



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

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15 Station Road

STONE

ST15 8JP

2 December 2025

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2025 at 7:05pm**, or on the rising of the Council meeting, if later.

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

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence, and to consider the approval of any reasons given for absence under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Requests for Dispensations Received

4. To receive a report from County Councillors representing Stone Town

- County Councillor J. Hood
- County Councillor A. Mynors

5. To receive a report from Borough Councillors representing Stone Town

6. 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.

7. Minutes of Previous Meetings

- a) To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 4 November 2025, Minute Numbers GP26/079 – GP26/091 (attached).

8. Minutes of Sub-Committees

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 18 November 2025, Minute Numbers TTP26/017 – TTP26/023 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 18 November 2025, Minute Numbers ENV26/018 – ENV26/025 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes
- c) Estates Sub-Committee held on 18 November 2025, Minute Numbers EST26/001 – EST26/010 (attached)
 - i. To consider the draft minutes

9. Budget 2026-27 to 2028-29 - Overview

To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached).

10. Town Council Payments

To receive a list of payments made by the Council during the period 1 to 31 October 2025 (attached).

11. Update from Working Groups:

To receive updates from Working Group co-ordinators:

- a) Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group (Chairman: R. Kenney)

12. To receive reports from Town Councillors on attendance at meetings as a representative of the Town Council

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group – Cllr J. Davies

Stone ATC – Town Mayor & one Cllr – Cllrs: J. Metters and J. Davies

Age Concern Stone & District – Cllrs: J. Davies and C. Thornicroft

Stafford & Stone Access Group – Cllr T. Kelt

Stone Common Plot Trustees – Cllrs: A. Burgess, J. Hood, T. Kelt, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group – Cllrs: J. Battrick, J. Powell and R. Townsend

SPCA Executive Committee – Cllr T. Kelt

West Midlands Railway and other rail matters – Cllr T. Kelt

Members of the public are welcome to attend the General Purposes Committee 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 – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 4 November 2025

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, L. Davies, J. Hood, T. Kelt, B. Kenney, P. Leason,
J. Metters, A. Mottershead, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Officers: L. Fleetwood & T. Williams

ABSENT: Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, K. Dawson, I. Fordham and R. Townsend

GP26/079 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, K. Dawson, I. Fordham 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.

Apologies were also received from Officers: L. Trigg and R. Edwards

GP26/080 Declarations of Interest

None

GP26/081 Requests for Dispensations

There were none

GP26/082 To receive the report of the County Councillors

The Chairman invited County Councillors to address the Committee.

County Councillor Jill Hood

Councillor Hood informed the Committee that the County Council's Cabinet had met to confirm its East West proposal for Local Government Reorganisation.

The Eastern Unitary authority will serve an approximate population of 689,784 residents covering Staffordshire Moorlands, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Tamworth and Stoke on Trent areas.

The Western Unitary Council will serve an approximate population of 487,794 residents covering Newcastle under Lyme, Stafford, Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire.

* 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 Hood advised the Committee that the Deputy Leader, Martin Murray, had spoken about this split being the best option for delivering quality services and meeting the aspirations of the people of Staffordshire.

The County Council would be submitting its proposal to the Government by the deadline of 28 November 2025.

County Councillor Andrew Mynors

Councillor Mynors was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP26/083 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

Councillor Rob Kenney

The Chairman said the North South proposal for local government reorganisation had been analysed and was proven to be the best arrangement.

Councillor Jon Powell

Councillor Powell informed the Committee that he had called in planning application 25/41057/OUT (Land at Marlborough Road, Walton).

GP26/084 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP26/085 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7 October 2025 (Minute Numbers GP26/063 – GP26/078), be approved as a correct record.

GP26/086 Minutes of Sub-Committees

There are no minutes for consideration.

GP26/087 Stone Town Policing

The Chairman invited PCSO Neil Moffatt to step forward to deliver his (verbal) Police report and allow Town Councillors to consider policing issues in Stone.

