



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

15 Station Road
Stone
ST15 8JP

8 July 2025

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 15 JULY 2025 at 7:05pm**, or on the rising of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee, if later.

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

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

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

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Requests for Dispensations**
4. **Representations from Members of the Public**

To consider representations from members of the public on items to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Sub-Committee held on 18 March 2025, Minute No's ENV25/036 – ENV25/045 (attached)

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

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

7. **Crown Meadow**

To receive an update from the Chairman on project work relating to:

- Crown Meadow (general)
- Site Visit with Biodiversity and Ecology Officer (report of Sub-Committee Chairman is attached)

8. **To confirm Membership of Working Groups**

- Environment Working Group
Membership: Currently all Councillors

9. **Reports of Working Group**

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

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

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

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

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 18 March 2025

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

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

By Chairman's Invitation: A. Best

ABSENT: Councillors: R. Kenney, P. Leason and J. Powell

ENV25/036 Apologies

Councillors: R. Kenney, P. Leason and J. Powell

ENV25/037 Declarations of Interest

None made.

ENV25/038 Request for Dispensations

None received.

ENV25/039 Representations from Members of the Public

Due to this meeting taking place in the pre-election period for Town Council elections, the Town Council's Scheme of Public Participation had been suspended.

ENV25/040 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 14 January 2025 (Minute Numbers ENV25/027 – ENV25/035), were approved as a correct record.

ENV25/041 Environmental Sub-Committee Works Update

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

Asbestos Removal

Although not under any time pressure, the Town Council had reached an impasse with the main allotment holder in respect of what was needed to be done to replace the asbestos (to provide ground support) when it was dug up. A solution was needed to be negotiated.

Woodend Footbridge

The Grounds Maintenance Contractor has cleaned the foot bridge and confirmed that it would be treated and painted by the end of March 2025.

Scrape One

The Grounds Maintenance Contractor has completed work on Scrape One. He has cut back a third of the grasses to promote new growth and biodiversity.

The Grounds Maintenance Contractor has removed Willow saplings ahead of time and before the nesting season commences. The saplings have been reduced to stumps (which will regrow) to prevent the Willow seeds they produce, from germinating in the scrape.

Plant Borders

The Sub-Committee Chairman, Deputy Town Clerk and Grounds Maintenance Contractor, have undertaken a walkabout to look at the town's borders, including Walton roundabout, identifying the current issues and considering their future maintenance and improvement.

A number of tasks were noted including pollarding some taller Willow trees, general pruning work and some replanting. The Grounds Maintenance Contractor now has a clear idea of what needs to be done, which should be covered by the existing budget.

New Items

Footpath improvement works on Crown Meadow, to alleviate surface water flooding, is a new item added to the list.

Anglers Car Park

The planned work to Angers Car Park is in the Grounds maintenance Contractors sights to complete before the end of the financial year.

Scrape Two

The restoration of Scrape Two involving the digging out of hundreds of unwanted Willow saplings and grasses has been done. The area currently looks unsightly but will regenerate with replanting of the wanted grasses and flowers, still to do.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Town Clerk for her input on these projects.

ENV25/042 Crown Meadow

The Chairman provided the Sub-Committee with a further update on Crown Meadow which included the following:

Volunteer Groups

Dates have been suggested for a volunteer litter picking meet, now confirmed to be taking place on Saturday 29 March 2025, with several Councillors advising they plan to attend.

Himalayan Balsam Removal sessions were also proposed for April and June.

Biodiversity Officer

A site meeting with Stafford Borough Council's Biodiversity Officer was planned to take place soon to look at the work undertaken on Crown Meadow and to receive advice on further improvements and positive projects to enhance the site.

ENV25/043 Reports of Working Groups

Environmental Working Group

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the Environmental Working Group was looking at getting some volunteer dates, and if it proves popular, the setting up of another WhatsApp group, to share information on volunteer sessions and related environmental updates.

ENV25/044 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.

ENV25/045 Crown Meadow

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

RECOMMENDED: That the General Purposes Committee authorises the publication of a series of articles on Crown Meadow as described in the Town Clerk's report.

