



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

15 Station Road
STONE
ST15 8JP

Tel: 01785 619740

Email: clerk@stonetowncouncil.gov.uk

2 October 2025

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER 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 Meeting of the Town Council held on 2 September 2025, Minute Numbers C26/035 – C26/044 (attached).**

6. **To receive the draft minutes and decisions of the under mentioned Committees:**
 - a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on 2 September 2025, Minute Numbers GP26/048 – GP26/062 (attached).
 - b) Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 2 September 2025, Minute Numbers PC26/019 – PC26/024 (attached).
7. **Allotment Awards**

To award the winners of the Allotments Competition 2025.
8. **Conclusion of Audit 2024-25**

To note receipt of the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for the year ending 31 March 2025.

A letter from the External Auditor and the External Auditor's Report and Certificate is attached.
9. **To receive the forthcoming Civic Announcements** (attached).
10. **To receive the Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements** (attached).

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 Meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 2 September 2025

PRESENT: Councillor J. Metters in the Chair and
Councillors: A. Burgess, J. Davies, K. Dawson, J. Hood, R. Kenney, P. Leason,
J. Powell, N. Powell and R. Townsend

Officers: R. Edwards and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, I. Fordham, T. Kelt, B. Kenney, A. Mottershead
and C. Thornicroft

Prayers

Before the meeting began, Reverend Paul Kingman, led prayers.

C26/035 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, I. Fordham,
T. Kelt, B. Kenney, A. Mottershead and C. Thornicroft

C26/036 Declarations of Interest

None made.

C26/037 Requests for Dispensations

None received.

C26/038 Representations from Members of the Public

None

C26/039 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 1 July 2025
(Minute Numbers C26/024 – C26/034), be approved as a correct record.

* 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.

C26/040 Committee Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) The draft minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1 July 2025 (Minute Numbers GP26/033 – GP26/047), were noted.
- b) The draft minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 1 July 2025 (Minute Numbers PC26/013 – PC26/018), were noted.

C26/041 To Thank the Outgoing Mayor's Cadets for their Services during 2024-25

The Town Mayor invited Past Town Mayor, Councillor Philip Leason, to come forward to thank his Cadets for their conscientious service through the now completed mayoral year 2024-25, and to award certificates of appreciation in acknowledgement of their duty and support.

Sergeant James Haycock served as Mayor's Air Cadet, representing 2352 (Stone) Squadron Air Training Corps, and Corporal Madison Twigg served as Mayor's Army Cadet, representing Stone Detachment (Mercian Regiment) Army Cadets.

After photographs had been taken and Councillor Leason had wished them well in their future careers, the Mayor's Cadets returned to their seats in the public gallery.

The meeting was suspended at this point to enable the past Town Mayor to make a presentation to Stone Community First Responders.

The Past Town Mayor, Councillor Philip Leason, awarded £2,500 of his Mayor's Charity appeal 2024-25, to Mr Steve Fisher, CFR Coordinator, and his colleagues from Stone Community First Responders.

Mr Fisher, gave thanks to Councillor Leason and the Town Council on behalf of the charity and trustees for the monies received.

A total value of £3,766.57 had been raised by Councillor Leason during his mayoral term and representatives of his other charities, Stone & District Stroke Club and Stone Alzheimer's Club, would receive their awards during separate meetings of their respective clubs.

The meeting was reconvened at this point.

**C26/042 Local Government Transparency Code 2015
Openness of Public Bodies Regulations 2014**

The Information* for Quarter ending 30 June 2025 was noted.

* 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.

C26/043 Civic Announcements

The Civic Announcements, which had previously been circulated, were noted.

C26/044 To receive the Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements

The Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's reports of engagements, which had previously been circulated, were noted.

The Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor provided the Town Council with additional verbal reports on the details of their engagements.

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 2 September 2025

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: A. Best, A. Burgess, J. Davies, K. Dawson, J. Hood, P. Leason, J. Metters,
J. Powell, N. Powell and R. Townsend

Officers: R. Edwards and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, I. Fordham, T. Kelt, B. Kenney, A. Mottershead
and C. Thornicroft

GP26/048 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, I. Fordham, T. Kelt,
B. Kenney, A. Mottershead and C. Thornicroft

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

GP26/049 Declarations of Interest

None

GP26/050 Requests for Dispensations

There were none.

