



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

15 Station Road
STONE
ST15 8JP

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

28 May 2025

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 3 JUNE 2025 at 7:00pm** for consideration of the matters itemised in the following agenda.

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

Agenda

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Requests for Dispensations Received**
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. **To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 13 May 2025, Minute Numbers C26/001 – C26/011 (attached).**

6. To receive the draft minutes and decisions of the under mentioned Committees:

- a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025, Minute Numbers GP26/001 – GP26/017 (attached).
- b) Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025, Minute Numbers PC26/001 – PC26/006 (attached).

7. Internal Auditor's Report 2024-25

The Council is required to consider an Internal Audit Report before approving the accounts for submission to the External Auditors. The following reports have been enclosed:

- a. Formal Internal Audit submission to the External Auditors
- b. Report from Internal Auditor

Members are asked to consider the reports.

8. Annual Governance Statement 2024-25

To consider the Annual Governance Statement for submission to the external auditor (attached).

9. Council Accounts & Audit Submission 2024-25

To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached) and the accounting statement for submission to the external auditor.

**10. Local Government Transparency Code 2015
Openness of Public Bodies Regulations 2014**

Information for Quarter ending 31 March 2025 (attached).

11. To receive the forthcoming Civic Announcements (attached).

12. To receive the Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements (attached).

On this occasion reports are enclosed for the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor 2024-25 and Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor 2025-26.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the Town Council meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of the scheme are displayed in the Council's notice boards and website.

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

Stone Town Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 13 May 2025

PRESENT: Councillor P. Leason in the Chair for Minute Number C26/001
Councillor J. Metters in the Chair thereafter and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, L. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt, B. Kenney,
R. Kenney, J. Powell and N. Powell

Officers: L. Trigg and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, K. Dawson, A. Mottershead, C. Thornicroft and
R. Townsend

Councillor Leason asked the Council to observe a minute's silence in memory of Mr Peter Sinnott, former Councillor and Town Mayor, who had recently passed away.

Prayers

Before the meeting began Reverend Jim Cartlidge led prayers.

Councillor Leason informed Councillors that this was the last occasion that Reverend Jim would be joining them as Mayor's Chaplain and would be leaving Stone at the end of June 2025 to take up an appointment in Cheshire.

As a souvenir of Reverend Jim's time in Stone and as a thank you for all that he had done in leading the many civic services at St Michael & St Wulfad's Church and prayers before Council meetings in the Council Chamber, Councillor Leason presented him with a Stone Town Council tankard.

C26/001 To appoint the Town Mayor for the ensuing year

Councillor P. Leason invited nominations for Town Mayor for the ensuing year.

Councillor J. Hood nominated Councillor Jason Metters as Town Mayor, which was seconded by Councillor J. Davies.

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Jason Metters as Stone Town Mayor for the year 2025-26.

Councillor Metters received his Town Mayor's Chain of Office and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

* 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.

Councillor Metters took the Chair and announced that his partner, Miss Sarah Goodall, would be his Consort.

Councillor Metters advised the Council that Reverend Paul Kingman would be asked to take on the role of Mayor's Chaplain for the ensuing year.

C26/002 To appoint the Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing year

Councillor Metters invited nominations for Deputy Town Mayor.

Councillor P. Leason proposed Councillor Andrew Best as Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing year.

The nomination was seconded by Councillor J. Powell, and with no further nominations all members were in support of the motion.

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Andrew Best as Deputy Town Mayor for the year 2025-26.

Councillor Best received his Deputy Town Mayor's Chain of Office and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Councillor Best informed the Council that his Consort would be his wife, Mrs Rosalind Best.

C26/003 To thank and record the Town Council's appreciation of the services of the retiring Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and their Consorts

The Town Mayor extended a very special thank you to Town Mayor 2024-25, Councillor Philip Leason, who had been an exemplary first citizen and representative of Stone with his steadfast dedication to the town over very many years. He added that Councillor Leason was a tough act to follow – although he knew he would benefit from Philip's generous support and expert guidance during the upcoming year. The Town Mayor extended these words to Edith and asked that his warmest good wishes be forwarded to her.

The Town Mayor invited Councillors to address the Council.

Councillor Hood expressed how the VE Day celebrations on Thursday 8 May had highlighted to her just how popular and well-liked Councillor Leason was by the people of the town, and how difficult a task chaperoning the Town Mayor on the evening, had turned out to be.

Councillor Hood added that Councillor Leason knew everyone, and everyone knew him – taking great delight in talking to him and demonstrating how full of admiration and respect they were. She said Philip had built up quite a following as a popular man, a popular Councillor, and an exceptionally successful Mayor

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and ambassador for Stone Town Council.

C26/004 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, K. Dawson, A. Mottershead, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

C26/005 Declarations of Interest

None received.

C26/006 Requests for Dispensations

None received.

C26/007 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 1 April 2025 (Minute Numbers C25/085 – C25/092), be approved as a correct record.

C26/008 Committee Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) The draft minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1 April 2025 (Minute Numbers GP25/139 – GP25/158), were noted.
- b) The draft minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 1 April 2025 (Minute Numbers PC25/055 – PC25/060), were noted.

