

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 1 July 2025

PRESENT: Councillor A. Best in the Chair, and
Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, J. Hood, T. Kelt, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

Officers: R. Edwards and T. Williams

Note: Prior to the start of the meeting and in the absence of the Committee Chairman and the Committee Vice Chairman, the Deputy Town Clerk invited nominations for Chairman, and Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Best, was appointed to take the Chair for the meeting.

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, K. Dawson I. Fordham, B. Kenney, R. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters, A. Mottershead, J. Powell and N. Powell

GP26/033 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: K. Dawson, I. Fordham, B. Kenney, R. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters, A. Mottershead, J. Powell and N. Powell

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

GP26/034 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hood declared an interest in agenda item 9 (Minute Number GP26/041) – Grant to Local Organisations (Stone Choral Society).

GP26/035 Requests for Dispensations

There were none.

GP26/036 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 no report on this occasion.

County Councillor Andrew Mynors

Councillor Mynors was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP26/037 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee but there were no reports 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.

GP26/038 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP26/039 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3 June 2025 (Minute Numbers GP26/018 – GP26/032), be approved as a correct record.

GP26/040 Minutes of Sub-Committees

There were no Sub-Committee draft minutes.

GP26/041 Grant to Local Organisation

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

- a. **Organisation: Stone Choral Society**
 Amount Requested: £500
 Reason: To support the costs of performing 'Stone Circles' at Crown Wharf on 1 November 2025, which includes music hire, advertising, professional musicians, collaboration with Acceler8 and production expenses.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Stone Choral Society.

- b. **Organisation: First Oulton Scout Group**
 Amount Requested: £500
 Reason: To support the purchase of safety equipment (first aid kit and fire extinguishers) and additional equipment (such as gas burners, propane tanks and camping equipment) to help cater for the size of the group.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to First Oulton Scout Group.

- c. **Organisation: Florence Brass Band**
 Amount Requested: £500
 Reason: To support the purchase of uniform and equipment including polo shirts, music folders and rolling stand cases with the aim of keeping performance fees affordable for local community groups.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Florence Brass Band.

The following organisations did not meet the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated, but a motion was proposed and seconded to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant:

- d. **Organisation: Oak Tree Farm Rural Project**
 Amount Requested: £473
 Reason: To support the replacement of gardening equipment to be used by team members.

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- i. Turnover is over £100,000
- ii. Level of reserves

RESOLVED: To decline the award of a grant to Oak Tree Farm Rural Project.

The meeting was suspended at this point and then reconvened after Mrs Campbell Kelly and Mrs Mary Gale had been thanked by the Town Council in accordance with agenda item 7, 'To Give Thanks' (Minute Number C26/030).

GP26/042 Heritage Centre

The Committee considered an update on Stone Heritage Centre.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Committee that she had received an update from the Heritage Centre Manager with the following information:

- Both the VE Day and Mr BuzzKing's Puppet Things exhibitions had received more than 200 visitors which included people who hailed from Brisbane in Australia and Oklahoma in the United States.
- The current exhibition was in celebration of His Majesty's official Birthday on 14 June 2025.
- Walton Primary School made a surprise/impromptu visit to the Heritage Centre on Monday 30 June 2025 and were welcomed.
- Loans from the public and Staffordshire County Archives & Heritage Department were being received and collected in preparation for the development of 'The Story of Stone' exhibition.
- Items for the VJ Day exhibition and interpretation items were in development in readiness for the August celebration.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Heritage Centre Manager was putting a schedule of forthcoming events and exhibitions together, up to December 2025, with the aim of sharing information with the public through the Town Council's social media platform and other avenues of communication.

The Committee asked that its thanks to the Heritage Centre Manager be recorded for his hard work in developing the Heritage Centre into the successful facility that it is.

GP26/043 Town Council Payments

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

GP26/044 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

There was no additional update from the Steering Group.

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Engagement with Young People

Councillor Dawson was not available to give a report.

GP26/045 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 of the Liaison Group would be called as soon as possible with the topical subject of 'Local Government Reorganisation' on the agenda for discussion following further announcements and SPCA briefings. He said the Liaison Group provided an opportunity for parishes to share information and discuss common interests on the potential implications.

Councillor Davies advised the Committee that all councillors were very welcome to attend the meetings.

Stone ATC

Councillor J. Davies advised the Committee that the Annual Meeting of 2352 (Stone) Squadron ATC took place on 24 June 2025. A new committee had been appointed, and the Squadron was thriving with a waiting list being needed to manage high demand and the Squadron building having a capacity limit of 36 cadets.

Councillor Davies called for the Town Council to add weight to their cause for a new larger building.

Councillor Lin Davies attended the meeting as their Squadron Chaplain.

Age Concern Stone & District

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

Stafford District Access Group

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that the Annual Meeting had taken place on 23 June 2025 which included what had been achieved over the year and approval of the accounts. He said that a new treasurer had been appointed as the previous treasurer had moved away from the area.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

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

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Townsend advised the Committee that the next meeting would be held on 25 July 2025.

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 he had nothing to report.

The meeting was suspended and reconvened after the Confidential section of the Town Council meeting and after the Planning Consultative Committee meeting.

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GP26/046 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.

GP26/047 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3 June 2024, Minute Numbers GP26/018 and GP26/032 be approved.

CHAIRMAN

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