GP26/051 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.

GP26/052 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

* 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 Jon Powell

Councillor Powell gave a report on a Borough Council Economic Development & Planning Scrutiny Committee meeting (held on 19 August 2025) which included a presentation on water and wastewater discharge management.

Councillor Powell advised Councillors that the big message he had taken from the meeting was in the operation of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs), or spills. These are pipes connecting the sewage system to water courses and in Stone expel wastewater into the River Trent and its subsidiaries in times of heavy rain or flooding. Solids are by design supposed to be retained in the pipework and non-solids allowed to release into the River Trent and Scotch Brook.

The Website: www.Sewagemap.co.uk shows where the spills are located and records indicate that on one day at the end of August 2025 there were three out spills into the River Trent. Councillor Powell expressed concern because the river and its banks are used daily by dog walkers, the Canoe Club, fishermen and everyone else who enjoy living in Stone.

GP26/053 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP26/054 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1 July 2025 (Minute Numbers GP26/033 – GP26/047), be approved as a correct record.

GP26/055 Minutes of Sub-Committees

RESOLVED:

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 15 July 2025 (Minute Numbers TTP26/001 – TTP26/009), that the draft minutes be noted.
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 15 July 2025 (Minute Numbers ENV26/001 – ENV26/009), that the draft minutes be noted.
- c) Mayor's Charity Sub-Committee held on 15 July 2025 (Minute Numbers MC26/001 – MC26/006), that the draft minutes be noted.

GP26/056 National Pay Award 2025-26

The Committee considered the report* of the Town Clerk (which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting) on the outcome of the 2025-26 national pay award negotiations for local government staff and its impact on the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council accepts the recommendations of the Town Clerk and adopts the new 2025-26 salary levels for staff on national local government pay scales.

* 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 Committee considered Stafford Borough Council's proposals for the reorganisation of local government in Staffordshire.

The consideration followed a public survey launched across Cannock Chase, Stafford Borough, and other Southern and Mid Staffordshire areas of the County, whose councils were working collectively towards a business case to submit to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). A copy of the survey had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting and residents, businesses, partners and organisations had been encouraged to participate in the shaping of the LGR in the county. A link to further information on devolution and local government reorganisation had also been provided.

The Chairman introduced the leader of Stafford Borough Council, Councillor Aiden Godfrey, who had kindly attended the meeting to brief the Committee on the current situation with local government reorganisation in Staffordshire and the Borough Council's preferred option.

Councillor Godfrey shared information on the background to LGR following publication of the White Paper outlining change. He referred to a series of meetings held locally between various districts and borough councils including Stoke on Trent City Council and the County Council with the purpose of formulating a proposal(s) on what the structure of local government should look like in Staffordshire.

A summary of Councillor Godfrey's report included the following points:

- The recommendation that a North unitary authority and a South unitary authority be set up in Staffordshire to take over from the nine existing district and borough councils.
- The North unitary authority would comprise Staffordshire Moorlands, Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke on Trent.
- The South unitary authority would comprise Stafford, South Staffordshire, Lichfield, Cannock, Tamworth and East Staffordshire.

Both North and South groups had been crafting proposals for submission to Central Government.

- The White Paper made clear that any new unitary authority must be sustainable. The Government has given a population guideline of 500,000 as a baseline minimum for a unitary authority to be economically viable and sustainable in the long term. All six district/boroughs in the south of Staffordshire come in at just over 600,000 people which was seen as positive.
- More recently South Staffordshire and Lichfield had developed the view that there should be two smaller unitary authorities in the south of the county rather than one big one. If split the populations of each would be around 309,000 and 318,000 which was substantially less than the Government's recommended size.