C26/009 Committee Terms of Reference

The Council considered the terms of reference for the Council's General Purposes and Planning Committees.

The Town Clerk advised the Council that amendments had been suggested to improve clarity, and these changes had been tracked in a document enclosed with the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the suggested amendments be adopted and the updated terms of reference for the Council's General Purposes and Planning Committees be approved.

* 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.

C26/010 To determine membership and elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of General Purposes Committee and Planning Committee for 2025-26

Membership of the General Purposes Committee

RESOLVED: That all Members be appointed to the General Purposes Committee for the year 2025-26.

Chairman of the General Purposes Committee:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Rob Kenney be appointed as Chairman of the General Purposes Committee for the year 2025-26.

Vice Chairman of the General Purposes Committee:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Ian Fordham be appointed as Vice Chairman of the General Purposes Committee for the year 2025-26.

Membership of the Planning Consultative Committee:

RESOLVED: That all Members be appointed to the Planning Consultative Committee for the year 2025-26.

Chairman of the Planning Consultative Committee:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Tom Kelt be appointed as Chairman of the Planning Consultative Committee for the year 2025-26.

Vice Chairman of the Planning Consultative Committee:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Clive Thornicroft be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Planning Consultative Committee for the year 2025-26.

C26/011 To defer other business under Standing Order 2, paragraph (j) to an appropriate meeting of the General Purposes Committee

RESOLVED: That all other business under this Standing Order be deferred to the General Purposes Committee

TOWN MAYOR

* 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.

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.

* 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.

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

* 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.

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).

* 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.

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

* 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.

Stone Town Council – Planning Consultative Committee

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

PRESENT: Councillor T. Kelt in the Chair, and
Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Best, J. Davies, L. Davies, I. Fordham, J. Hood,
R. Kenney, P. Leason (from agenda item 5, Minute Number PC26/005, Planning
Application 25/40347/FUL), 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, N. Powell and R. Townsend

PC26/001 Apologies

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

PC26/002 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

Councillor I. Fordham advised the Committee that, as substitute members of
Stafford Borough Council's Planning Committee, he would not speak or vote on
the planning applications listed on the agenda.

Councillor J. Hood and Councillor R. Kenney advised the Committee that, as
members of Stafford Borough Council's Planning Committee, they would not
speak or vote on the planning applications listed on the agenda.

PC26/003 Representations from Members of the Public

None

PC26/004 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on
1 April 2025, Minute Numbers PC25/055 – PC25/060), be approved as a correct
record.

PC26/005 Planning Applications

Application Number – 25/40424/HOU

Applicant – Mrs Alison Pope

Location – 174 Lichfield Road, Stone

Development – Demolition of existing garage and construction of proposed extension

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40500/HOU

Applicant – Ms A. F. Mitra

Location – 4 Windsor Close, Stone

Development – Rear Extension

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40582/HOU

Applicant – Mr A. Leigh

Location – 8 Meadow Way, Stone

Development – Single storey rear extension and single storey front extension to garage

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40432/HOU

Applicant – Mr D. Savage

Location – 8 Trinity Drive, Stone

Development – Single storey side and rear extension

Observations: No comments were made by the Town Council

Application Number – 25/40347/FUL

Applicant – Domus Portfolio 1 Limited

Location – 60 Church Street, Stone

Development – Change of Use from C4 (House of Multiple Occupancy) to C2 (Residential Institute).

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 24/39942/FUL

Applicant – Mr T. Myles

Location – Brooms Cottage, Stafford Road, Stone

Development – Single storey extension to the main (existing dwelling) and new build dwelling to the garden

Observations: The Town Council raises objections to this planning application due to concerns about over development of the plot, and the impact the proposed development will have on surrounding residents and their homes.

The Town Council asks that the local planning authority consider in detail the representations made by the owner of Brooms Park and the observations of the County Council's Highways Department.

Application Number – 25/40345/FUL (amended plans)

Applicant – NCR

Location – Stone Pharmacy 5 – 7 Stafford Street, Stone

Development – installation of automated teller machine. Amended plans in conjunction with 25/40273/LBC

Observations: No objections

PC26/006

To note the following items considered under delegated powers where no objections were forwarded to Stafford Borough Council due to no Member asking for the item to be considered by a special meeting of the Committee.

Application Number – 25/40345/FUL

Applicant – NCR

Location – Stone Pharmacy 5 – 7 Stafford Street, Stone

Development – installation of automated teller machine

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40346/ADV

Applicant – NCR

Location – Stone Pharmacy 5 – 7 Stafford Street, Stone

Development – Installation of one non-illuminated logo panel and one non-illuminated top sign.

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40273/LBC

Applicant – NCR

Location – Stone Pharmacy 5 – 7 Stafford Street, Stone

Development – installation of automated teller machine

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40442/HOU

Applicant – Mr & Mrs G. Yule

Location – 19 Airdale Road, Stone

Development – Side, rear and front extensions, and landscaping and changes to vehicular access.

Observations: The Town Council made no comment on this planning application.

