



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

15 Station Road
Stone
ST15 8JP

7 January 2025

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **TOURISM & TOWN PROMOTION SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 2025** at **7.05pm**, or on the rising of the Planning Consultative Committee, if later.

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

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

Councillors: Mrs J. Hood (Chairman), A. Mottershead (Vice Chairman), A. Best, A. Burgess,
J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, B. Kenney and J. Powell

Co-opted

Member: Mr J. Cook

AGENDA

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

4. **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.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 19 November 2024, Minute No's TTP25/016 – TTP25/025 (attached)

6. **Calendar of Events**

To consider the Town Council's Calendar of Events (and give updates on events that have taken place) including:

2024

Taken Place

- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 21 November 2024)
- Texas Flag Raising, marking the anniversary of Texas joining the Union on 29 December 1845 (Sunday 29 December 2024)

2025/2026

Upcoming/To be agreed

- Texas Flag Raising, marking Texas State's independence from Mexico (Saturday 1 March 2025)
- St George's Day Re-enactment (Saturday 26 April 2025)
- VE Day Commemoration (Thursday 8 May 2025)
- Floating Market/Waterside Events (24, 25, 26 May 2025)
- Puppet Tree Jamboree
- Florence Brass Band Concert & Burma Star Commemoration
- Summer Children's Event
- Classic Car Event
- Vegan Market
- VJ Day Commemoration (Friday 15 August 2025)
- Music Event/Street Party (Saturday 16 August 2025)
- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 20 November 2025)
- Texas Flag Raising, marking the anniversary of Texas joining the Union on 29 December 1845 (Monday 29 December 2025)
- Any other suggested new events for 2025/26

7. **Stone Traders' Group**

To consider Stone Traders' Group's proposed event schedule for 2025 (attached).

8. **Budget 2025-26 – 2026-27**

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

9. Reports from Working Groups

- Remembrance Plaques Working Group (Co-ordinator: Councillor L. Davies)
- Market Strategy (Co-ordinator: Councillor J. Hood)
- Friendship Agreement Working Group (Co-ordinator: Councillor J. Davies)
- VE/VJ Day Working Group (Co-ordinator: Councillor J. Davies)

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

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

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

Stone Town Council – Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber
at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 19 November 2024**

PRESENT: Councillor J. Hood in the Chair and
Councillors: A. Best, A. Burgess, J. Davies and L. Davies and P. Leason

Co-opted Member: J. Cook

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

By Chairman's invitation: No Councillors

ABSENT: Councillors: K. Dawson, B. Kenney, R. Kenney, A. Mottershead and J. Powell

TTP25/016 Apologies

Councillors: B. Kenney and R. Kenney

TTP25/017 Declarations of Interest

None

TTP25/018 Requests for Dispensations

None

TTP25/019 Representations from Members of the Public

None

TTP25/020 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on 17 September 2024 (Minute Numbers TTP25/009– TTP25/015), were approved as a correct record.

* 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.

TTP25/021 Calendar of Events

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

2024 – Events that have taken place

- Remembrance Commemorations (10 and 11 November 2024)

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Remembrance commemorations at Walton and Stone had run smoothly on both 10 and 11 November, appropriately honouring the soldiers who fought and lost their lives in the two world wars and other conflicts.

The Chairman said that on Remembrance Sunday she noticed that there were people standing on the sidelines wearing medals who would have been most welcome to take part in the parade.

Although no complaints were received by the Town Council about the quality of the sound, questions were raised about whether the people at the back of the parade could hear the service. The Chairman said she hoped the Council could find the budget to have speakers installed in the High Street, next year.

She said the Parade Marshal and Church had done the commemorative services proud.

- Vegan Market (Saturday 16 November 2024)

The Chairman confirmed that a successful vegan market had taken place on Saturday 16 November 2024, the first market of its kind to be held in the town.

The market stalls had been erected a little too close to the shop fronts which caused a problem with access for wheelchair users and mobility scooters outside one shop as stock had been displayed on the pavement.

Members of the Sub-Committee who had been to the market reported that it was well attended with a wide variety of produce available. They said the market had provided something different and the shopkeepers at the bottom end of town were pleased the stalls extended so far down.

The Sub-Committee expressed that it was keen to book the market again in 2025.

2024/2025 – Upcoming/Agreed

- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 21 November 2024)

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that Stone in Bloom had installed 25 Christmas trees in the town and for the first time had planted a live 6ft Christmas tree (decorated) in the anchor bed on Christchurch Way.

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- Texas Flag Raising, marking the anniversary of Texas joining the Union on 29 December 1845 (Sunday 29 December 2024)
The usual small-scale arrangements for the Texas Flag Raising event in December will be made.
- Texas Flag Raising, marking Texas State's independence from Mexico (Saturday 1 March 2025)
The usual arrangements for the marking of Texas State's independence from Mexico will be put in place.
- St George's Day Re-enactment (Saturday 19 April 2025)
The Chairman expressed the need to ensure the booking was secure with the Knight re-enactment group.
- VE Day Commemoration (Thursday 8 May 2025)
Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that a report of the working group would be given later in the meeting.
- Floating Market/Waterside Events (24, 25, 26 May 2025)
The Chairman said she hoped the successful Floating Market would return in 2025.
- Music Event/Street Party
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Council had been asked by Stone Traders' Group not to hold any celebration in the month of May 2025 as it would clash with the Food and Drink Festival.
- Any other suggested new events for 2025
The Chairman invited Sub-Committee members to put forward new ideas for events in 2025.