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- A North unitary authority driven by what was Stoke on Trent City Council, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council was considered a powerful force. Two smaller authorities positioned in between north Staffordshire and the powerful West Midlands, was seen as having the potential to struggle for funding. It was suggested that Staffordshire's funding would be diverted to Stoke on Trent.
- A single unitary authority in the south was considered more a financially secure and stable option than the proposal for two authorities. It would have access to higher levels of Government funding, attract more investment, be robust with political and financial muscle and less likely to fragment.
- The six districts in the south will have places like Burton on Trent, Stafford, Cannock and South Staffordshire (near to Wolverhampton) which are big economic areas. These areas combined will have some power and authority.
- A proposal has been put forward by Staffordshire Moorland District Council to take Stone, as well as Meir, Meir Heath and parts of Uttoxeter to join them with Moorlands, Newcastle and Stoke on Trent. The Leader did not support breaking the boundaries of Stafford Borough.
- Putting Stone into the North unitary authority was not considered beneficial to the town and may lead to it being used as a dumping ground for meeting development targets. Stone would struggle to compete with Stoke on Trent for funding.
- No consideration had yet been put into the structure of a strategic/combined authority. The formation of a strategic authority was thought to be more complicated still as Staffordshire is down on the numbers the Government says a strategic authority should look after. The favoured idea presently is to join forces with Shropshire.
- The Leaders and Chief Executive Officers of the district councils in the south meet on a regular basis with a company they have commissioned to consider the financing of the North and South options. A report should identify the most financially viable options.

At the end of the presentation several questions were asked by Councillors which provided clarification on the information Councillor Godfrey had given.

The Chairman advised the Committee that, although the survey had closed (Monday 1 September 2025) and the Borough Council had been unable to extend the deadline, engagement around LGR would continue. Stafford Borough Council will be in consultation with the Town Council up to the final submission to Government in November 2025.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Town Clerk had suggested compiling a paper for consideration (by the Committee) at the next meeting when a final response on the reorganisation of local government in Staffordshire, could be considered.

* 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 Committee agreed to this course of action.

At the end of the item, on behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Councillor Godfrey for attending the meeting.

GP26/058 Planning Application Validation Criteria Consultation

The Committee considered a Stafford Borough Council consultation seeking views on its Planning Application Validation Criteria setting out the information needed to assess planning applications.

An email from Stafford Borough Council and a copy of the 'Planning Application Validation Guidance and Local Validation Criteria' had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting. A link to the Local Validation Criteria Consultation had also been provided.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Committee that (whether or not a collective response was compiled) Town Councillors could complete the consultation independently.

The Committee agreed that Town Councillors put forward their individual comments to the Town Clerk in order that a draft collective response can be compiled (only with these responses) for consideration at the next meeting. The consultation close date is 17 October 2025.

GP26/059 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 detailing the following information:

- On 11 and 12 July the Heritage Centre successfully hosted a popular 'Sketch in Stone' exhibition, a showcase of paintings, sketchbooks and several 3D objects depicting the character of Stone.
- On 14 August he welcomed his 1000th visitor this year and since opening in June 2024 had received over 1960 visitors; numbers that had continued to exceed expectations.
- The recent VJ Day 80 exhibition ran from 14 to 30 August and received 135 visitors. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with one moved visitor expressing their thanks with the comment 'thank you for showing that you care'.
- As part of the National Railway 200 Celebrations the Heritage Centre will host a display in early September. In collaboration, a special walk and talk led by Councillor Philip Leason and Mr Steve Booth had been organised for 13 September 2025.
- Future talks by Shaun Farrelly and Chris Westwood are scheduled for November and December 2025.

* 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 Society for Staffordshire Artists will start to exhibit their work from 18 September, showcasing artistic interpretations of Stone and its surrounding areas.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Heritage Centre Manager continued to work on the development of 'The Story of Stone'.

GP26/060 Town Council Payments

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

GP26/061 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that a Steering Group meeting would be arranged soon.

Engagement with Young People

Councillor Dawson had nothing to report on this occasion.

GP26/062 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 held on 24 September 2025 at the Heritage Centre at 3pm and the SPCA County Officer would be attending along with Clerks and elected members of surrounding parishes.

Councillor Davies invited Town Councillors to join the meeting which would provide a briefing/discussion on Local Government Reorganisation.