CHAIRMAN



Black Rose Solutions Limited

74 Leacroft Road
Penkridge
Staffs
ST19 5BU

0781 321 7576
sandie.morris@blackrosesolutions.co.uk

20th May 2025

Dear Les,

Stone Town Council – Internal Audit 2024/25

I confirm that I have carried out an examination of your accounts and procedures, in line with the Practitioners Guide 2024 and in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

I can state that I found no material errors, omissions or irregularities in your financial records and I have no concerns about your internal control procedures.

Please refer to the enclosed report for further details of the audit work covered.

I would also confirm that I am totally independent of your Council and have no contact with any Member or employee.

Yours sincerely,

S Morris

Mrs Sandra Morris ACMA

Enc
Full Internal Audit Report

Comments marked **REC** denote an issue recommended for action as it may affect the Internal Audit response on the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accounting Return).

Comments marked **note** are included for reference or information.

Items referenced **FR** – relates to clause in the council's financial regulations.

Items reference **PG** – relates to a clause in the practitioners Guide.

Black Rose Solutions Ltd

Internal Audit - Report

Name of Council - **Stone Town Council**

Date of Audit - **25th February 2025 & 20th May 2025**

Annual Return - Internal Control Objectives

A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	YES
Is the cashbook maintained and up to date?	yes
Is the cashbook arithmetic correct?	yes
Is the cashbook regularly balanced?	yes
The council uses the Sage accounting system, no errors or omissions were noted	
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	YES
Are payments supported by invoices?	yes
Is all expenditure approved?	yes
Is VAT appropriately accounted for?	yes
Does the Council hold Power of Competence?	yes
Re adopted?	16/05/2024
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	YES
Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	no
Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment?	yes
Is Insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	yes
Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	yes
	Review
Risk Assessment	18/03/2025
Financial Regulations	05/03/2024
Standing Orders	05/03/2024

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	YES
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PG.D.5 • Ensure that the precept in the accounts matches the submission form to the relevant authority and the public record of precepted amounts ok*

Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept?	yes
Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the council?	yes
Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?	no
Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	yes*
Are reserves appropriate?	yes
Earmarked Reserves	121,262
General Reserves	270,351
Months of Income	6
Months of expenditure	7
The council holds general reserves within guidelines (3 to 12 months of Net Revenue Expenditure)	note
A data entry/rounding error caused the reported Precept figure to be £1 different to that reported by the Borough Council. This will be corrected.	

E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	YES
Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	yes
Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	yes
Is the council VAT registered?	yes
Are returns submitted in a timely manner?	yes
Is VAT reclaimed on exempt business activities reviewed and considered insignificant?	yes
Are receipts for business activities within the registration threshold?	n/a

F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	N/a
The council holds no petty cash	

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	YES
Do all employees have contracts or employment with clear terms and conditions?	yes
Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?	yes
Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?	yes
Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?	yes
Does line 4 include only Salary, NI & Pension	yes
Does the council monitor off payroll working (IR35)	yes

H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	YES
Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care?	yes
Are the assets and investments registers up to date?	yes
Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?	yes
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	YES
Is there a bank reconciliation for each account?	yes
Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion and approved by council?	yes
Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	no
Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation?	n/a
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	YES
Are year end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure) ?	I&E
Are debtors and creditors properly recorded?	yes
Do accounts agree with the cashbook?	yes
Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?	yes
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 23/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly certified itself exempt	N/a
The council did not certify itself exempt	
L. The authority publishes information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	YES
All councils - Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015	
Accounts remain published for 5 years	yes
Transparency Code for Larger Authorities (income/expenditure >£200k)	
Quarterly:-	
All items of expenditure above £500	yes
Procurement information (initiations to tender > £5k)	yes
Annually:-	
local authority land	yes
grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations	yes
organisation chart	yes
senior salaries (>£50k)	n/a
constitution (standing orders)	yes
pay multiple	no
The council falls into large authority thresholds for Transparency Code guidelines, so the code details what advised to be published. But this is not a legal requirement.	

M. The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2024 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations. (Evidenced by website or minutes)	YES
---	------------

Approval Date (meeting)	04/06/2024
Publication Date (announcement date)	18/06/2024
Date from (commencement date)	19/06/2024
Date to	30/07/2024

N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR.	YES
--	------------

Notice of Period for Exercise of Electors Rights	yes
Section 1 Annual Governance Statement	yes
Section 2 Accounting Statements	yes
Notice of Conclusion of Audit	yes
Section 3 External Audit Report & Certificate	yes
Internal Audit Report	yes

O. Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	YES
---	------------

The council has oversight of two charities
Town Hall Charity (505718) - Sole Trustee
Richard Vernon Trust (236666) - 3 councillors appointed
Filings for both are up to date, finances and meetings are separate from the council.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

ENT'S NAME OF AUTHORITY Stone Town Council

www.stonetowncouncil.gov.uk ENT'S PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for. NO PETTY CASH HELD			✓
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes ✓	No 	Not applicable

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

25/02/2025 20/05/2025 DD/MM/YYYY

ENT'S NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR S. MORRIS ACMA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 20/05/2025

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Introduction

1. This report sets out the Council's accounts for 2024-25. It compares the final outturn figures with the original budget for the year and the forecast produced as part of the budget process.
2. The proposed financial submission to the Council's external auditors is also attached for approval.