PCSO Moffatt shared information on the following topics:

- Homelessness in Stone – a number of homeless people in the town have been offered accommodation and will soon be moving away from their camps. Streetscene will be tending the areas after they have gone.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – a reduction in instances of anti-social behaviour had been noted in Westbridge Park.

* 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.

- Anti-Social Behaviour – a large group of children have been issued with community protection warnings after causing disturbances outside Morrisons.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – individuals have been accessing the rooftops behind the Card Factory.
- There have been two attempted burglaries in Walton where the perpetrators have been trying to access high spec vehicles on residents drives.
- StoreNet Retail Radio System – a Stone PCSO will be attending a meeting to encourage businesses to sign up to the system which provides retail radio links to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- ‘Hot Spot’ patrols – are taking place in towns such as Stafford, Stone and Newcastle after government funding was awarded to increase the numbers of police patrols.
- There will be a visible police focus in town centres on knife crime (Ditch the Blade), Bonfire Night and Christmas initiatives.
- Driving through Stone High Street – officers are issuing £100 fines and working to deter people from breaching the Traffic Regulation Order. The Police welcome County Enforcement Officers in respect of addressing parking in the High Street.
- E-scooter presentations – have been undertaken by PCSO Moffatt at local schools to educate children on the legalities of riding E-scooters.

Town Councillors raised the following points:

- Concerns were expressed about a particular group who have been visiting Stone. The Local Policing Team have been aware of their presence in town. Their activities have included placing a banner across the footbridge near Aldi.
- Letters have been issued stating that Staffordshire Police were proposing to change PCSO shift patterns, moving the end time from 10pm to 9pm.

PCSO Moffatt confirmed there were three PCSOs in Stone.

The point of the changes was said to be alignment of resources with a stronger police presence during busier times of day. Town Councillors expressed concern about loss of PCSO cover during the nighttime.

At the end of the item the Chairman thanked PCSO Moffatt for attending the meeting and giving his report.

GP26/088 Engagement with Young People Working Group

The Committee considered disbanding the Engagement with Young People Working Group due to the limited availability of time resources.

RESOLVED: That the Engagement with Young People Working Group be disbanded.

GP26/089 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 30 September 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.

GP26/090 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that a meeting of the new Heritage Centre Steering Group would be arranged shortly.

Engagement with Young People

The working group has been disbanded in accordance with Minute Number GP26/088 (above).

GP26/091 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 take place in January 2026 when it was hoped there would be greater clarity on the direction of Local Government Reorganisation to assist in directing discussions.

Stone ATC

Councillor J. Davies advised the Committee that he and the Town Mayor had attended an excellent annual dinner on 17 October 2025.

The Squadron was in very good shape. It had a limit on the number of cadets that could be accommodated due to the size of the building and Councillor Davies had highlighted the need for larger accommodation with the MP for Stone.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that there had been no meeting.

Stafford District Access Group

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that the next meeting would be held on 8 December 2025, which the Local Policing Commander would be attending.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that a meeting would be taking place on 6 November 2025.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Powell advised the Committee that a meeting of the Community Hub Liaison Group was in the process of being arranged.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Kelt informed the Committee that a meeting had taken place on 3 November which followed the usual format of items on policy, training, health and wellbeing and general information (that came through on email).

He reported that increased subscriptions had been agreed and the accounts accepted. Some new roles in relation to the creation of parishes were proposed. Green Belt issues were discussed although the role the Committee can play was unclear.

The SPCA AGM will be taking place on 24 November 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.

West Midlands Railway and other Rail Matters

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that he had attended the North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership meeting in Stoke on Trent where they ran through the activities and achievements during the year.

The next rail users group meeting will take place on 27 November 2025.

CHAIRMAN

Stone Town Council

Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee

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

PRESENT: Councillor A. Best in the Chair and
Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson and J. Powell

Co-opted Member: J. Cook

Officers: L. Trigg (attended the meeting virtually on Teams), R. Edwards, L. Fleetwood and T. Williams

Note: At the start of the meeting and in the absence of the Sub-Committee Chairman and the Sub-Committee Vice Chairman, the Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Andrew Best, was appointed to take the chair for the meeting.

