

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 20 May 2025

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Best, J. Davies, L. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt,
J. Metters, A. Mottershead, J. Powell and C. Thornicroft

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

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, K. Dawson, B. Kenney, P. Leason, N. Powell and
R. Townsend

GP26/001 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: K. Dawson, B. Kenney, P. Leason,
N. Powell and R. Townsend

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

GP26/002 Declarations of Interest and Declarations

None made

GP26/003 Requests for Dispensations

None received

GP26/004 To receive the report of the County Councillors

The Chairman invited County Councillors to address the Committee:

County Councillor Jill Hood

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that she had joined her new County
Council colleagues for an induction day last week, and she hoped the positive
plans expressed, will move forward.

Councillor Hood reported on the County Chairman's suggestions about managing
parking in Stone High Street.

She also advised the Committee that she had met Councillor Mynors, the new
County Councillor for Stafford Trent Valley Division (covering the Aston Lodge area
at the southeastern side of the town), who was very pleasant.

County Councillor A. Mynors

Councillor Mynors was unable to attend the meeting and had sent his apologies.

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GP26/005 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

Councillor Fordham advised the Committee that Councillor Jenny Barron had been appointed Borough Mayor (for the year 2025-26) at Stafford Borough Council's Annual Meeting on Saturday 17 May 2025.

Councillor Andy Cooper was appointed as Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Fordham advised the Committee that on 19 May 2025 (last night) the Cabinet and committee memberships and appointments to outside bodies were determined and would appear on the Borough Council's website shortly. He said the year's business was now underway.

Councillor Hood informed the Committee that she had received notification that the 'Land at Downing Gardens' planning application had been refused and she had recalled her 'Call In'.

She said there was a lot of comments on Facebook suggesting the developers may come back and challenge the decision through an appeal or a Judicial Review. She said she hoped that would not be the case.

Councillor Hood reported on her observations on the new Town Mayor at the Borough Council Mayor Making Event where Councillor Metters had done a wonderful job networking with attendees. She said he was a great asset and ambassador to the town.

GP26/006 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP26/007 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1 April 2025 (Minute Numbers GP25/139 – GP25/158), be approved as a correct record.

GP26/008 Minutes of Sub-Committees

There were no Sub-Committee draft minutes.

GP26/009 Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the terms of reference for the Council's Sub Committees, Steering Groups and Working Groups.

The Town Clerk advised the Council that a small number of amendments had been suggested to improve clarity, and the changes were shown as 'tracked' in a copy of the terms of reference that had been attached to the electronic version of the agenda for the meeting.

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RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference for the Council's Sub-Committees, Steering Groups and Working Groups, with the suggested amendments made by the Town Clerk, are accepted.

GP26/010 Appointment of Members, Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to the following Sub-Committees

RESOLVED: To appoint the following Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and Members to the Sub Committees for the municipal year 2025-26:

Tourism & Town Promotion

Chairman: Councillor J. Hood

Vice Chairman: Councillor A. Mottershead

Members: Councillors: A. Best, A. Burgess, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, B. Kenney and J. Powell

Co-opted Member: J. Cook

Environment

Chairman: Councillor R. Townsend

Vice Chairman: Councillor T. Kelt

Members: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, B. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Estates

Chairman: Councillor A. Best

Vice Chairman: Councillor J. Powell

Members: Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood, A. Mottershead, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Mayor's Charity

Chairman: Councillor J. Metters

Vice Chairman: Councillor A. Best

Members: Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, I. Fordham, T. Kelt, R. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Powell and R. Townsend

In addition, the Town Mayor and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee are ex-officio voting members of all committees and sub-committees where they are not members in their own right, as set out in Standing Orders.

GP26/011 Appointment to Steering/Working Group

RESOLVED: To make the following appointments to Town Council Steering and Working Groups for the municipal year 2025-26:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

No appointments were made to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

Councillor Members: R. Kenney (Chairman), P. Leason (Vice Chairman), J. Davies and J. Hood

Co-opted Members: S. Booth, T. Cockin, H. Frost and a Joules Brewery representative

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Engagement with Young People

Members: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Best, K. Dawson and J. Metters and J. Powell

GP26/012 Appointment to Outside Bodies

RESOLVED: To make the following appointments of Council representatives on outside bodies:

Stone ATC (Town Mayor plus 1 member)

Councillors: J. Metters and J. Davies

Age Concern Stone & District (2 members)