Background

3. The Council's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March. It is required to keep its accounts for that period in accordance with legal requirements, to report them for approval by the Council within three months of the year end, and to submit an annual return to its external auditors to a similar timescale.
4. The Council is also required to employ the services of an internal auditor, who examines the accounts, reviews the Council's internal control, completes the internal audit section of the annual return, and may produce a report identifying any areas of concern to Members. This internal audit has been performed by Sandie Morris, who will be reporting independently to the Council, as required.
5. Subject to certain limited requirements, councils which turn-over less than £6.5 million per annum are not expected to comply with the accounting standards required of larger local authorities and have more freedom to determine their own form of accounts, subject to national recommendations on proper practices.

Accounts 2024-25

6. The Council's net revenue spending for 2024-25 was £400,301. This can be seen in detail in the Income and Expenditure Account set out at Appendix 1. The resulting effect on the Council's balance sheet can be seen at Appendix 2.
7. This net spending of £400,301 compares with £562,226 in the previous year, an approved budget of £605,328 and a forecast made at the time the 2025-26 budget was prepared of £532,760. This is set out in more detail in Appendix 3.
8. Explanations of the major variations between the original budget and the forecast were included in a series of budget reports to this Committee and its Sub-Committees during

December 2024 and January 2025. Details of the major variations from the forecast that was made at the time the 2025-26 budget was prepared are set out later in the report.

9. In a number of cases identified below, spending was originally anticipated and provided for in 2024-25, but that expenditure has been delayed until the current year. In such cases I have recommended that the budgets be rolled forward to the new financial year to meet the costs when they are incurred. A figure of £113,682 has been contributed to the Rollover Reserve to allow this transfer between years to happen. The details of the makeup of this reserve are set out in the explanation of variances below.

Explanation of Variances from Forecast

10. Appendix 3 shows that the Council's net expenditure for 2024-25 was £132,459 less than forecast at the time the budget was prepared in January. Of this, £113,682 relates to budgets rolled over into the current financial year, leaving a true variance of £18,777 underspent.
11. Details of significant variances from forecast and proposals for rollover are set out below:
12. **Frank Jordan Centre (net £3,486 underspent)** – This was mainly due to additional income, particularly from supporting the Banking Hub.
13. **Stone Station (net £2,746 underspent)** – This is largely due to the final phase of the Council planned work on roof repairs not taking place, offset by a claim for rent arrears at the Station which was not anticipated when the budget was prepared. The £5,000 budget to complete the roof repairs has been rolled forward into 2025-26.
14. **Stone Heritage Centre (£12,246 underspent)** – The forecast spending at the Heritage Centre was a contingency sum at this stage.
15. **Town Market (net £1,241 overspent)** – The overspending was due to stall set-up costs being higher than budgeted.
16. **Bus Shelters and Street Furniture (£1,223 underspent)** – Some recurring maintenance tasks and repairs were not undertaken in the year, including painting benches and washing bus shelters. A sum of £690 has been rolled forward to 2025-26.
17. **Building Maintenance (£20,000 underspent)** – This unspent provision has been rolled forward into 2025-26.
18. **Grounds Maintenance (£2,545 underspent)** – Anticipated work on installing signs, a Tilling Drive cut, replanting of borders, replacement of the lock gate and bridge painting were not undertaken in 2024-25. £2,515 has been rolled forward into the 2025-26 budget to cover the cost of these items.
19. **Crown Meadow Improvements (£1,981 underspent)** – This was largely due to the pathway project not being undertaken within the year. A sum of £1,560 has been carried forward to allow this to be undertaken in 2025-26.

20. **Allotments (£3,223 underspent)** – This relates to an unused contingency provision (£1,000), a hedge cut at Mount Road (£175) and an underspending against the provision for asbestos removal (£1,825). These latter two amounts totalling £2,000 have been rolled forward into 2025-26.
21. **Environmental Initiatives (£1,190 Correction)** – £1,190 has been rolled forward into 2025-26 via the rollover reserve.
22. **Christmas Lights (£3,847 underspent)** – The underspending relates to the elimination of an overprovision for electricity costs in 2023-24 and not needing the contingency provision included in the budget.
23. **Grants to Outside Bodies (£1,611 underspent)** – This underspending has been rolled forward into 2025-26.
24. **Insurances (£1,271 underspent)** – The underspending largely relates to an unused provision for potential increases in premiums due to the revaluation of the Community Centres and Heritage Centre.
25. **Administration (£7,194 underspent)** – Expenditure against this budget is irregular between years due mainly to IT lifecycles. The underspend has been rolled forward into 2025-26.
26. **Stone Heritage Centre Capital (£71,922 underspent)** – This underspending is due to the whole of the project budget being provided in 2024-25, with unspent amounts being rolled forward to meet costs in 2025-26.

Audit Submission

27. The completed financial statement to be submitted to the Council's external auditors is attached at Appendix 4 and the summary year-end bank reconciliation which will accompany it is at Appendix 5. It should be noted that the net expenditure shown in the audit return is £1,030.84 different than set out in other parts of this report. This is because the Mayor's Charity Fund is required to be included within the accounts for external reporting purposes, but it is excluded from internal income and expenditure reports for the sake of clarity.