Stone ATC

Councillor J. Davies advised the Committee that the next meeting of 2352 (Stone) Squadron ATC will take place on 11 September 2025. Unfortunately, he and the Town Mayor will not be available to attend due to the RAF Tactical Supply Wing Battle of Britain Dinner on the same evening.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Davies reported on an Age Concern Stone & District meeting he had attended with Councillor Thornicroft. Topics of discussion included:

- The finances which were in good order. A charity donation of £1,200 had been received from a 75K Peak Ultra Marathan fundraising event.
- The office computers needed updating due to the ending of support for Windows 10.
- A call for new volunteers had been made through ALBOS after longstanding volunteers had given their notice. The opening hours may be affected until new staff are in post.
- The Lunch Club was oversubscribed, and Club members were off to Llandudno in September.
- Mr Ravenscroft had been appointed a Trustee to the charity.

* 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.

Stafford District Access Group

Councillor Kelt was not available to give a report.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Townsend advised the Committee that a meeting of the Stone Common Plot Trustees, which included a Plot walkabout, had taken place on Sunday 31 August 2025.

The newly formed Resources Sub-Committee had met to look at how the Common Plot could attract funding into the future.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Townsend advised the Committee that a meeting of the Stone Community Hub Liaison Group took place on 28 July 2025. Most issues raised were operational in nature and the Town Council office were supporting efforts to resolve these.

The Community Hub was coming to the end of a 12-week pilot scheme aimed at attracting a wider and new demographic of clients.

The Hub was well supported with food donations enabling it to continue with its food bank offering. More tinned and packaged foods welcomed.

The Hub is now more rigorously assessing clients using a standardised assessment process to match need with available services.

Councillor Townsend said that funding would always be an issue and the Hub were actively looking at new opportunities.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Kelt was not available to give a report.

West Midlands Railway and other Rail Matters

Councillor Kelt was not available to give a report.

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 2 September 2025

PRESENT: Councillor J. Metters in the Chair, and
Councillors: A. Best, A. Burgess, K. Dawson, J. Davies, J. Hood, R. Kenney,
P. Leason, J. Powell, N. Powell and R. Townsend

Officers: R. Edwards and T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, I. Fordham, T. Kelt, B. Kenney, A. Mottershead
and C. Thornicroft

In the absence of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Committee, the
Town Mayor was appointed Chairman for the meeting.

PC26/019 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, I. Fordham,
T. Kelt, B. Kenney, A. Mottershead and C. Thornicroft

PC26/020 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

Councillor R. Kenney advised the Committee that, as a member of Stafford
Borough Council's Planning Committee, he would not speak or vote on the
planning applications listed on the agenda.

Councillor J. Hood advised the Committee that, as a member of Stafford Borough
Council's Planning Committee, she would not speak or vote on the planning
applications listed on the agenda.

PC26/021 Representations from Members of the Public

None

PC26/022 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on
1 July 2025, Minute Numbers PC26/013 – PC26/018), be approved as a correct
record.

PC26/023 Planning Applications

Application Number – 25/4 0938/HOU
Applicant – Mr & Mrs Fox

Location – Orchid Cottage, 33 Eccleshall Road, Stone

Development – Removal of existing covered store and provision of two storey side/rear extension and terrace

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40877/FUL

Applicant – J. R. & S. Trippett SIPP

Location – Block 1 & 2 (Phase 1) Stone Business Park, Diamond Way, Stone

Development – Variation of Condition 7 (hours of operation) on application 21/33758/FUL

Observations: The Town Council wishes to repeat the observations made in its response to planning application 21/33758/FUL (letter dated 14 April 2021), as the circumstances have not materially changed. These are:

The Town Council has no objections as long as the need to avoid disturbance to Brooms Park residents is recognised.

Application Number – 25/41001/HOU

Applicant – Mr P. Hancock

Location – 27 Parker Jervis Place, Stone

Development – Conversion of garage into a part garage, part home gym/office. Brick wall relocation.

