

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 3 June 2025

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, L. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt, B. Kenney,
P. Leason, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

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

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, K. Dawson and A. Mottershead

GP26/018 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, K. Dawson and A. Mottershead.

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

GP26/019 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Townsend declared an interest in agenda item 9 (Minute Number GP26/026) – Grant to Local Organisation.

GP26/020 Requests for Dispensations

The Committee considered a request for a dispensation from Councillor Townsend in relation to agenda item 9 (Minute Number GP26/026).

Councillor Townsend had in advance of the meeting requested a dispensation to allow him to answer any questions from Councillors about the grant application submitted on behalf of Aston Lodge Residents Association and to provide clarification where needed. A copy of the written request was distributed to each Town Councillor present at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Townsend be granted a dispensation to speak but not vote on agenda item 9 (Minute Number GP26/026) – Grant to Local Organisation.

GP26/021 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, as the new term was just beginning, she had no report on this occasion.

* 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.

County Councillor Andrew Mynors

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

GP26/022 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

Councillor Leason advised the Committee that, as a member of the Food Waste Working Group, he had been involved in meeting Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council who were already operating a food waste system. The working group was looking at costs and the system was under consideration for introducing in Stafford, next year.

Councillor Leason said there had been a big debate about whether Stafford Borough Council should provide plastic liners (for external household caddies) in line with the Newcastle Under Lyme approach, but most of the working group were against providing them.

GP26/023 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP26/024 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025 (Minute Numbers GP26/001 – GP26/017), be approved as a correct record.

GP26/025 Minutes of Sub-Committees

There were no Sub-Committee draft minutes.

GP26/026 Grant to Local Organisation

The Committee considered a request for grant aid from the following organisation which met the criteria within the Council's grants policy:

Organisation: Aston Lodge Residents Association

Amount Requested: £500

Reason: To support the purchase of a heavy-duty cordless trimmer and leaf blower.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Aston Lodge Residents Association.

GP26/027 Heritage Centre

The Committee considered an update on Stone Heritage Centre.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that puppetry event 'Mr BuzzKing's Puppet Things' which ran from Friday 30 May to Monday 2 June 2025 had gone very well and was successful.

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A Committee member raised a question about when a 'Heritage Centre' sign would be installed on the outside of the building as people were having difficulty finding it.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the large sign at the building's frontage was originally going to say, 'Stone Heritage Centre' but the decision had not been documented, and current management at Joules preferred the sign displaying 'Joules Fire Station'.

A suggestion had previously been made to use the windows to display 'Stone Heritage Centre', accompanied by an A board, which the Heritage Centre Manager was looking into.

A Committee member suggested installing a sign on the side of the building adjoining the Crown Wharf car park so that it would be seen by traffic on Crown Street. The Town Clerk confirmed that all signage options secured to the external structure of the building would have to be agreed by Joules Brewery.

Another proposal was to introduce a main frontage sign saying 'Stone Fire Station and Stone Heritage Centre'.

The Chairman reassured the Committee that the matter was receiving consideration.

GP26/028 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 30 April 2025.

GP26/029 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.

GP26/030 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.

Stone ATC

Councillor J. Davies advised the Committee that the next meeting of 2352 (Stone) Squadron ATC would be the Annual General Meeting on 24 June 2025.

Age Concern Stone & District

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

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Stafford District Access Group

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that the next meeting would be the Annual Meeting on 23 June 2025.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that the last meeting of the Stone Common Plot Trustees was the Annual General Meeting (on 7 May 2025) which had been reported upon.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

It was confirmed there had been no meeting of Stone Community Hub Liaison Group.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Kelt informed the Committee that there had been no meeting.

West Midlands Railway and other Rail Matters

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that a meeting had taken place on 29 May 2025 where the main discussions affecting Stone were timetable changes (of which there were none), a number of travel problems, access to trains at Stone including the gap between the platform and train, access to north bound trains, and questions about the proposed parking charges on Station Approach.

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that Sir Gavin Williamson MP had been approached for support.

The meeting was suspended at this point and then reconvened after the Planning Consultative Committee meeting had taken place.

GP26/031 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.

GP26/032 Staffing Matters

The Committee considered the report* of the Town Clerk which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED: The Committee agreed to re-appoint to the post of Marketing and events Organiser in line with the recommendations outlined in the Town Clerk's report.

CHAIRMAN

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