Recommendations

28. The Council are recommended to:
- a. Approve the Council's Accounts for 2024-25 as set out in this document, including the use of the rollover reserve to allow the transfer of budgets between financial years and the proposed use of those budgets in 2025-26.
 - b. Note the variances between the forecast outturn for 2024-25 and the actual outturn, and the reasons identified for the major variances.
 - c. Approve the financial statement for submission to the Council's external auditors.

Stone Town Council

Income and Expenditure Account 2024-25

2023-24			2024-25	
£	£		£	£
Income				
36,585		Frank Jordan Centre	55,973	
9,478		Stone Station	6,279	
16,167		Town Market	14,089	
-		Crown Meadow Improvements	-	
4,380		Allotments	4,379	
1,010		Tourism & Town Promotion	6,665	
-		Salaries & Employment Costs	-	
1,025		Administration	117	
1,291		Civic Dinner & Hospitality	1,292	
-		Miscellaneous	-	
6,035		Interest	6,640	
40,024		Stone Heritage Centre (Setup)	-	
	115,996	Total Income		95,433
Expenditure				
26,688		Frank Jordan Centre	22,737	
19,247		Stone Station	33,933	
-		Stone Heretage Centre	7,754	
14,430		Town Market	11,950	
-		Car Parking	-	
2,078		Bus Shelters & Street Furniture	3,497	
1,039		Street Lighting	940	
839		Dog & Litter Bins	864	
-		Joules Clock	100	
703		Town Electricity Supply	660	
22,776		Grounds Maintenance	20,455	
975		Crown Meadow Improvements	7,959	
1,452		Allotments	1,756	
-		Environmental Initiatives	-	
22,869		Christmas Lights	20,153	
24,568		Tourism & Town Promotion	35,255	
3,900		Grants to Outside Bodies	2,389	
200,116		Salaries & Employment Costs	228,007	
7,020		Accommodation	8,087	
6,893		Insurances	9,289	
43,240		Administration	29,303	
1,183		Audit & Legal Fees	2,063	
27,786		Town Council Elections	-	
2,924		Allowances - Mayor & Deputy Mayor	2,941	
235		Regalia & Presentations	601	
3,859		Civic Dinner & Hospitality	3,579	
2,449		Remembrance Sunday & War Memorials	2,893	
515		Miscellaneous	492	
-		Neighbourhood Plan	-	
240,436		Stone Heritage Centre (Setup)	38,078	
	678,222	Total Expenditure		495,734
	562,226	Total Net Expenditure		400,301
Financing				
369,163		Precept	393,645	
21,552		Council Tax Support Grant	23,739	
11,461		Concurrent Functions Allowance	11,461	
154,676		Transfer from (to) Earmarked Reserves	37,206	
	556,852	Total Financing		466,051
	-5,374	Net Surplus for Year		65,749

Stone Town Council

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

2023-24			2024-25	
£	£		£	£
Current Assets				
9,961		Debtors	4,897	
2,340		Payments in Advance	3,177	
2,017		VAT Recoverable	2,175	
381,176		Cash at Bank and In Hand	424,133	
	395,495	Total Current Assets		434,381
Current Liabilities				
13,538		Creditors	32,080	
12,071		Receipts in Advance	2,639	
7,847		Payroll Taxation	8,049	
	33,456	Total Current Liabilities		42,767
	<u>362,039</u>	Total Net Assets		<u>391,614</u>
Represented by				
201,989		General Fund Balances	267,740	
158,468		Earmarked Reserves	121,262	
1,581		Mayor's Charity Fund	2,612	
	<u>362,039</u>	Total Reserves and Balances		<u>391,614</u>

Stone Town Council

Comparison of Actual 2024-25 with Budget and Forecast

Appendix 3

Actual 2023-24	Actual 2024-25	Actual Compared With		Actual Compared With Forecast	
		Approved Budget		Outturn	
		Budget 2024-25	Variance 2024-25	Forecast 2024-25	Variance 2024-25
£	£	£	£	£	£
-9,897	-33,236	-14,880	-18,356	-29,750	-3,486
9,768	27,654	43,080	-15,426	30,400	-2,746
0	7,754	45,000	-37,246	20,000	-12,246
-1,738	-2,139	-6,100	+3,961	-3,380	+1,241
2,078	3,497	7,500	-4,003	4,720	-1,223
1,039	940	1,000	-60	940	+0
839	864	900	-36	860	+4
-	100	-	+100	-	+100
703	660	700	-40	650	+10
-	-	20,000	-20,000	20,000	-20,000
22,776	20,455	23,600	-3,145	23,000	-2,545
975	7,959	11,735	-3,776	9,940	-1,981
-2,928	-2,623	2,425	-5,048	600	-3,223
-	-	1,190	-1,190	-	-
22,869	20,153	23,260	-3,107	24,000	-3,847
23,558	28,590	31,000	-2,410	28,500	+90
3,900	2,389	4,000	-1,611	4,000	-1,611
200,116	228,007	236,340	-8,333	228,100	-93
7,020	8,087	6,900	+1,187	8,240	-153
6,893	9,289	10,700	-1,411	10,560	-1,271
42,215	29,186	36,380	-7,194	36,380	-7,194
1,183	2,063	1,500	+563	1,860	+203
27,786	-	-	-	-	-
2,924	2,941	3,400	-460	2,940	+1
235	601	200	+401	700	-99
2,569	2,287	2,500	-213	2,600	-313
2,449	2,893	2,000	+893	2,500	+393
515	492	1,000	-508	800	-308
-6,035	-6,640	-3,300	-3,340	-6,400	-240
-	-	-	-	0	-
200,412	38,078	103,298	-65,220	110,000	-71,922
-	-	10,000	-10,000	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
562,226	400,301	605,328	-205,027	532,760	-132,459

