

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 16 September 2025

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

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

By Chairman's Invitation:

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, R. Kenney, J. Metters, N. Powell

ENV26/010 Apologies

Councillors: R. Kenney, J. Metters and N. Powell

ENV26/011 Declarations of Interest

None made.

ENV26/012 Request for Dispensations

None received.

ENV26/013 Representations from Members of the Public

None received.

ENV26/014 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 15 July 2025 (Minute Numbers ENV26/001 – ENV26/009), were approved as a correct record.

ENV26/015 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.

He advised that the update had not changed since the last meeting with the most pressing item now being the repair work to the diagonal pathway running across Crown Meadow.

The pathway will be raised and chamfered to repel the settlement of surface water, hopefully before the onset of winter.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Council had been approached by the Canal and River Trust who were undertaking some work at Star Lock to replace the two gates. The Trust has asked to park a welfare unit on Crown Meadow, now redirected to the Angler's car park (which will be partly shut off). The lock work is scheduled to begin on 3 November and be finished by 19 December 2025. Any damage to the car park will be made good.

She said the installers have promised to look out for the balanced lock arm which has been missing for some time from Walton Roundabout.

ENV26/016 Crown Meadow and Allotment Update

The Chairman provided the Sub-Committee with an update on Crown Meadow and the allotment sites:

Crown Meadow (General)

The Chairman said he hoped a site visit of Crown Meadow could be set up with the Head of Recovery and Connectivity at Staffordshire Wildlife Trust for the purpose of obtaining information and advice that will aid the formulation of a long term management plan. Members of the Sub-Committee will be invited to the walkabout when arranged.

He has also opened a conversation with the Ecology and Biodiversity Officer at Stafford Borough Council about the potential for more connectivity between the Borough Council's Meadows and Crown Meadow via a bridge across the river Trent.

A Sub-Committee member expressed a concern about the Willow tree situated on the bank of the river. The weather forecast for the autumn was very wet and higher river levels will result in debris getting caught up in the branches as it travels down river. Any branches becoming detached could also cause serious damage.

The Chairman said the Borough Council had advised that the tree was an excellent habitat for fish/wildlife.

Allotments

The Chairman reported on the suggestion that the Town Council work on a publicity exercise for the Mount Road and Newcastle Road allotment sites. The Deputy Town Clerk has written to the allotment holders to seek their views on a naturalist visiting to record plant and wildlife activity.

It was reported that no objections had been raised and two or three allotment holders welcomed the idea.

Wildlife expert/photographer David Emley will now record the flora and fauna and take photographs with a view to building a library of information that can be used for publicity through local media channels.

The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that Horsetail was prolific on two or three plots at the Mount Road allotment site and was becoming more widespread along footpaths/around greenhouses. The concern was that the plant might make some allotments unlettable and advice was needed on preventative measures of which there were a number.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that all the allotments were let and had been let for the last year. The waiting list remained substantial with 21 names, seven of which had been listed since 2023.

ENV26/017 Reports of Working Groups

Environmental Working Group

Himalayan Balsam: The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the main activity of the Environmental Working Group had been to coordinate removal of Himalayan Balsam through organised volunteer pulling sessions.

He said it was not worth doing any further work on the project at this point in time and until the next growing season.

Stafford Borough Sustainability Panel Meeting: Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that he had attended a Stafford Panel Meeting.

Chairman