Chairman

Stone Town Council - Environment Sub

Dept	Job Description	Details	Current Status	Approved Budget	Est Date
Allotments	Asbestos Removal	Remove and dispose of asbestos. Asbestos survey confirmed issues as low risk and requires monitoring.	MP has removed asbesto pile from plot 2A and stacked in a layby on the site. MP will add to the pile as he gradually clears asbestos items from other plots. MP will inform us when finished, and we will then obtain a quote to have asbestos professionally removed by a specialist. Raised borders on plot 13 to be dug out and replaced with sleepers as budget allows - MP is liasing with the plot holder on this, as they need to agree to the work. 30.08.24 MP confirms that the plot holder is going to give up the plot soon, and then work can commence on the removal. 24.10.24 Plot holder has renewed for another year, investigation underway to resolve before next growing season. Nov 24 - MP will investigate using gravel boards as a cheaper alternative to sleepers. March 2025: No immediate prospect of being able to remove asbestos sheeting from Plot 13 until an affordable option for new boards is reached. Costs to STC to replace with gravel boards or sleepers is too great.	1825	Work started March 24
Crown Meadow	Wooden footbridge.	Cleaning and re-treating wood.	18.06.2025 -Project completed	525	Completed May 25
Grounds Maint	Walton Roundabout pruning and re-planting	Cut back/prune exisitng shrubs & ivy to promote new growth. Insert new shrubs where required.	March 2025: Pruning and cutting back has been completed. Spaces left by dead shrubs and Formia have now been filled by new growth. Mick recommends that new plants are not necessary at this stage and other more pressing remedial work is required. Use remaning budget towards restoration of other town borders, specifically the overgrown laurel copse opposite the Star Inn and for pollarding of overgrown silver birch trees in town borders on Christchurch Way and Stafford Street.	600	Mar-25
Grounds Maint	Town borders pruning and re-planting	Cut back/prune exisitng shrubs & trees to promote new growth. Insert new shrubs where required.	Time sensitive. Has been rolled over from 2022/23. MP has now done some cutting back in Spring 2024. Remaining budget will be used for further cut back and planting new shrubs later in 2024. 27.8.24. MP confirmed the plan to cut back, remove and replant where required and particularly on Stafford & Lichfield St borders. 24.10.24 - MP confirmed that work has commenced and is ongoing. Nov 24 -MP has indicated that work will be completed by 31.03.25. 10.3.25 Town borders were visited and reviewed by Mick, Robert and Rachel. Several areas for replanting were agreed with the aim of getting this done by end of current Fin Yr. Some remedial tree work and pollarding was also indentified to keep some trees in Town Borders manageable and safe. Mick to advise on how much of this work can be done within existing budget (£600 + £600) and from the tree maintenance budget.	600	Mar-25
Grounds Maint	Re-install Lock Gate	Replace damage lock gate on Walton Roundabout	Canals Trust to source lockgate or MP to manufacture. Areed that MP will make if Canals trust does not supply soon. 27.8.24. MP is committed to reinstating lock gate. No date given.10.3.25: Waiting on Canal Trust to find us a lock balance arm. 28.6.25 DTC to discuss this project with MP and seek a way forward.	400	

Environmental Initiatives	Foot path improvements to alleviate against flooding	Raise the level of the diagonal foot path so that floodwater runs off it rather than in to it.	Budget for this project approved for 2025/26. Mick will scrape the footpath to widen it then use the scrapings and additional aggregate to build up the footpath by a few inches where necessary so that the water runs off the footpath, rather than into the footpath. 03.07.2025 - Work to commence in late Summer early Autumn.	1560 +£1000 contingency	Late Summer/ Early Autumn
Crown Meadow	Repairs and Improvements to Angler's Carpark	Reposition and replace the fence. Reposition the CM information board to enable increasing the width of the entrance. Refurbish CM info board. Excavate the embankment as well as remove overgrown and dead trees on Amphitheatre side. Resurface with crushed concrete and limestone.	18.06.2025 Carpark renovation and expansion is completed. MP is currently renovating the CM information board. When completed he will reinstate it as well as add more fencing and hard core to improve accessibility to the Commemorative Orchard. 22.06.2025. Measures are being considered to prevent cars from being parked on the grassy next to the car park.	3100	Completed May 25