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

Stone Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	523,301	362,038	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	369,163	393,645	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	149,009	131,664	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	200,116	228,007	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	479,319	267,727	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	362,038	391,613	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	381,176	424,133	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	293,300	315,865	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

12/05/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Stone Town Council

Summary Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2025

BANK RECONCILIATION

Balance per bank statements as at 31 March 2025

	£	£
Current Account	1,500.00	
Business Reserve	422,632.97	
National Savings Account (Closed 5 Nov 2024)	<u>0.00</u>	
		424,132.97

Less: unpresented cheques at 31 March 2025

None	<u> </u>	0.00
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Add: unbanked cash at 31 March 2025

None	<u> </u>	0.00
------	-----------------------------	------

Net balances as at 31 March 2025 **424,132.97**

CASH BOOK

Opening Balance 1 April 2024 **381,175.98**

Add: Receipts in the year	573,639.48	
Less: Payments in the year	<u>530,682.49</u>	
		42,956.99

Closing balance per cash book as at 31 March 2025 **424,132.97**

Local Government Transparency Code 2015

Procurement Information

1. Invitations to Tender for Contracts Exceeding £5,000

None

2. Contracted Agreements Exceeding £5,000

None

Payment Information

The attached appendix sets out all Council payments for the period over £250, excluding salary and related payments, payments from the Mayor's Charity and transfers between the Council's bank accounts.

Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Decisions that would otherwise have been taken by the Town Council or one of its Committees that have been delegated to an officer:

1. Under a specific express authorisation; or
2. Under a general authorisation to officers to take such decisions and, the effect of the decision is to:
 - a. grant a permission or licence;
 - b. affect the rights of an individual; or
 - c. award a contract or incur expenditure which, in either case, materially affects the Town Council's financial position.

- None

Date: 20/05/2025
Time: 18:08:29

Stone Town Council - Payments over £250

Page: 1

The table below lists payments over £250 made by the Council in the period identified.

Where the actual amounts shown are below £250, these payments represent adjustments to items over £250 shown elsewhere in the list.

The table includes payments by cheque, direct debit, payment card, telephone banking and online banking. It excludes salary and related payments, payments from the Mayor's Charity, and transfers between the Council's bank accounts. All amounts exclude VAT.

Payment Date From : 01/01/2025

Payment Date To : 31/03/2025

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
09/01/2025	01141826	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Gas Usage -01.01 to 31.01.25	11.88
15/01/2025	INV-1725	IG Stage Hire	30% Deposit for Summer Music Event 16.08.25	270.00
20/01/2025	01141826	VALDA ENERGY	SSTN Gas Usage - 01.01 to 31.01.25	773.09
20/01/2025	01141826	VALDA ENERGY	SSTN Elec Usage - 01.01 to 31.01.25	439.03
20/01/2025	01141826	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Gas Usage -01.01 to 31.01.25	805.16
20/01/2025	01141826	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Elec Usage 01.01 to 31.01.25	449.10
21/01/2025	5477	Christmas Plus	Installation of Festive Display 2024 - 30%	2,250.00
27/01/2025	211996	Prism Solutions	Prism IT Managed Service - Feb 25	1,269.58
10/02/2025	01184330	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Gas Usage -01.02 to 28.02.25	2.05
10/02/2025	25765	Stone Gazette Ltd	3 Full pages advert ST15 Directory 25	645.00
14/02/2025	131295	B Hygienic Ltd	SSTN - Annual hygiene contract to 31.01.2026	336.00
14/02/2025	INV-0003	G C Power Cables Limited	SSTN - 5 year fixed wire elec test	690.00
14/02/2025	INV-0003	G C Power Cables Limited	FJC - 5 year fixed wire elec test	690.00
14/02/2025	2478978	Forvis Mazars LLP	Limited Assurance Review -31.03.2024	1,365.00
20/02/2025	01184330	VALDA ENERGY	SSTN Gas Usage - 01.02 to 28.02.25	658.33
20/02/2025	01184330	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Gas Usage -01.02 to 28.02.25	754.01
20/02/2025	01184330	VALDA ENERGY	SSTN Elec Usage - 01.02 to 28.02.25	403.84

Date: 20/05/2025

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Stone Town Council - Payments over £250

