



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

15 Station Road
Stone
ST15 8JP

10 March 2025

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2025 at 7:10pm**, or on the rising of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee, if later.

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

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

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

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
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.

(Note: Due to this meeting taking place in the pre-election period for County Council elections, this item will not be considered).

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Sub-Committee held on 14 January 2025, Minute No's ENV25/027 – ENV25/035 (attached)

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

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

7. **Crown Meadow**

To receive an update from the Chairman.

8. **Reports of Working Group**

- Environmental Working Group (Co-ordinator: Councillor R. Townsend)

9. **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.

10. **Crown Meadow**

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

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

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

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

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 14 January 2025

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

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

By Chairman's Invitation: A. Best and J. Hood

ABSENT: Councillors: B. Kenney, J. Powell and N. Powell

ENV25/027 Apologies

Councillors: B. Kenney, J. Powell and N. Powell

ENV25/028 Declarations of Interest and Declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

None made.

ENV25/029 Request for Dispensations

None received.

ENV25/030 Representations from Members of the Public

None received.

ENV25/031 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 5 November 2024 (Minute Numbers ENV25/019 – ENV25/026), were approved as a correct record.

ENV25/032 Environmental Sub-Committee Works Update

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

He said the works update was regularly reviewed with plenty of communication between himself, the Deputy Town Clerk and Grounds Maintenance Contractor.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that most projects had fallen behind schedule due to inclement weather, machinery/motor vehicle breakdowns and ill-health. The Grounds Maintenance Contractor had however committed to a completion date of 31 March 2025 for all outstanding works.

ENV25/033 Crown Meadow

The Chairman referred the Sub-Committee to his written reports* (circulated to Members with the agenda) which included three detailed proposals for the following works:

i) Willow Trees

To cut back the standard Willow trees/shrubs located around scrape One (believed to be responsible for the large number of Willow saplings that were setting) so they produced less seeds to blow on to Scrape One.

A new budget item of £300 would be needed for this purpose.

ii) Footpaths

To raise the height of the diagonal path (that provided the most direct route across Crown Meadow) to a level that was higher than the grass to prevent it from holding water.

It was proposed that the budget for the planting of the shelved hedgerow project totalling £1,560, would be diverted to this project with an additional contingency of £1,000 (depending on the extent of the work needed and cost of materials).

The Chairman assured the Sub-Committee that the material used would be a good quality aggregate mix, the same as that used on the riverside path which didn't wash away.

The work would also include reinstatement of the drainage from Scrape Two to Scotch Brook.

The suggestion was made to replace the two Cherry trees in the amphitheatre.

iii) Himalayan Balsam

A plan (drawn up following professional advice) for the select group of volunteers to work on pulling up/curtailing the spread of Himalayan Balsam on Crown Meadow.

This action would assist in preventing the plant from dominating and the negative impact on diversity and wildlife. The work would

need to be undertaken at the correct time which was between April and June 2025.

ENV25/034 Budget 2025-26 – 2027-28

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 4 February 2025 for the services under its control.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the standstill budget (initially considered by the General Purposes Committee on 10 December 2024) and the amounts included for each service. It also considered other areas of growth or savings when setting the budget for 2025-26 and future years.

The Sub-Committee considered whether it wished to recommend to the General Purposes Committee additional sums for inclusion in the Environmental Initiatives budget.

The Chairman confirmed that an unspent sum of £1,190 (relating to an energy audit during the previous year) will be carried forward to 2025-26 and proposed that this sum be increased to £2,000 to enable the Council to address any environmental initiatives that arise during the coming year.

The Sub-Committee supported all budget proposals and their recommendation to the General Purposes Committee.

RECOMMENDED: That the standstill budget set out in the Clerks Report for the years 2025-26 and 2027-28 is accepted, after making the adjustments set out below, arising from consideration of reports presented at this meeting:

- The £1,560 in the current year's budget for Hedgerows is used instead for improvements to the paths at Crown Meadow in 2025-26 with a contingency of an additional £1,000.
- £300 is added in the current year for cutting back Willow trees.
- An Environmental Initiatives budget of £810 for 2025-26 is added to the anticipated carried forward sum of £1,190.

ENV25/035 Reports of Working Groups

Environmental Working Group

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

Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that a meeting of the Stafford Borough Sustainability Panel had taken place in December 2024 and the main items of discussion were the Sustainability Strategy (currently under development), Council Score Cards and School Enrichment Programme (which would be rolled out across the Borough).

The next meeting will take place in February 2025.