A Literary Book Festival was suggested. The Chairman said that a Book Festival had been held in Stone some years ago lasting for about a week. As the event had been very expensive, further research would be needed to ensure that it was a viable option.

The Chairman called for ideas for a children's event to add to the popular Puppet Festival that was proposed be held again in 2025.

- Date for installation of Christmas trees in 2025
The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Council needed to be mindful that the Christmas tree installation in 2025 did not clash with Stone Traders' Group event dates in the High Street.

TTP25/022 Town Markets

The Sub-Committee considered Minute Number GP25/047 (from the General Purposes Committee meeting on 6 August 2024) relating to income from the Town's Markets

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The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the General Purposes Committee had noted from the Budget Monitoring Report that income from markets had gone down significantly. The Committee recommended the matter be referred to the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee, as the sub-committee responsible for markets.

RESOLVED: To refer the issue to the Market Strategy Working Group for consideration and a report back.

TTP25/023 Christmas Lights

The Sub-Committee considered issues relating to the Christmas Lights.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that after issues in previous years with the Walton Roundabout lights, the Town Council's electrical contractor would be testing the installation on the morning of the Christmas Lights Switch On.

The Town Clerk informed the Sub-Committee that the Christmas lights in the town were on a three-year cycle for changes to the display but as the display intended for last year had been late in arriving, the new lights had been introduced this year.

TTP25/024 Stone Traders Group

The Sub-Committee received advice from Stone Traders Group that Town Council representation was no longer needed at its management meetings. The reason was that the Group did not see that there was any benefit or purpose to the arrangement continuing.

The Town Clerk informed the Sub-Committee that he had advised the Group's Secretary that the benefit was in the long term when members of the Council had regularly attended meetings and understood both the role and the point of view of the Traders which would reflect in more informed discussions in the Council Chamber.

Councillor Fordham asked that it be recorded that he had not been invited to any Stone Traders Group Meetings.

The Traders Group had also advised in its correspondence a proposal to remove several of its events that were similar to Town Council events. These included the Four Wheel Fest, Transport Fest and any music festival.

TTP25/025 Reports from Working Groups

The Chairman invited co-ordinators from each Working Group to address the Sub-Committee:

Remembrance Plaques Working Group

Councillor L. Davies advised the Sub-Committee that she would have a test/prototype plaque ready as soon as she was able.

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Councillor J. Davies confirmed that the Working Group was aiming to progress the installation of plaques at the homes of fallen soldiers from World War 1 and World War 2. He said the Working Group's research had identified the homes of individuals named on the War Memorial and would be recommending which individuals were commemorated on a rolling programme. The rolling programme would continue for some time in collaboration with the ATV/JAT and coincide with the opening of the Heritage Centre.

Market Strategy Working Group

The Chairman reported that no meeting of the Market Strategy Working Group had taken place.

Friendship Agreement Working Group

Councillor J. Davies advised the Sub-Committee that he had sought feedback from members of the working group on various ideas and was in touch with the President of the Association of Amici di Neresheim. He said he had also sourced various examples of policies from other organisations which provided a useful template.

VE Day Working Group

Councillor J. Davies advised the Sub-Committee that the working group was making several recommendations in respect of marking VE Day 2025. The first recommendation was to hold a small-scale celebration on the evening of 8 May 2025, which was also the day of the Food and Drink Festival. He said the Working Group did not propose the Town Council attempt to compete with national events that were taking place on that day.

He suggested on behalf of the Working Group that the Council also consider holding an end of WWII event at the end of the summer, something similar to the Summer Street Party held in August 2024. This occasion could mark both Victory in Europe and Victory in Japan.

Councillor Davies put forward the suggestion to make budgetary provision for a beacon lighting event by the canal on the evening of 8 May, preceded with an open-air celebration in Stonefield Park. The celebrations would benefit from the purchase of two VE 80 flags for Stonefield Park and the flagpole in the High Street.

Councillor Davies proposed that the Heritage Centre Manager and Marketing and Events Organiser were invited to join the Working Group to look after the work needed and to lead in with the going live of the heritage centre.

He said that a meeting of the VE Day Working Group would be arranged as soon as possible.

Councillor Leason advised the Sub-Committee that the Borough Council will be planting the pictorial bed in Stonefield Park to commemorate the end of the war.

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He said that if two separate events were held, a small event could take place in the amphitheatre prior to the beacon lighting on the canal.