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<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
20/02/2025	01184330	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Elec Usage - 01.02 to 28.02.25	350.06
24/02/2025	INV3001427	MEB Total Ltd	FJC - Install 2 sockets in the Stonefield Room	385.70
25/02/2025	213801	Prism Solutions	Prism IT Managed Service - Mar 25	1,273.93
27/02/2025	STC/DL250225	The Puppet Tree	Deposit - Puppet Event 29th May	750.00
28/02/2025	10196467	British Gas	Heritage Centre Electricity 9 Jan to 9 Feb	294.15
18/03/2025	7070296374	Stafford Borough Council	Install/remove bollards Jan - Mar 25	12.50
19/03/2025	7070296374	Stafford Borough Council	Install/remove bollards Jan - Mar 25	458.88
19/03/2025	INV3001427	MEB Total Ltd	FJC - Install 2 sockets in the Stonefield Room	0.08
19/03/2025	188084636	Heard Catering	Catering for Pig Race 56 meals	448.00
19/03/2025	01224113	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Elec Usage 28.02.to 31.03.25	324.90
19/03/2025	01224113	VALDA ENERGY	STTN Elec Usage 28.02 to 31.03.25	327.52
19/03/2025	01224113	VALDA ENERGY	STTN Gas usage 28.02 to 31.03.25	646.65
19/03/2025	01224113	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Gas Usage -28.02 to 31.03.25	662.21
20/03/2025	3047160975	Adobe Systems Software	Adobe Acrobat Subscription x 3	727.92
25/03/2025	215555	Prism Solutions	Prism IT Managed Service - April 25	1,256.43
25/03/2025	5813476/CE/51839	The Arch Rent Collectors	SSTN Rent 25.03 to 23.06.25	1,184.25
26/03/2025	2503040	Crown Highways	Remove and store poles, Walton Christmas lights	749.75
				25,243.21

STONE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

3 June 2025

CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town Mayor

Saturday 7 June 2025	Stone Carnival Parade
Sunday 8 June 2025	Stone Carnival Sunday - Dog Derby Event
Sunday 15 June 2025	Biddulph Town Mayor's Civic Service
Sunday 22 June 2025	Cannock Chase Chairman's Civic Service
Thursday 26 June 2025	Shakespeare Gala Performance of Hamlet at the Gatehouse Theatre
Saturday 28 June 2025	HMS Collingwood Open Day and Field Gun Competition
Sunday 29 June 2025	East Staffordshire Mayor's Civic Service

Deputy Mayor

Saturday 7 June 2025	Stone Carnival Parade
Sunday 8 June 2025	Stone Carnival Sunday - Steeple Chase Event

TOWN MAYOR

TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 13 May 2025

Wednesday 2nd April – Opening the AED Donate Furniture Shop

It was nice to see a vacant shop being brought back into use. The shop sells good quality pre-owned furniture as a way of raising funds for the charity.

Friday 4th April – Stafford Borough Mayor's Race Night

An enjoyable evening but sadly I did not back any of the winners

Saturday 7th April – Street Collection in aid of the Mayor's Charity

Thanks to all those who volunteered to collect.

Monday 7th April – The Formal Opening of the Crown Court

Always an interesting occasion and it was nice to see another local person as High Sheriff.

Wednesday 9th April – Hosting the Mayor of Biddulph and his party who passed through Stone on a sponsored cycle ride to London

With coffee at Crown Wharf and an opportunity to view the Heritage Centre before they set off again.

Thursday 10th April – The Chairman of Cannock's Nepalese Evening

A most enjoyable evening with excellent food.

Friday 11th April – Town Mayor's Quiz Evening

A well supported event. Particular thanks to Neil who set the questions and to Trudy.

Saturday 12th April – Stone Choral Society "A Little Jazz Mass"

A lovely concert, with a variety of music. We are so fortunate to have such a talented Choral Society in Stone.

Wednesday 16th April – Oak Tree Farm AGM

It is always a pleasure to visit the project and see the dedication of the volunteers and enthusiasm of those who attend it.

Saturday 26th April – St Georgas's Day Re-Enactment

A well-attended event, which as usual was greatly enjoyed by everyone. Although I did ask one small boy if he enjoyed it and he said he had but he was disappointed that there was no blood!

Saturday 26th April – Stone Civic Dinner

An excellent meal was provided by the Stone House, and it was nice to welcome most of the Civic Heads from throughout the county. Particular thanks to Trudy for all her hard work to ensure that the evening was a success.

Sunday 27th April – The Mayor of Leek's Civic Celebration.

The event was held in at The Old Spice Mill in Leek with excellent food and fellowship

Monday 28th April – Visit to the Army Cadet Headquarters

An opportunity to thank the cadets for their support with events in Stone and to present some Duke of Edinburgh awards.

Tuesday 29th April – Welcoming the Management of Hovis Ltd who had held their Annual Conference at the Mill

The event was held at the Lymestone Brewery and it was a pleasure to welcome the group who were impressed with the town and how they had been accommodated at the Mill.

Wednesday 7th May – Stone & District Stroke Club's VE Day Part

A real joy to attend and meet the members and volunteers. Entertainment was provided by St. Michael's First School Choir in the morning and by a group from Stafford in the afternoon.

