozitive Energy                 | Elec Usage FJC - Oct 2023                             | 296.32            |
| 24/11/2023          | 24112023         | Kath Stanway                    | Compere plus performance by Vinyl Overdrive           | 450.00            |
| 27/11/2023          | 187412           | Prism Solutions                 | Prism IT Managed Service Dec 2023                     | 993.55            |

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Stone Town Council - Payments over £250

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| <u>Payment Date</u> | <u>Reference</u> | <u>Supplier</u>                        | <u>Description</u>                                   | <u>Amount (£)</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| 29/11/2023          | 48319            | Panda Press (Stone) Ltd                | Produce and install signage for Rebekah - Welcome to | 326.00            |
| 29/11/2023          | INV000190        | Hearts Cross Medical                   | Attendance at Christmas Lights 2023                  | 350.00            |
| 30/11/2023          | INV-0943         | Current Electrical & Property Services | Hire and installation of power supply, lighting and  | 993.60            |
| 30/11/2023          | 534              | Hazzard Promotions                     | Hazzard Promotions                                   | 350.00            |
| 01/12/2023          |                  | Stafford Borough Council               | SBC Rates FJC Dec 2023                               | 279.00            |
| 02/12/2023          | 201615202339817  | Pozitive Energy                        | Gas Usage 18/08/2023-31/08/2023                      | 379.45            |
| 02/12/2023          | 201615202341610  | Pozitive Energy                        | Gas Usage HC 01/09/2023-30/09/2023                   | 812.91            |
| 04/12/2023          | 201615202339817  | Pozitive Energy                        | Gas Usage 18/08/2023-31/08/2023                      | 379.45            |
| 04/12/2023          | 201615202345520  | Pozitive Energy                        | Gas Usage 01/11/2023-30/11/2023                      | 355.12            |
| 11/12/2023          | 5229             | Christmas Plus                         | Installation of festive display 2023 70%             | 5,250.00          |
| 13/12/2023          | 713382023465912  | Pozitive Energy                        | FJC Elec Usage Nov 2023                              | 298.42            |
| 13/12/2023          | 7                | MJ Plant                               | Hedge Cutting around Canoe Club                      | 320.00            |
| 13/12/2023          | 6                | MJ Plant                               | FJC Weed control x 8 visits plus jobs                | 318.00            |
| 13/12/2023          | 10               | MJ Plant                               | Annual Grounds Maint for Town Borders and Walton     | 4,375.00          |
| 13/12/2023          | 11               | MJ Plant                               | Marquee set up - November 2023                       | 992.50            |
| 13/12/2023          | 5                | MJ Plant                               | Weed control CM, Amphi and surrounding areas         | 328.00            |
| 15/12/2023          | SIA397233        | Reach Publishing                       | Fish4Jobs Ad Stoke & West 21/11/23                   | 275.00            |
| 16/12/2023          | 713412023459228  | Pozitive Energy                        | Gas Usage 01/11/2023-30/11/2023                      | 377.80            |
| 16/12/2023          | 713402023459228  | Pozitive Energy                        | Gas Usage 01/11/2023-30/11/2023                      | 709.49            |
| 16/12/2023          | 713392023459252  | Pozitive Energy                        | Electricity Usage 01/11/2023-30/11/2023              | 406.38            |
| 18/12/2023          | 29112023         | Home & Colour                          | FJC Blinds fitted in the Stonefield Room             | 331.00            |
| 20/12/2023          | 7070293819       | Stafford Borough Council               | Install / remove bollards Oct to Dec 2023            | 457.47            |
| 22/12/2023          | 5813476/CE/44983 | The Arch Rent Collectors               | Quarterly Stn Rent 25/12/2023-24/03/2024             | 1,184.25          |
| 27/12/2023          | 189161           | Prism Solutions                        | Prism IT Managed Service Jan 2024                    | 984.40            |
|                     |                  |  |  | <u>101,163.93</u> |

### **Introduction**

1. This report considers the waiver of the six-month Councillor attendance rule in order to prevent the disqualification of a Councillor.

### **Background**

2. Section 85 of the local Government Act 1972 automatically disqualifies a Councillor from office if they fail to attend any meeting of the authority within a consecutive 6-month period, unless the Council approves the reason for non-attendance.
3. Due to a temporary work secondment outside of the area, Councillor Jonathan Powell will be unable to attend any Council/Committee/Sub-Committee meetings between January and July 2024 and he has requested that the “six-month rule” be waived for the period of his absence.
4. The last meeting attended by Councillor Powell was the previous Council meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023. If the Council does not approve Councillor Powell’s absence as an acceptable reason for not attending meetings, then his term of office would cease automatically on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

### **Proposal**

5. Current rules do not allow for Councillors to attend meetings remotely. Councillor Powell’s work commitments will therefore prevent him from being part of any Council related meeting for the period between January and June 2024.
6. Should a waiver not be granted, a casual vacancy would need to be declared after the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024, which may lead to the need for a by-election. A by-election would be likely to cost the Council around £9,000 based on previous experience.
7. It is therefore proposed that the requirements of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 be waived in respect of Councillor Jonathan Powell, for the period January to June 2024. This would, in effect, extend the duration of the Section 85 requirements until 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