Chairman

Stone Town Council - Environment Sub

Dept	Job Description	Details	Current Status	Approved Budget	Est Date	
Allotments	Asbestos Removal	Remove and dispose of asbestos. Asbestos survey confirmed issues as low risk and requires monitoring.	MP has removed asbesto pile from plot 2A and stacked in a layby on the site. MP will add to the pile as he gradually clears asbestos items from other plots. MP will inform us when finished, and we will then obtain a quote to have asbestos professionally removed by a specialist. Raised borders on plot 13 to be dug out and replaced with sleepers as budget allows - MP is liasing with the plot holder on this, as they need to agree to the work. 30.08.24 MP confirms that the plot holder is going to give up the plot soon, and then work can commence on the removal. 24.10.24 Plot holder has renewed for another year, investigation underway to resolve before next growing season. Nov 24 - MP will investigate using gravel boards as a cheaper alternative to sleepers. March 2025: No immediate prospect of being able to remove asbestos sheeting from Plot 13 until an affordable option for new boards is reached. Costs to STC to replace with gravel boards or sleepers is too great.	1825	Work started March 24	
Crown Meadow	Wooden footbridge.	Cleaning and re-treating wood.	MP to complete in time for Westbridge Park re- opening ceremony which is April 2024. MP confirms this will be completed in March. 4.5.24 MP confirms will be completed by 30.6.24. 27.8.24 MP intends to complete by end Sept. Bridge will be wood-painted rather than varnish as the wood no longer holds varnish and painting enables MP to more easily maintain and cover vanadalism. 24.10.24 - Bridge has been powerwashed and sanded, MP aims to paint in the coming weeks dependant on the weather. Nov 24 - MP has said that this will completed by the 31.3.25	525	Mar-25	
Crown Meadow	Scrape 1. Grasses cut back	Cut back grasses to encourage new growth and to allow other species to grow. Cut back a third of the area on a three year rotation. Strim and remove.	24 - MP has indicated that this will be completed by the 31.03.25 22.02.25. This job has now been completed for 2024/25 with 40% of the grasses in Scrape 1 being strimmed and raked out. New growth is appearing. If this proves successful in enabling new growth and biodiversity then another section will be strimmed in Feb 2026 as planned.	1000	Mar-25	Completed 22.02.25
Crown Meadow	Scrape 1 willow saplings	Removal of invasive willow saplings. The saplings need to be uprooted using a digger and disposed of or offered to Bill Waller/SBC for replanting at another site	March 2024: 50% of the willow were extracted by Mick, with the help of Staffs Wldlife Trust volunteers. Bill Waller took the shrubs for replanting further upstream in the Trent Valley Corridor. 22.02.25 Mick completed removal and disposal/shredding of all willow shrubs from Scrape 1 and so the scrape is now clear of unwanted willows.	500	Mar-25	Completed 22.02.25

Grounds Maint	Walton Roundabout pruning and re-planting	Cut back/prune existng shrubs & ivy to promote new growth. Insert new shrubs where required.	Rolled over from 2022/23. MP did some cutting back in Spring 2024. Remaining budget will be used for further cut back and planting new shrubs later in 2024. 27.8.24. MP confirmed cutback and selective replant will be completed by 31.12.24. 24.10.24 -Pruning has taken place, some shrubs planted, this will be revisited over the coming months. Nov 24 - MP has indicated that work will be completed by the 31.03.2. March 2025: Pruning and cutting back has been completed. Spaces left by dead shrubs and Formia have now been filled by new growth. Mick recommends that new plants are not needed at this stage so this budget can be considered for use towards other restoration of town borders, specifically opposite the Star Inn and for overgrown trees.	600	Mar-25
Grounds Maint	Town borders pruning and re-planting	Cut back/prune existng shrubs & trees to promote new growth. Insert new shrubs where required.	Time sensitive. Has been rolled over from 2022/23. MP has now done some cutting back in Spring 2024. Remaining budget will be used for further cut back and planting new shrubs later in 2024. 27.8.24. MP confirmed the plan to cut back, remove and replant where required and particularly on Stafford & Lichfield St borders. 24.10.24 - MP confirmed that work has commenced and is ongoing. Nov 24 -MP has indicated that work will be completed by 31.03.25. 10.3.25 Town borders were visited and reviewed by Mick, Robert and Rachel. Several areas for replanting were agreed with the aim of getting this done by end of current Fin Yr. Some remedial tree work and pollarding was also indentified to keep some trees in Town Borders manageable and safe. Mick to advise on how much of this work can be done within existing budget (£600 + £600) and from the tree maintenance budget.	600	Mar-25
Grounds Maint	Re-install Lock Gate	Replace damage lock gate on Walton Roundabout	Canals Trust to source lockgate or MP to manufacture. Areed that MP will make if Canals trust does not supply soon. 27.8.24. MP is committed to reinstating lock gate. No date given.10.3.25: Waiting on Canal Trust to find us a lock balance arm.	400	
Environmental Initiatives	Foot path improvements to alleviate against flooding	Raise the level of the diagonal foot path so that floodwater runs off it rather than in to it.	Budget for this project approved for 2025/26. Mick will scrape the footpath to widen it then use the scrapings and additional aggrgate to build up the footpath by a few inches where necessary so that the ater runs off the footpath, rather than into the footpath.	1560 +£1000 contingency	
Crown Meadow	Repairs and Improvements to Angler's Carpark	Reposition and replace the fence and resite the display board to increase the width of the entrance. Excavate the embankment, remove growth on Ampitheatre side. Resurface car park with crushed concrete and limestone.	MP will complete this project when he has a two day window in his diary and the conditions underfoot are dry. 27.8.24. MP is planning this for October 24. Scope of the project was reconfirmed. 24.10.24 - MP confirmed that this will be his project over the winter. Nov 24 - MP has indicated that work will be completed by the 31.03.25	3100	Mar-25

Crown Meadow Volunteers	Restoration of Scrape 2	Excavating the area of Scrape 2 specifically to remove willow saplings, other overly dominant plants and some of the silt. Reinststate required plants	24.10.24 - The wet weather has not made this possible, MP confirmed that this will completed when the scrape dries out. Nov 24 - MP has indicated that work will be completed by the 31.03.25 22.02.2025. The dig out of Scrape 2 has been completed with removal of most unwanted willows and silt. In the next few weeks Mick will replant any required plants that have been inadvertently dug out. RT to meet Bill Waller to review and make any further recommendations for management of scrapes, including any replanting of beneficial species.	2800	Mar-25	Completed 22.02.25
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