By Chairman's invitation: No Requests

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, J. Hood, B. Kenney, R. Kenney, J. Metters and A. Mottershead

TTP26/017 Apologies

Councillors: J. Hood, B. Kenney, R. Kenney, J. Metters and A. Mottershead

TTP26/018 Declarations of Interest

None made.

TTP26/019 Requests for Dispensations

None received.

TTP26/020 Representations from Members of the Public

None received.

TTP26/021 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting held on 16 September 2025 (Minute Numbers TTP26/010 – TTP26/016), were 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.

TTP26/022 Calendar of Events

The Sub-Committee considered the Town Council's Calendar of Events and gave updates on events that had taken place:

2025 – Taken Place

- Vegan Market (20 September 2025)
Good reports had been received about the Vegan Market with lots of stalls and variety of produce/goods on offer.
- Classic Car Event (27 September 2025)
The Classic Car show was a successful well attended event with impressive numbers visiting town to view the exhibits.

2025/2026 – Upcoming/Agreed

The following events to be hosted by the Town Council, and their agreed dates, were noted by the Sub-Committee:

- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 20 November 2025)
The Chairman reported that preparations for the Switch-On were in hand and that volunteer stewards had been recruited.
- Texas Flag Raising, marking the anniversary of Texas joining the Union on 29 December 1845 (Monday 29 December 2025)
Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that the usual arrangements would apply with the December 2025 event being low key.
- Texas Flag Raising, marking Texas State's independence from Mexico (Saturday 7 March 2026)
Councillor Davies advised the Sub-Committee that the usual arrangements would apply in March 2026.

Other Events

In the absence of the Sub-Committee Chairman, Councillor Hood, the detailed arrangements for the other events listed on the agenda were not discussed at this time.

- Any suggested new future events

The Chairman invited Sub-Committee members to put forward new ideas for events in 2026.

Suggestions were made that the Sub-Committee should consider a formal opening of the Heritage Centre and an Armed Forces Day event.

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TTP26/023 Reports from Working Groups

The Chairman invited co-ordinators from each Working Group to address the Sub-Committee:

Remembrance Plaques Working Group

Councillor L. Davies advised the Sub-Committee that the Remembrance plaques continued to be a work in progress.

It was suggested the Remembrance Plaques project could be launched at the same time as the opening of the Heritage centre. The plaques have been designed and locations for installation identified.

The Working Group may be ready for its report to be considered by the General Purposes Committee after a Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee meeting, early in the New Year.

Market Strategy Working Group

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Markets Working Group had not yet arranged their meeting.

Friendship Agreement Working Group

Councillor J. Davies advised the Sub-Committee that a draft policy document had been formulated but the Friendship Agreement Working Group would be meeting when the direction of local government reorganisation was clearer. He said that future changes to the structure of local government would have an important impact on friendship arrangements.

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 – Environment Sub-Committee

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

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

Officers: L. Trigg (attended the meeting virtually on Teams), R. Edwards,
L. Fleetwood and T. Williams

By Chairman's Invitation: No requests

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, B. Kenney, R. Kenney and J. Metters

ENV26/018 Apologies

Councillors: B. Kenney, R. Kenney and J. Metters

ENV26/019 Declarations of Interest

None made.

ENV26/020 Request for Dispensations

None received.

ENV26/021 Representations from Members of the Public

None received.

ENV26/022 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 16 September 2025 (Minute Numbers ENV26/010 – ENV26/017), were approved as a correct record.

ENV26/023 Environmental Sub-Committee Works Update

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

He advised the Sub-Committee that the Grounds Maintenance Contractor will be working on the town borders over the winter and early spring. As part of this work some Silver Birch trees will be subject to pollard treatment as a lot of them are shallow rooted and subject to wind damage.

It was suggested that an alternative and more robust tree species could be considered as a replacement for the Silver Birch (potentially through an initiative that provided free trees).

The Deputy Town Clerk has sourced a balanced lock arm/beam for Walton Roundabout from Canal and River Trust operatives working on Star Lock. The Grounds Maintenance Contractor will install it when it is available.

