

# Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

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

**PRESENT:** Councillor J. Hood in the Chair and  
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, B. Kenney, R. Kenney and C. Thornicroft

Co-opted Member: J. Cook

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

By Chairman's invitation: No Councillors

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

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**TTP24/026 Apologies**

Councillors: K. Dawson, P. Leason, A. Mottershead and J. Powell

**TTP24/027 Declarations of Interest, Declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and Requests for Dispensations**

None

**TTP24/028 Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**TTP24/029 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on 17 October 2023 (Minute Numbers TTP24/017– TTP24/025), were approved as a correct record.

**TTP24/030 Calendar of Events**

The Committee considered the Town Council's Calendar of Events for 2024-25 and gave updates on events that had taken place (in 2023):

**2023 – Events that have taken place**

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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.

- Remembrance Commemorations (Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 November 2023)  
The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that Remembrance Sunday was an occasion that brought much pride to the residents of Stone and gratitude to the servicemen and women, and their relatives.
- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 23 November 2023)  
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that a lot of work had gone into the preparations for the Christmas Lights Switch-On which had produced a successful occasion once again. She said that a lot of positive feedback had been received about the Christmas lights and the Walton lights were stunning.

The Chairman thanked the contractors for coming to Stone during their busiest period to deal with a few Christmas lighting issues. As some of these were a repeat faults (having occurred in previous years), she suggested the contractors be asked to install the lights at least three weeks before the Switch On event in 2024.

- Texas Flag Raising (Friday 29 December 2023)  
Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that the event was enthusiastically supported, although not in large number.

#### **2024 – Upcoming/To be agreed**

- Texas Flag Raising, marking of Texas State's independence from Mexico (Saturday 2 March 2024)
- The Town Council's 50th Anniversary (Monday 1 April 2024)  
Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that he didn't think a standalone 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stone Town Council event was necessary and that the occasion could be marked with a theme at the Heritage Centre and incorporated into the Heritage Centre's launch.
- St George's Day Re-enactment (Saturday 20 April 2024)  
The St George's Day Re-enactment team had earmarked the date in their diaries to deliver their jousting performance in Stone.
- Floating Market (provisionally 25, 26, 27 May 2024)  
The Chairman said the Floating Market was a good event that brought people into town and didn't cost the Town Council anything.
- 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings (Thursday 6 June 2024)  
Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that a commemorative service was an appropriate way to mark the occasion and preparations were commencing.
- Puppet Tree Jamboree (July 2024)  
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Puppet Tree Jamboree organiser would like to run the event on the 29 June 2024.

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- Music Festival (August 2024)  
The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Traders had suggested holding a music festival in August but had since agreed to swap the date to May to allow the Town Council to arrange an event in August. 31<sup>st</sup> August was agreed as a suitable date.

The Sub-Committee suggested adopting the same format as the Coronation event in 2023, and that the festival could hopefully incorporate the opportunity to celebrate Olympic successes of local athletes.

- Florence Brass Band Concert & Burma Star Commemoration (August 2024)  
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the occasion was the Town Council's celebration, and a suitable programme would be produced.
- Classic Car Event (September 2024)  
It is hoped to be able to hold a Classic Car event in September 2024.
- Remembrance Commemorations (10 and 11 November 2024)  
The Sub-Committee suggested following the same format in 2024 and not going back to Market Square after the Church Service, which streamlined the programme.

The Chairman said she was saddened to see people waiting outside the Frank Jordan Centre for their children when they could have been invited inside. She asked that checks be made at the next event to see if anyone is waiting and invite them in.

The Chairman said that some people who would normally attend the occasion were absent, and that the invitation list should be checked for completeness.

- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 21 November 2024)  
The proposed date for the event was accepted.
- Texas Flag Raising, marking the anniversary of Texas joining the Union on 29 December 1845 (Sunday 29 December 2024)
- Consideration of an alternative free event to Stone by the Sea  
The Chairman invited Sub-Committee members to put forward ideas for an alternative event for young children.
- Any other suggested new events for 2024 and 2025  
The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that he had been contacted by someone who wanted to organise a Bike Race event in the High Street and a meeting to discuss its potential was planned.

Councillor Fordham suggested the new Westbridge Park and Skate Park might serve as an ideal venue for hosting a Stone Town Council skating/skateboard competition or a team competition.

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The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that the Borough Council Chief Executive had recommended an expert be asked to guide local children on how to use the skatepark alongside other users – involving moving in the same direction and giving way appropriately etc.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that she and the Town Clerk had met with two residents who were keen to organise a regular antiques market on Sundays in the High Street. The residents said they would give the points of discussion consideration with a view to coming back with a firm proposal.