## **Recommendations**

8. It is recommended that the Council:
  - a. Agree to waiving the requirements of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of Councillor Jonathan Powell, for the requested period of January to June 2024.
  - b. Note that this would have the effect of changing Councillor Powell's effective date for disqualification for non-attendance at meetings from 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**STONE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**13 February 2024**  
**CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Town Mayor**

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Saturday 17 February 2024 | Stone Lions Club 45 <sup>th</sup> Charter Anniversary Dinner |
| Sunday 18 February 2024   | Staffordshire Moorlands Chairman's Charity Curry Night       |
| Tuesday 20 February 2024  | Aston & Little Stoke Scouts Visit to Council Chamber         |
| Friday 1 March 2024       | Borough Mayor's Charity Abba Tribute Evening                 |

**Deputy Mayor**

No Civic Announcements

**TOWN MAYOR**

## **TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT – 6 Feb 24**

### **Friday 1 Dec 23**

A popular annual Christmas event in the Town is the daily opening during the season of Advent of decorated shop windows in the manner of an Advent calendar. The windows were each designed and created by many different organisations such as schools and charities under the coordination of Christ Church. The Mayor was delighted to support not only the opening of the first window at Vantage Point Creative but also many of the subsequent openings.

### **Sunday 10 Dec 23**

A large congregation gathered in St Michael's and St Wulfad's Church for the annual Civic Carol service with contributions from many organisations within the town.

### **Monday 11 Dec 23**

The Mayor and Mayoress were delighted to host the Christmas Meeting of the Royal Air Forces Association, Stone & District Branch, in the Council Chamber. Representatives from the operational RAF of today along with local members of the University of Birmingham Air Squadron were very interested to learn some of the history of the Town.

### **Thursday 14 Dec 23**

The Mayor and Mayoress had greatly enjoyed attending the Stone Alzheimers Drop-in's 17th anniversary meeting in October and now were delighted to join in their Christmas Party.

In the evening, the Mayor managed to combine both his civic role and his role as a choir member at the Stone Choral Society Christmas Concert.

### **Saturday 16 Dec 23**

One of the enjoyable features of Christmas in Stone is the Church-led carol singing in the Market Square at which the Mayor lent his support both in his presence and with his voice.

### **Sunday 17 Dec 23**

The Mayor travelled to St Mary's Church in Stafford to support the large-scale Stafford Borough Civic Carol Service.

### **Monday 18 Dec 23**

It is always interesting to attend civic events in other authorities' areas and the Mayor thoroughly enjoyed attending Cannock Chase Council's Civic Carol Service at Hednesford and the subsequent refreshments.

### **Friday 21 Dec 23**

Stone has had a formal friendship twinning with Bagnacavallo in Italy for some 20 years and it has been unfortunate the events over recent years, not least the Covid pandemic, have caused the relationship to become inactive. Therefore, the Mayor and Mayoress were

pleased to accept an invitation from Bagnacavallo to participate in an on-line Christmas exchange of greetings between all the towns that are twinned with Bagnacavallo. Those towns were Neresheim in Germany, Aix-en-Othe in France and Strzyzow in Poland. The Mayor and Mayoress had had the pleasure of visiting all those towns in the past and it was encouraging to see that all were keen to keep these friendships alive.

### **Monday 25 Dec 23**

For the Mayor and Mayoress the highlight of Christmas Day was joining the residents and staff of St Mary's Nursing Home for a pre-lunch drink and a chance to wish everyone a very merry Christmas. It was a particular pleasure to spend some time with the Sisters who had remained in the Town after the Priory had closed earlier in the year.

### **Friday 29 Dec 23**

In honour of Stone's sister city, Carthage, Texas, and of the anniversary of Texas joining the Union in 1845, the Mayor and Mayoress were present for the raising of the Lone Star State flag in the High Street. It was also the eightieth anniversary of the origination of the event when the American flyer, John Howland, and his crew, who were at the US Army Air Corps depot at Yarnfield awaiting their operational assignment, come down to the Town and had received a very warm welcome and hospitality during those dark days of World War 2.

### **Monday 1 Jan 24**

New Year's Day saw the Stafford and Stone Canoe Club's traditional canoe race from Darlaston to the Canoe Club down the River Trent. The Mayor was delighted to act as the starter and the event was an opportunity to restate the links between the Council and the Club.

### **Saturday 20 Jan 24**

The first of the Mayor and Mayoress's charity events of the new year was the 'Pig Race' held at Stone Golf Club. The event was very well supported, particularly by local civic dignitaries, and a great time was had by all. The winners were particularly pleased by their prizes which included individual ceramic piggy banks produced by the Mayoress.

### **Sunday 21 Jan 24**

Over the centuries the churches in the Town have played a major role in the community, extending to the parishes around the Town. It was, therefore, very appropriate for the Mayor and Mayoress to accept the invitation to the induction of Rev Paul Kingman, Vicar of Christ Church, as the Rural Dean of Stone. The Bishop of Stafford made a particular point of welcoming the support of the Town Council.

### **DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT – 6 Feb 24**

No report on this occasion.