

# Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 17 September 2024

**PRESENT:** Councillor T. Kelt in the Chair and  
Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, P. Leason and C. Thornicroft

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

By Chairman's Invitation:

**ABSENT:** Councillors: B. Kenney, R. Kenney, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell and  
R. Townsend

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**ENV25/011 Apologies**

Councillors: B. Kenney, R. Kenney, J. Metters and R. Townsend

**ENV25/012 Declarations of Interest**

None

**ENV25/013 Request for Dispensations**

None

**ENV25/014 Representations from Members of the Public**

None

**ENV25/015 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 16 July 2024 (Minute Numbers ENV25/001 – ENV25/010), were approved as a correct record.

**ENV25/016 Environmental Sub-Committee Works Update**

The Chairman drew the Sub-Committee's attention to the Grounds Maintenance Works Update document which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

He referenced the most recent comments on the Update which highlighted that progress was being made in completing the outstanding works, although at a slower pace than was hoped.

The proposal for an alternative project to replace the cancelled 'Crown Meadow hedgerow' works will be put forward to the next meeting.

**ENV25/017 Crown Meadow Update**

- i) The Chairman referred the Sub-Committee to the report of the Biodiversity & Ecology Officer at Stafford Borough Council regarding Crown Meadow and other surrounding Meadows. A copy of the report (entitled: Stone Meadows Local Nature Reserves and the River Trent Floodplain) had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The report identified four areas where nature recovery work was on-going and these included Goodall Meadow, Southern Meadow, land south of Westbridge Park and Crown Meadow. All sites except Crown Meadow are managed by Stafford Borough Council with the support of Stone Town.

The report ends with a conclusion and next steps identifying the importance of sharing information on the nature recovery work and raising its profile with Town Councillors.

The Chairman invited comments from the Sub-Committee and the suggestion was made that funding opportunities be explored for Crown Meadow as Goodall Meadow and Southern Meadow had benefited from some large grant awards. The Town Clerk advised the Committee that funding opportunities were always explored to establish appropriateness for use.

**ENV25/018 Reports of Working Groups**

**Environmental Working Group**

The Chairman reported on the various environmental works that were currently going on. He drew the Sub-Committees attention to the following items:

**Town Council Website**

The addition of new information to the Town Council's website on Crown Meadow includes impressive photographs taken by semi-professional photographer, Dave Emley. Three new pages – 'About', 'Flora and Trees' and 'Fauna' have been created and are listed from the 'What We Do' and 'Crown Meadow' menu and sub menu.

### **Removal of Himalayan Balsam on Crown Meadow**

The Chairman suggested there were four options for managing Himalayan Balsam on Crown Meadow and Councillor N. Powell would share the findings of her research at a future meeting.

### **Safety Signs on Crown Meadow**

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Council's Health and Safety consultants had recommended the installation of signage on Crown Meadow to warn members of the public about the dangers and risks of the riverbank.

The Sub-Committee agreed that appropriate signage should be installed as soon as possible at the entrance points to Crown Meadow.

### **Installation of Life Buoys**

The Sub-Committee raised the question about whether the Town Council should install life buoys on Crown Meadow.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that she had sought advice from the Council's Health and Safety consultants and insurers who suggested that whilst life buoys can be installed, they would not be of great benefit because the site was vast and there would be a need to install many of them which was not recommended.

The Sub-Committee agreed that it was more important to have safety warning signs installed as soon as possible.

### **Stafford Borough Community Panel**

The Chairman reported on a meeting of the Community Panel in September 2024 where the following topics had been discussed:

Council Score Cards – Stafford Borough Council had agreed to adopt the Council Score Card system as a valid way of assessing and addressing occurring environmental issues. The Borough Council will be assigning officers to areas and the Community Panel will also assign a representative to join the Borough Council to oversee work going ahead.

Cannock Chase Education Programme – Two officers had spoken to the Panel and the initiative was very impressive. The programme will be expanded to schools including those in Stone, probably early next year.

Midlands Climate Expo – This event will be taking place at Uttoxeter Racecourse on 20 September 2024 and Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall will be the key speaker.

Mowing regime and Bee Friendly Status – The mowing regime in the Borough is in the process of being finalised. It requires extra funding and is linked to the Bee Friendly Town Project supported by the Council. Stafford has successfully achieved Bee Friendly Status, and the Chairman understood that an application was soon to be made for Stone.

Major Recovery Strategy – This Borough wide strategy has been developed by the Biodiversity & Ecology Officer and all town and parish councils along with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust will be actively involved. A number of other environmental strategies are also being developed.

Local Energy Production – This is a subset of the Panel who are looking at working with the big solar co-op to install solar panels at scale on large roofs that they will lease from the owners.

**Chairman**