#### **TTP24/031 Council Facebook**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk\* on the setting up of a Town Council Facebook Page which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The Chairman invited Lindsay Fleetwood, the Town Council's Marketing and Events Organiser, to address the Sub-Committee.

Lindsay delivered a Power Point presentation, exploring a number of points and questions about setting up a Facebook Page including: What is a Facebook Page?, Why should Stone Town Council have a Facebook Page?, the purpose, scope and aims of a Town Council Facebook Page, effective control of the Facebook Page, dealing with comments, how the Facebook Page will be run, planning prior to the launch, the look and feel of the page, building up a follower base and ensuring the page is effective.

The slides in her presentation were made available in hard copy and distributed at the meeting.

Lindsay and the Town Clerk noted the Sub-Committee's observations and answered questions about managing comments, scheduling, cost and impact on officer time (given Facebook's snowball tendencies).

The Sub-Committee discussed the management of abusive comments and agreed that a 'no response' policy was best.

Lindsay projected a mock-up of what the Town Council's Facebook page would look like to include sections about the Council and its services, its assets (such as the Heritage Centre and Crown Meadow), Town Council meeting information and events to include a mixture of pre-event publicity and after event feedback with photographs.

To attract followers, Lindsay proposed raising awareness of the page and proactively driving traffic towards it through the establishment of links with other Facebook pages, asking local community groups, schools etc. to post about the Town Council going live, asking that posts are shared, liked, and to put out a press release.

Lindsay will review the page at key intervals to assess how effective it is in respect of follower numbers, engagement, people sharing posts, liking posts and any feedback received from Councillors and members of the public.

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Jon Cook informed the Sub-Committee that a Town Council Facebook presence was a good idea but was not without its pitfalls. He suggested taking an opportunity to learn from other councils' experiences of its use. He asked the Council to give the press an opportunity to report on Council press releases prior to their inclusion within the Facebook site.

The Chairman thanked Lindsay for her work in producing an informative presentation.

RECOMMENDED: That the proposals in the Town Clerk's report are supported and the General Purposes Committee agree to the establishment of a Facebook site along the lines of the proposal outlined.

**TTP24/032 Stone Traders' Group**

The Sub-Committee considered a proposed High Street Events Schedule for 2024, for Stone Traders Group & Stone Food & Drink Festival.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the events schedule (enclosed with the agenda for the meeting) was the original version, with a Stone Traders Music Festival listed in August. It had since been agreed that this should be changed to the late May bank holiday to allow the Council to hold its own music event in August.

This would result in the Traders' music festival being on the same weekend as the floating market, but this wasn't seen as an issue by the Traders' Group and may be complimentary.

The Sub-Committee raised the point that some scheduled events were cancelled last year which didn't give a positive impression of the town and gave cause for concern when people didn't know who the organiser was.

The Sub-Committee expressed the firm view that publicity should clearly state the organiser of an event.

RECOMMENDED: That the dates circulated for Stone Traders Group are supported by the Town Council, subject to the agreed change of the Music Festival from August to the late May bank holiday.

**TTP24/033 Budget 2024-25 – 2026-27**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk\* (issued with the agenda for the meeting) which considered the level of budget that the Sub-Committee may wish to recommend to the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 6 February 2024 for the services under its control.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the standstill budget and the amounts included for each service. It also considered potential costs and savings when setting the budget for 2024-25 and future years.

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The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that there was an item in the confidential section of the agenda that, depending on the decision made, may have an impact on the budget. Any recommendation from this item would be reported to the General Purposes Committee separately, and would be in addition to the recommendations below.

He also advised the Sub-Committee that if the music event was significant in size there wouldn't be enough money in the budget to cover the costs.

The Sub-Committee suggested that an additional £5,000 be added to the Town Promotion budget in case it was needed for the music event.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget figures included in the Clerks report are accepted by the General Purposes Committee with the additional provision of £5,000 in 2024-25 for the cost of a music event.

**TTP24/034 Reports from Working Groups**

No reports were presented.

**TTP24/035 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.

**TTP24/036 Christmas Lights and Christmas Trees**

The Sub-Committee considered Christmas lights and Christmas tree provision for the 2024 festive season.

RESOLVED: That the outcome of a discussion with the grounds maintenance contractor is reported to the General Purposes Committee on 6 February 2024, to provide additional information for the Committee to determine the provision and budget for 2024.

**Chairman**

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