The footpath on Crown Meadow which is scheduled to be built up to prevent surface water flooding, will not be completed in the immediate term but should be completed before the end of the financial year, subject to weather conditions.

The Chairman reported that he and the Deputy Town Clerk had visited the allotment site in Mount Road and surveyed the Mare's Tail which was noted to be prolific on a couple of allotment plots. The weed is known to spread like wildfire unless contained and is difficult to eradicate. The solution was considered to be allocating Plot 2A to a knowledgeable new allotment holder who was able to manage it. Plot 1A had a more serious Mare's Tail problem which will need further consideration.

ENV26/024 Crown Meadow

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

Mount Road Allotments

The boundary wire fence was in need of repair and possibly replacement with old broken down concrete posts and tangled wiring. It was not known whether the remedial work would require a budget but a quotation would be requested from the grounds maintenance contractor.

Recording of Flora and Fauna

The Chairman will be visiting the allotments sites next week with David Emley, Photographer and recorder of wildlife, to consider the criteria and parameters for David recording the flora and fauna, starting next month with the goodwill of allotment holders. He said there was an awareness of the importance of the allotment sites in the ecological and natural world and publishing this information would be interesting and informative.

Crown Meadow (General)

The Chairman said he hoped to work on the development of a long term ecological and management plan for Crown Meadow with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor's input. The plan would steer the improvement and

future proofing of Crown Meadow; providing guidance on future budgets for tree planting, woodland maintenance, attracting wildlife, meadow flowers and the like. He has sought the advice of an authoritative body and secured their offer of help.

The Chairman will continue to consult with the Ecology and Biodiversity Officer at Stafford Borough Council in moving forward with formation of a five year plan.

ENV26/025 Reports of Working Groups

Environmental Working Group

The Chairman reported that the Environmental Working Group hadn't met recently but would be considering the five year plan for Crown Meadow as its next project.

Stafford Borough Sustainability Panel Meeting: Councillor Kelt advised the Sub-Committee that he had attended a Stafford Panel Meeting on 17 November 2025.

He said that things were starting to move with potential future impacts next year in the Borough (including Stone) in areas such as tree planting and educating schools. There was a lot of work and progress in East Staffordshire on biodiversity, more so than in Stafford Borough. Councillor Kelt said the Panel geographically covered Staffordshire although it was a Stafford Borough initiative.

Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association has issued information about Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESP), a nationwide initiative looking at local requirements for decarbonisation, growth and access to cheap and affordable low impact energy. The Plans will be looking at the way energy is generated, stored and distributed with findings/developments driven down to individual regions.

Councillor Kelt was not clear how RESPs will impact Stone and the Sustainability Panel in Stafford. The project has been going since 2023 and will start producing something in 2026. He has applied to attend a webinar to learn more and gain an understanding of the impact on Stafford borough and in turn Stone.

Chairman

Stone Town Council – Estates Sub-Committee

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

PRESENT: Councillor A. Best in the Chair and
Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Officers: L. Trigg (attended the meeting virtually on Teams), R. Edwards,
L. Fleetwood and T. Williams

By Chairman's invitation: J. Davies and R. Townsend

ABSENT: Councillors: I. Fordham, J. Hood, R. Kenney, J. Metters and A. Mottershead

EST26/001 Apologies

Councillors: I. Fordham, J. Hood, R. Kenney, J. Metters and A. Mottershead

EST26/002 Declarations of Interest

None made.

EST26/003 Requests for Dispensations

None received.

EST26/004 Representations from Members of the Public

None received.

EST26/005 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Estates Sub-Committee meeting held on the 18 March 2025 (Minute Numbers EST25/027 – EST25/034), be approved as a correct record.

EST26/006 Car Parking

The Sub-Committee considered the parking arrangements at the Frank Jordan Centre.

* 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 advised the Sub-Committee that a short term parking issue had arisen at the Frank Jordan Centre (which was likely to soon be resolved) prompting questions about longer term parking efficiency on the car park.