Wednesday 7th May – The Common Plot AGM

It was good to meet and thank the Committee and many of the volunteers who work so hard to maintain and keep this real asset to Stone in excellent condition.

Thursday 8th May – Raising the VE Day Flag

The event was attended by a large number of people including members of the Choral Society and a class from St. Dominic's Priory School.

Thursday 8th May – Evening events in Granville Square and the lighting of a beacon

The event included items from the Florence Brass Band and Stone Choral Society. A short act of worship was led by the Rev. Paul Kingman and the event concluded with a wreath laying and lighting of a beacon. Particularly thanks to Cllr Jim Davies and the Town Council staff for all their hard work in arranging the VE Day events.

Friday 9th May – Visit to Woolcool

I had met the Managing Director during the year, and she had invited me to tour the plant. It was a pleasure to see how a company that had started in Stone has grown. It has received numerous awards for its products and was visited by the King back in 2019 when he was Prince of Wales.

TOWN DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 13 May 2025

Friday 25th April - Biddulph Civic Charity Ball

On Friday the 25th of April I was grateful to stand in for our Town Mayor 2024-2025, Philip Leason. The event was very well attended, and Mayor of Biddulph, Nigel Yates was welcoming and cordial. After a very well presented address members of the community insisted on expressing their gratitude to Nigel's fundraising efforts over the year, and one of the town's local craft groups took the time to crochet a trophy to present to the Mayor - testament to the esteem that the local groups hold for their very dedicated public servants. A very fun event indeed teeming with personality and good cheer.

Saturday 26th April - Stone Civic Dinner

On Saturday the 26th of April we held the Civic Dinner and raffle. We were in good company and we were sincerely grateful that our civic guests from the St Vincent Association could join us during the entrance ceremony. We are also grateful to the local first responders in attendance, as they were able to deftly demonstrate their skills and assist one of our guest attendees at the event. We were all relieved to hear that they made a swift recovery later that evening thanks to the quick response of our guests. It marked the end of a very successful year by our outgoing Mayor, Philip Leason and his consort, Edith.

TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 3 June 2025

15 May – Samaritans AGM

I was grateful to attend the Stafford Branch of the Samaritans on the 15th of May for their Annual General Meeting. Hearing the stories from the volunteers made it clear how important their work is, and that their compassion is matched by emotional resilience. I was absolutely blown away to hear of a stone resident that has been volunteering at the organisation for 48 years. We should be very proud of our residents and their efforts in the wider Staffordshire area.

17th May – Stafford Borough Mayor Making

It was a great turn out for the Borough Mayor making ceremony and service on the 17th, with members of Stafford and surrounding areas scouts, guides, cadets and youth organisations. This being one of my first events I was particularly grateful to the other civic heads that took the time to introduce themselves to me, as well as some of our town councillors that facilitated some wonderful introductions to some of the other individuals in attendance. Borough Mayor Jennifer Baron took over and facilitated a wonderful reception with her consort, Ray Baron, and I am looking forward to the forthcoming year with two very dedicated representatives for the borough.

20th May – Sir Gavin Williamson MP - Town Council Engagement

It was a refreshing change of pace following the council meetings to have the opportunity to host Sir Gavin for an amicable exchange of ideas and strategy in tackling local issues. We are grateful to have a keen public servant engaging with all stakeholders from across his constituency. The opportunity afforded to the town council was valued and appreciated by all in attendance.

22nd May – Moddershall Oaks - Accommodation Grand Opening

Myself and Sarah were given wonderful treatment at a reception at Moddershall Oaks to celebrate the opening of the pod housing luxury accommodation that has been added to the list of services provided by the business. The Borough Mayor, Jenny Baron cut the ribbon and attendees were given a semi-structured tour about the estate to show the offerings and value provided to customers. Penny, our host and partner of the business was eager to show how the team there had focused on their unique value proposition, and how this brings further tourism to the rural area around our town. It was evident to see how they had grown their business by consistent reinvestment over the years, and their tenacity through adversity over recent years will hopefully pay off by their strategic approach to providing value to their clientele. Sarah and I were incredibly impressed by the thoughtfulness and diligence of the staff at the venue, all of whom were locals from around the area. We wish them all the success in the future.

TOWN DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 3 June 2025

Friday 16 May – HMS Collingwood Ceremonial Divisions

I attended the HMS Collingwood Division Ceremony on 16th May. It was a lovely day, weather was great, and the base looked wonderful. The parade went well and was enjoyed by all. Afterwards I attended their awards ceremony in which they gave out awards such as medals and plaques to the officers doing well in their training. A longtime service award of a sword was given to one of the teachers at the base which was very nice.

I met the Lord Mayor of Southampton who was a nice man whose day job was a secondary school maths teacher. We were both new to all the proceedings, so it was nice to experience it together. The base commander introduced himself to me and asked me to pass on his congratulations to Jason for becoming this year's Stone Mayor. He expressed an interest in coming to Stone and I mentioned civic Sunday which he was going to look if he could attend.

A great day was had by all, and it was an experience I'll never forget.