Chairman

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Stone Traders Group / Stone Food & Drink Festival Proposed 2025 Events

As discussed with you recently, we do not need to duplicate events in town if the Town Council are to put on similar events. We started these events as there was a significant gap in the events needed in town to promote the businesses within and raise the profile of Stone Town Centre. Over the past couple of years STC have put on similar events, therefore we see no need to duplicate in the future. We are proposing to remove several of our events; Four Wheel Fest, Transport Fest and any music festival, in the belief STC are to continue with the recent events put on themselves, namely: Music Festival (August bank holiday), Classic Cars and Summer Kids Camp of some description. You have indicated this is likely to be the case, which we would welcome.

Our proposed events for 2025

Stone Street Food

Now recognised as a popular event in the town diary. We propose to repeat the events in number and dates as 2024, 3rd Friday of each month 3.00 – 9.00pm May to October

Friday 16th May

Friday 20th June

Friday 18th July

Friday 15th August

Friday 19th September

Friday 17th October

Emergency Services Day – NEW

Bringing together all emergency service vehicles to promote the work of these organisations and engage with the public. Also a chance for children to interact with the many emergency vehicles we see today.

Sunday 14th September 2025

Halloween Festival

This years Halloween Event was a great success, in part to Government funding allowing additional free activities for children. We would propose to repeat this event in 2025.

Sunday 26th October 10.00am – 3.00pm

Christmas Markets

A real highlight of the year for the Traders, especially given the retail element and what it brings to the shops during the events.

Sunday 23rd November 10.00am – 3.00pm

Sunday 14th December 10.00am – 3.00pm

Stone Food & Drink Festival

Confirmed date Friday 9th – Sunday 11th May 2025

Following our discussion, we agreed there is no point in having competing events at the same time. Therefore, we respectfully request STC do not hold a large event, such as a Music Festival in the town on that weekend. We appreciate its VE Day on Thursday 8th May and there will be a marking of the occasion in town, which we fully understand but as we agreed, any event on a large scale will be counter productive for us both.

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Secretary, Stone Traders Group

Operations Director, Stone Food & Drink Festival

Introduction

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

Background

2. The General Purposes Committee on 10th December 2024 considered the standstill budget for 2025-26 and indicative figures for the next two years based on a number of assumptions contained within the report.
3. The standstill budget was prepared on the basis that all Council services will continue at broadly their current level. Inflation has not, however, been included in Sub-Committee budgets beyond 2024-25. A separate estimate of inflation beyond this date has been made across the whole of the Council and will be considered by the General Purposes Committee.
4. The figures for this Sub-Committee on the above basis are:

Actual		Budget	Forecast	Budget	Budget	Budget
2023-24		2024-25	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
£		£	£	£	£	£
22,869	Christmas Lights	23,260	24,000	21,000	24,000	21,000
23,558	Tourism & Town Promotion	31,000	28,500	29,000	32,000	32,000
-1,737	Town Market	-6,100	-3,380	-2,020	-2,020	-2,020
44,691	TOTAL	48,160	49,120	47,980	53,980	50,980

5. In respect of the figures above, Sub-Committee members should note:
 - a. The Christmas Lights budget includes the cost of providing the lights, and the electricity to run them, but not the costs of the switch-on event which are included in the Sub-Committee's Tourism & Town Promotion budget. This budget reflects the agreed contract payments to Christmas Plus, the cost of erecting, removing and storing the poles for the Walton Shops lights and a contingency for maintenance and replacement of the infrastructure and Council owned lights. The 2026-27 forecast also includes the periodic cost of anchor testing, but no specific allowance has been made for any tree re-wrapping that may be required over the budget period.
 - b. The Tourism and Town Promotion forecast for the current year includes the cost of the Olympic Homecoming event. The budget for 2025-26 and subsequent years

includes the cost of hanging baskets in the Town Centre (£6,000), the Christmas lights switch-on event (£4,000), High Street Christmas Trees (£6,000), a general provision for town promotion events (£15,000) and a contingency for unforeseen items (£1,000). The provision for town centre events includes the additional sum of £5,000 for the summer street party/music event that has become a regular part of the programme in recent years. This provision can be removed if the Sub-Committee do not foresee continuing with this event in the future.

For 2025-26 only, the cost of hanging baskets will be around £3,000, rather than £6,000, due to a reduction given by Stafford Borough due to the reduced quality of the 2024 displays.

- c. The Town Market forecast for 2024-25 shows a lower than expected surplus, largely due to an anticipated income reduction of around 23% whilst costs have reduced by only around 13%. For 2025-26 and subsequent years, income and expenditure have been budgeted for at broadly current levels with an annual contingency of £2,000 for ongoing maintenance. No provision has been made for Market Square rental income.
6. As reported to the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 10th December 2024, the standstill budget is just the starting point for the budget process. Members of the Sub-Committee will want to review this standstill budget and the amounts provisionally included. In addition, there are likely to be other areas where the Sub-Committee will want to undertake new developments or stop/change the things that they are doing now.
 7. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the standstill budget and any areas of growth or savings which they would want to be taken into account in setting the budget for 2025-26 and future years.

Recommendations

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