The installation of parking lines had been investigated as a solution and a cost of £650 obtained (not including pre sweeping) for the parking of 32 cars. This was more than the number of cars that parked there currently, by a reasonable margin. However, the poor condition of the car park surface was an issue with this course of action as the lines would wear away quickly, estimated to last for twelve to eighteen months.

The Chairman suggested installing signs on the surrounding walls to mark the position of the parking bays and enable motorists to use the car park to maximum effect.

The use of reflective strips screwed to the walls was also suggested as well as a combination of reflective strips and professionally printed and purchased signs (that make clear parking is reserved for customers of the Frank Jordan Centre).

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman agreed that they would undertake some research on different parking systems, in time for the next meeting of the Sub-Committee in January 2026.

The Town Clerk advised them that at least a provisional costing would need to be available at the next Sub-Committee meeting if it was to be considered for inclusion in next year's budget.

EST26/007 Street Lighting

The Sub-Committee considered the Town Council's street lighting provision.

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that he was aware that a report had been prepared some years ago detailing the lighting that needed to be refurbished, refitted or updated.

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Town Council had responsibility for two separate sets of lights in the town. He was aware that a group of lights near the war memorial had had their bulbs updated to LED.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that she had made an enquiry to Eon about eight sets of lights and was awaiting advice. The lights are located: in Adies Alley (x2) St Michael & St Wulfad's Church (Hemp Butts) (x2), Newcastle Road (x1), Lamb Lane (x1) and Trent Hospital (x2).

The Chairman said he would like reassurance that the lighting was being maintained and the Town Council were receiving value for money.

* 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 Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that a maintenance payment was made to Eon as well as a payment for the electricity supply. The outcome of her investigation would be made available to the Sub-Committee when Eon's report had been received.

EST26/008 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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.

EST26/009 Confidential Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Confidential Minutes of the Estates Sub-Committee meeting held on the 18 March 2025 (Minute Numbers EST25/027, EST25/033, EST25/033 and EST25/034), be approved as a correct record.

EST26/010 Update on Stone Station

The Town Clerk provided an update on Stone Station in respect of the extended use of the lease.

He advised the Sub-Committee that a meeting had been arranged with Council representatives, representatives from Network Rail and Sir Gavin Williamson CBE MP on Friday 21 November 2025 which will include a discussion about the Stone Station lease.

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.

Introduction

1. This report sets out the prospects for the Council's 2026-27 to 2028-29 budget. It considers the overall position of the Council, the context in which the budget needs to be set, and the standstill budget, which is the starting point for the determination of the 2026-27 precept.

Background

2. Before addressing the figures relating to the budget, it is first necessary to consider the context in which the budget needs to be set.
3. For a number of years, the Council has received payments of around £40,000 from Stafford Borough Council in addition to the precept. For 2026-27 this includes £29,184 to compensate for a previous reduction in this Council's Taxbase due to benefit changes and £11,461 for the cost of concurrent functions. Neither of these payments are a legal requirement, and, at the time of writing this report, have not been finally confirmed though they are based on provisional figures provided by Stafford Borough. The figures in this report assume that these payments will continue into the foreseeable future at the same cash level as estimated for 2026-27.
4. The Secretary of State has the power to require a referendum of local people before the Council Tax can be put up by more than a specified percentage. Currently, parish councils are exempt from this requirement, though this may change if Council Tax increases in the sector are considered to be excessive. Any change to this position would be likely to be made public during December, would be expected to be subject to consultation.
5. Recent year's budgets have been prepared in the context of major inflationary pressures, particularly with respect to energy. For this reason, the three-year budgets have been calculated without taking into account the effects of inflation. A separate estimate of inflation beyond this date was made across the whole budget as an "inflation contingency" and added to the General Purposes Committee budget.
6. The "Budget 2025-26" figures in the table below include a reallocation of £10,657 from this inflation contingency to individual budget lines to meet inflationary pressures throughout the rest of the financial year.
7. Inflation for 2026-27 is expected to be relatively low compared to some recent years, but this may change in the future. The same approach has therefore been used this year, with no inflation beyond 31st March 2026 being provided within individual budget lines and a separate inflation contingency being included within the General Purposes Committee

budget. This contingency will continue to be reviewed in order that the most up to date estimates of inflation can be used when the Council finalises its budget in February 2026.