Councillors: J. Davies and C. Thornicroft

Stafford & Stone Access Group (1 member)

Councillor T. Kelt

Trustees of the Town Hall Charity (all members)

All Councillors

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group (3 members)

Councillors: J. Battrick, J. Powell and R. Townsend

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group (1 member)

Councillor J. Davies

NOTE: Current membership of the following bodies will continue until the stated dates, or until retirement by an individual member, even if the members cease to be members of the Council

Stone Common Plot Trustees (5 Members for a four-year term)

Councillor C. Thornicroft (term runs to May 2026) and Councillors:

A. Burgess, J. Hood, T. Kelt and R. Townsend (terms run to May 2027)

Richard Vernon Trust (3 members for a four-year term)

Councillors: J. Davies, P. Leason and J. Powell (all members' terms run to May 2027)

SPCA Executive Committee (1 member for a two-year term)

Councillor: T. Kelt (to December 2025)

West Midlands Railway and other rail matters

Councillor T. Kelt

GP26/013 Annual Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Committee had brought forward from the last meeting the review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in accordance with the report* of the Town Clerk (dated 1 April 2025).

The Town Clerk's report and appendix* to the report (which included a copy of the revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations) had been enclosed with the electronic version of the agenda (only).

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The Town Clerk had previously advised the Committee that one of the major changes to both documents was an update in the contract regulations. There were also a small number of other minor updates.

The Town Clerk had reviewed the Town Council's current set of Financial Regulations against a new set of Model Financial Regulations issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). He concluded that the current financial regulations were more appropriate/suitable for the activities of a larger council and should be maintained with the amendments (as above) rather than be replaced.

RESOLVED: That the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, with the suggested amendments made by the Town Clerk, are accepted.

GP26/014 Heritage Centre

The Committee considered an update on Stone Heritage Centre.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the special VE Day 80 Exhibition on Thursday 8 May 2025 had gone very well with a pleasing number of visits made to the Centre.

GP26/015 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 31 March 2025.

GP26/016 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

There was no additional update from the Steering Group.

Engagement with Young People

Councillor Dawson was not available to give a report.

GP26/017 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 J. Davies advised the Committee that a meeting would be called as soon as possible to include a discussion with neighbouring parish councils on the developing impact of the reorganisation of Local Government and ways to support one another.

Stone ATC

Councillor J. Davies advised the Committee that (on 19 May 2025) he had joined 2352 (Stone) Squadron ATC at St Saviour's Church for the dedication of the new banner, the induction of their new Chaplain, Mrs Lin Davies, and a Cadet enrolment/awards ceremony. The event/service was conducted by Reverend Peter Carmody-Heaton, Wing Chaplain.

Councillor Davies said it was good to see the Air Cadets receive their awards, and to see them looking forward to their future RAF cadet challenges/adventures.

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Age Concern Stone & District

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

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that a meeting of the Access Group had taken place on Monday 7 April 2025 where the main points of discussion were wheelchair access to the Rugby Club and future legislation on electric taxis and impact on access.

Details of the finances were discussed, and the next meeting will take place on 2 June 2025.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee on the content of the Annual General Meeting on 7 May 2025. He said the play Plot lease had been agreed with the help of Councillor R. Kenney who was thanked for being instrumental in getting the matter dealt with.

Councillor Thornicroft reported on an annual tree inspection, that the lower woodland path project had been completed with a County Council grant, and that there had been a hiking group featured on Women's Hour on BBC Radio 4.

He said that repairs to the plot house had depleted the reserves and Trustees were looking for more fundraising initiatives. A sub-committee had been formed to report back at the next meeting.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Battrick confirmed there had been no meeting of Stone Community Hub Liaison Group.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Kelt informed the Committee about a meeting of the Executive Committee on Tuesday 6th May 2025. He said there had been lots of discussion on process and the development of new policies.

There were reports on the training programme and health and wellbeing programme. There was also discussion around the local government reorganisation and potential impact on SPCA, and on planning and the Green Belt going forward.

West Midlands Railway and other Rail Matters

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that a meeting was upcoming on 29 May 2025 (which he will be unable to attend).

Councillor Kelt said that John Heal was following up on possible charging for parking on Station Approach (with no decision yet). The group was following up on some issues including the platform gap on the north bound access.

He said the station volunteers had received a Silver Community Rail award which was very well deserved.

CHAIRMAN

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