Observations: No objections

PC26/024

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 – 25/40720/HOU

Applicant – Mr G. Hurlstone

Location – 1 Valley Road, Stone

Development – Single storey side extension

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40887/LBC

Applicant – Mr N. Griffin (Griffins of Stone Ltd)

Location – 30 High Street, Stone

Development – New rear access door with associated works

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40800/HOU

Applicant – Mr & Mrs S. Foster

Location – 17 Granville Terrace, Stone

Development – Single storey rear extension and alterations to the property

Observations: No comments were made by the Town Council

Application Number – 25/40674/ADV

Applicant – Mr S. Cole

Location – 31 High Street, Stone

Development – Advertisement Consent – timber Fascia, Fascia panel sign, projecting sign and fascia panel sign

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 25/40915/HOU

Applicant – Mr & Mrs Evans

Location – 2 Ambleside Close, Stone

Development – Single storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory and garage conversion (converted under permitted development).

Observations: No objections

CHAIRMAN

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

Stone Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Not Applicable.

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature

Forvis Mazars LLP

Date

25 September 2025

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Stone Town Council
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ST15 8JP

Direct line: +44 (0)191 383 6348

Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk

Date: 25 September 2025

Dear Mr Trigg

Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2025

We have completed our review for the year ended 31 March 2025 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the review, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council must consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, in particular, in the publication "*Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2024*". This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge.

Action you are required to take:

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the review. In summary, you are required to:

Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement on or before 30 September to confirm:

- that the review has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
- of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
- the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.
- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website, but this period must be reasonable.

Forvis Mazars LLP

Forvis Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Forvis Mazars Global, a leading global professional services network. Forvis Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at www.auditregister.org.uk under reference number C001139861. VAT number: GB 839 8356 73

Minor scope for improvement in 2025/2026

In undertaking the review of the 2024/25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return it came to our attention that in 2025 the Council has not met the requirements of the 2015 Accounts and Audit Regulations to start the period of 30 working days for the public to inspect the accounts the day after the AGAR was published and to do so as soon as possible after it was approved. The Council should ensure that in 2025/26 they comply with the Regulations.

Accessibility Regulations

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

Audit fee

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at [Audit Fees | Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments \(saaa.co.uk\)](https://saaa.co.uk) will follow.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



James Collins

Director

For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP

STONE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
7 October 2025
CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town Mayor

Thursday 9 October 2025	Admiral Sir Trevor Soar KCB OBE DL Lecture: Nelson & Jervis: Lessons in Leadership
Sunday 12 October 2025	Eccleshall Parish Council Civic Service
Friday 17 October 2025	2352 (Stone) Squadron ATC Annual Dinner
Saturday 18 October 2025	Stone Town Mayor's Trafalgar Evening
Saturday 1 November 2025	Stone Choral Society's Stone Circles Concert

Deputy Mayor

Saturday 18 October 2025	Stone Town Mayor's Trafalgar Evening
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TOWN MAYOR

TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 7 October 2025

Saturday 6 September – Nicholson War Memorial Centenary, Leek

The town of Leek was bustling with visitors and residents for the centenary of the Nicholson War Memorial. This memorial is the tallest of its kind, and was a gift from the Nicholson family to the town of Leek to commemorate all those that had fallen during the war. The occasion had become an opportunity to include the work of local artists and educational campaigns, an important occasion in recognising the devastating consequences of war. The local choir, youth bands, poets, and orators delivered tributes, and the descendants of the Nicholson family were in attendance, reminding us how close a piece of our history the wars were.

Thursday 11 September – RAF TSW Battle of Britain Dinner, MOD Stafford

I was warmly welcomed at the Officers Mess Hall at MOD Stafford and pleased to see our own Councillors Jim and Lin Davies. The dinner was interspersed with historical vignettes from records kept by the newspapers and participants during the Battle of Britain. Hearing from different military personnel from across the forces was inspiring and I was glad that they could have a night of relief from their busy and stressful lives. Prior to dinner, we had a fly over from a Spitfire - impressive, however very loud. A reminder of the stressful lives endured by many during the air raids of the 1940's, both in the military, and as citizens beneath the shadow of the bombers. I was glad to see the care and attention that is still paid to this important and historic event.

Saturday 13 September – Railway 200 Heritage Open Day

Councillor Philip Leason opened the event to commemorate 200 years of railways with a tour through the town, and then supported with a tour of the Jervis Mausoleum and old priory by the High Sheriff. The tour concluded at the heritage centre, and it was great to be furnished with further history and trivia of our colourful town, and the impact that train travel had on our town. This event was managed well by our friends at the North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership.