8. The figures below assume that all Council services will continue at broadly their current level, adjusted for any known variations within existing Council policy.

Standstill Budget

9. The table at Appendix A sets out the Council's current and forecast position for each budget. It is also summarised below by Sub-Committee:

Actual 2024-25		Budget 2025-26	Forecast 2025-26	Budget 2026-27	Budget 2027-28	Budget 2028-29
£		£	£	£	£	£
479	Estates	37,865	39,660	26,700	26,700	26,628
25,791	Environment	31,635	30,560	21,480	21,480	21,471
46,604	Tourism & Town Promotion	49,240	42,550	52,710	51,210	51,210
315,964	General Purposes	479,379	441,319	376,994	442,064	402,574
-37,206	Earmarked Reserves	-113,682	-113,682	-	-	-
351,633	TOTAL	484,437	440,407	477,884	541,454	501,883

10. The figures above and in Appendix A are based on the following:

- a. Known and forecast expenditure for the remainder of the current financial year.
- b. Forecast expenditure for the next three years, based on a standstill position. These figures therefore assume that current services will continue with no growth or cutbacks other than those which have already been committed by previous decisions of the Council.
- c. A provisional estimate of 3.2% has been made for cost inflation in 2026-27, with a further 3% in 2027-28 and 2.9% in 2028-29. Energy costs have, however been assumed to increase by 5% per annum across the three years, and salaries by 3% each year. An annual 5% increase in all fees and charges has been built in.

11. It can be seen from the above table that the current budget is forecast to underspend by around £44,000, after providing for a number of budget adjustments agreed by the Committee during the year. This underspending is largely due to lower than anticipated net costs at Stone Station, the Heritage Centre and for office accommodation, together with a £6,000 grant received from Stafford Borough Council towards the Christmas Light Switch-On. This is partly offset by lower than expected income at the Frank Jordan Centre.

Standstill Budget 2026-27

12. The standstill budget for 2026-27, at £477,884, is £12,606 higher than the forecast made when the 2025-26 budget was approved in February 2025. The main reasons for this

difference are an agreed increase in the employees budget and the purchase civic regalia earlier than originally planned, though there are also a number of other, smaller variations either way making up the figure.

Service Developments and Savings

13. The standstill budget is, however, just the starting point for the budget process. The Committee will want to review the amounts provisionally included. In addition, there are likely to be other areas where the Council may want to undertake new developments or stop/change the things that it is doing now.
14. Some budgets have been allocated to Sub-Committees, and some retained by this Committee. At meetings in January, these budgets will need to be considered in detail to determine the best pattern of spending to meet the Council's objectives and obligations and determine the budget recommendations to Council.

Recommendations

15. That the Committee notes the standstill budget position for 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 and the issues related to setting the precept, and:
 - a. Authorises the reallocation of the inflation contingency, in accordance with the figures in this report.
 - b. Asks each sub-committee to consider its financial needs for the next three years and report back to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee with its budget proposals,
 - c. Considers its own budgets at the next meeting of this Committee.
 - d. Considers whether it wishes to give any specific instructions to sub-committees to which they would need to have regard while preparing their proposed budgets.