Report on Crown Meadow Site Visit. June 9th 2025

In attendance: Bill Waller (Biodiversity and Ecology Officer at Stafford Borough Council), Robert Townsend (Chairman of Environment Sub-Committee), Rachel Edwards (Deputy Town Clerk), Mick Plant (Grounds Maintenance Contractor), Tom Kelt (Vice-Chairman of Environment Sub-Committee)

Background:

Bill Waller has visited Crown Meadow in an official capacity several times over the last five years to advise on projects and maintenance with the aim of improving the ecological health of the landscape. Several of the recently completed projects, especially in relation to management of the scrapes, have been supported and advised upon by Bill.

We walked the meadow to observe the completed projects and to look for any future projects.

Observations:

The project to trim down the grasses in scrape 1 was initiated in Jan 2025. New grass growth is now evident with a wider range of plant species developing. Wetland flowers planted several years ago have benefitted from getting more space and light. It was agreed that the plan to trim 1/3 of the scrape in rotation each year should be continued. An ongoing annual budget will be needed for this maintenance.

Scrape 1 has significantly benefitted from the project to remove hundreds of willow bushes and saplings from in the scrape. MP completed the job in March 2025 despite very difficult and wet conditions. Removing the willows has improved flood capacity as well as the growing conditions for grasses and flowers that support a range of wildlife. It was agreed that we keep an eye on the development of new willow bushes and try to remove them before they take hold. Budget provision may be needed.

It was noted that the muddy destruction caused by using an excavator to dig out the willows from scrape 1 has quickly disappeared and the scrape is looking healthy and natural again.

It was noted that cutting back the stand of willow trees next to scrape 1 has allowed in more sunlight to the scrape and has removed the risk of willow seedlings blowing into the scrape. The trees will regrow and will need pollarding again in future years.

It was noted how dry the scrapes are in this period of low rainfall and in complete contrast to them being flooded for months in 2024. The dryness is not helpful to some wildlife.

Scrape 2 has been excavated to remove hundreds of invasive willow saplings that had caused the scrape to fill with silt. The work was destructive but it was agreed that the scrape would eventually disappear without this remedial work. The scrape is now free of willows and dredged to about 60 cms depth. Despite low rainfall the scrape is still damp and there is significant re-growth of grasses and flowers. **Discussion point: It was discussed if a section of scrape 2 should be dug deeper to improve its capacity and to create a more permanent wet area. This needs further investigation and costing.**

It was agreed that with both scrapes now renovated, they would benefit from some additional species of wetland flowers being planted. **Discussion point: This is to be further discussed and costed.**

The spread of Himalayan Balsam was noted. Without intervention it will take over the river bank and scrapes. It is invading scrape 2 and is heading towards scrape 1. The banks of the Scotch Brook are severely affected and its spreading inland. It was agreed that pulling up HB by the roots is the best way to remove HB and to limit its spread. The Env Sub Comm will manage a volunteer programme to contain and reduce HB. The programme will need to run for several years to control HB.

It was agreed to also try strimming a boundary around the section of HB on the Scotch Brook to try to limit its spread as it is too difficult for volunteers to access. **This needs actioning in July to test its effectiveness.**

The area which Mick uses to dump green waste from CM was discussed as it is looking full after all the recent renovation works. Mick is confident that he can reduce the pile with some excavator work as it rots down.

The small woodland between the Anglers car park and the amphitheatre was discussed. It is largely made up of older trees some of which may need work to improve tree health and safety. **Discussion Point: There is a case for planting some new trees in this area and the amphitheatre to replace the dead and dying cherry trees. This needs further evaluation and costing.**

There was a discussion about the concept of creating public access from Crown Meadow northward along the valley to Trent Road meadows which is currently owned and managed by Stafford Borough Council. To connect the two would require two footbridges over the river and access across privately owned land on the south side of the river. It's unknown if this is feasible but it's a **concept that may be worthy of investigating with the idea of creating an accessible nature corridor for residents and visitors to utilise. Discussion Point.**

Bill Waller concluded that Crown Meadow is in good ecological health and that the renovation projects have had a positive effect. Work to maintain and improve the meadows will need to continue that will continue to save and enhance the space for the community.