Saturday 13 September – Stone Scout and Guide band AGM

I was given a very warm reception at this year's Stone Scout and Guide Band AGM. I was pleased to hear that they have recruited more members, and the value that these young people derive from the club is phenomenal. The work of the volunteers benefits our town tremendously in terms of event participation and for entertainment and skill development for young people. It was great to see some of the old archive footage of the local bands playing in the 1990's, as well as to meet familiar faces and new. Kerry Dawson was praised well for her exemplary contributions and the town is better for her ongoing contributions, along with the club as a whole.

Saturday 13 September – Bloom and Twine Opening

One of our community volunteers, Jessica Norris has recently opened a mobile florists with a shop at the Walton Industrial Estate. It was a nice turnout with cakes and prosecco, and the store owners and independent business owners that I met were very glad to see me in the chain representing the town on the industrial estate. It was reassuring to see her conducting trade on the opening day through the publicity that

Jess has managed to garner within the community. Jess and her husband, Dave, contributed to this year's carnival and the bike rally earlier in the summer and they are true assets to the town.

Friday 26 September – JD Weatherspoon, Recognising community contributions of the staff

Wetherspoon's release a quarterly magazine with stories of interest and recognition of the staff and venues around the country. In the material for the latest article, the company wanted to feature our Deputy Town Mayor, Andrew Best. Having served as a local governor, serving a previous term as Deputy Town Mayor, all while acting as deputy manager at our local Poste of Stone. Andrew has been in post for 20 years, and it is great to have his community contributions as well as his work recognised by his employers. I was honoured to have the company of my consort who acts as a team leader there too. Photographs will be available in the next edition of the magazine available throughout the region in all venues.

Saturday 27 September – Classic Car Event

I was thrilled to peruse the pride and joy of many of our classic car owners from around the region all lined up from the very tip of the top of the town, to the very bottom! Clearly these events pull in a tremendous turnout, and our traders from every end of the high street will no doubt have seen the benefit in footfall. Whether people know the first thing about cars or not, the vision into the past is worth the visit alone. The high street became a museum with a real atmosphere about the town.

Sunday 28 September – Staffordshire Moorlands Civic Service

I attended the Chairman of Staffordshire Moorlands Civic Service and we were heartily welcomed outside Biddulph council chambers to their new monument to the local miners in the region. The service was very personal to Adam Parkes, and he truly spoke from the heart. He inspired many people in the audience and was complimented widely. Adam and his fiancé were beyond welcoming and personable and the mirth at the reception after the service was fantastic. I was pleased to represent Stone, with many attendees indicating their excitement to see the Crown Wharf after I told them of the new heritage centre and the work that has been put into the new theatre.

Thursday 2 October – Stone Alzheimer's Club 19th Birthday Celebration

Residents from around Stone and surrounding towns and villages came together to celebrate the 19th Birthday of the Stone Alzheimer's Club and also to commemorate and celebrate the memory of their founder. Volunteers and service users were well entertained with a singer, and everyone was dancing and enjoying cake. I was even asked to support the hostess by performing my best air guitar solo! It was wonderful to see the community officers attend, and I was honoured to express the town's gratitude for the hard work that goes in to supporting our elderly community. This club is more than just a social club, though it does serve as that for many of the members. It is also a point of contact for addressing and identify other health conditions. Over the last year through the health initiatives hosted at the club, 3 members identified critically important health conditions early - an essential requirement in addressing issues

before they progress. This club is a gem of our community, and filled with so much joy and support.

DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 7 October 2025

14 September – Battle of Britain Commemoration and Tactical Supply wing, Royal Air Force Freedom Parade

I attended the civic service to commemorate the Anniversary of the Battle of Britain on the 14th September. It was well attended and our very own Cllr Jim Davis was there too. The rain held off until the end, we only needed umbrellas to get back to the civic centre. It was very meaningful and right, the way in which we all commemorated that time in Britain's history seemed very fitting. I was honoured to be invited to attend.