Stone Town Council

Standstill Budget 2026-27 to 2028-29

Actual 2024-25 £		Budget 2025-26 £	Forecast 2025-26 £	Budget 2026-27 £	Budget 2027-28 £	Budget 2028-29 £
-33,236	Frank Jordan Centre	-23,650	-16,500	-10,500	-10,500	-10,500
27,653	Stone Station	35,125	29,600	18,780	18,780	18,708
7,754	Stone Heritage Centre (Running)	45,250	13,650	45,000	45,000	45,000
-2,139	Town Market	-2,020	-3,940	-2,090	-2,090	-2,090
3,497	Bus Shelters & Street Furniture	5,840	6,020	5,870	5,870	5,870
940	Street Lighting	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
864	Dog & Litter Bins	900	890	900	900	900
100	Joules Clock	-	-	-	-	-
660	Town Electricity Supply	650	650	650	650	650
-	Building Maintenance	18,000	18,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
20,455	Grounds Maintenance	25,565	24,040	23,650	23,650	23,650
7,959	Crown Meadow Improvements	4,120	4,930	-	-	-
-2,623	Allotments	-50	-410	-2,170	-2,170	-2,179
-	Environmental Initiatives	2,000	2,000	-	-	-
20,153	Christmas Lights	21,260	20,000	23,500	22,000	22,000
28,590	Tourism & Town Promotion	30,000	26,490	31,300	31,300	31,300
2,389	Grants	5,611	5,611	4,000	4,000	4,000
228,007	Salaries & Employment Costs	253,800	252,900	249,600	251,000	251,000
8,087	Accommodation	15,010	10,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
9,289	Insurances	10,760	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
29,186	Administration	50,096	50,096	40,400	55,400	40,400
2,063	Audit & Legal Fees	1,450	1,800	1,765	1,765	1,765
-	Town Council Elections	-	-	-	35,000	-
2,941	Allowances - Mayor & Deputy Mayor	3,440	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500
601	Regalia & Presentations	200	300	4,200	800	300
2,287	Civic Dinner & Hospitality	2,600	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
2,893	Remembrance Sunday & War Memorials	3,500	3,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
492	Miscellaneous	800	800	800	800	800
-6,640	Interest	-5,600	-5,300	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500
-	Neighbourhood Plan	-	-	-	-	-
38,078	Stone Heritage Centre (Setup)	73,922	73,922	-	-	-
-	Market Square Improvements	30,000	30,000	-	-	-
-	General Contingency	-	-	-	-	-
-	Inflation Contingency	-	-	14,190	31,260	42,270
-11,461	Concurrent Functions Allowance	-11,460	-11,460	-11,461	-11,461	-11,461
-37,206	Rollover Reserve	-113,682	-113,682	-	-	-
-	Neighbourhood Plan Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
351,633	TOTAL	484,437	440,407	477,884	541,454	501,883

Date: 01/12/2025

Time: 10:13:41

Stone Town Council - Payments

Page: 1

The table below lists payments made by the Council in the period identified, for the Committee's information.

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 : 01/10/2025

Payment Date To : 31/10/2025

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
01/10/2025	9214	Prism Solutions	Leased line rental - Sept 25	60.90
01/10/2025	02361192	Stone Shoe Repairs Ltd	Engraving allotment shields	30.00
01/10/2025	9214	Prism Solutions	Leased line rental - Sept 25	49.99
01/10/2025	9214	Prism Solutions	Leased line rental - Sept 25	59.90
03/10/2025	38340704	PayPro Europe Ltd	Mail merge subscription	86.04
06/10/2025	wp-INV10375637	Water Plus	Water Usage Newcastle Rd 15.08-15.09.25	16.45
07/10/2025	12461680	British Gas	Elec Supply Ampitheatre 19.08 to 23.09.25	16.32
07/10/2025	INV5000085	MEB Total Ltd	FJC - 1/4 Fire alarm test -8.8.25	64.17
07/10/2025	V02393541550	EE	EE Mobiles - 29 Sept to 28 Oct	15.74
07/10/2025	V02393541550	EE	EE Mobiles - 29 Sept to 28 Oct	15.74
08/10/2025	86	MJ Plant	Marquee setup - Aug 25	895.00
08/10/2025	89	MJ Plant	Crown Meadow Topping	188.00
08/10/2025	INV-11493	EDG Security Limited	HC - Intruder/fire alarm maint to Apr 2026	90.00
08/10/2025	INV-11494	EDG Security Limited	SSTN - maintain fire alarm to Apr 2026	75.00
08/10/2025	41UG031-0009	Geosphere TA Parish Online	Parish Online Digital Mapping Subscription 25/26	600.00
08/10/2025	83	MJ Plant	Grounds Maint - Sept - Amp,CM, MR, Allotments, Abbey	1,784.00
08/10/2025	87	MJ Plant	Marquee Set Up - Sept 25	735.00
08/10/2025	91	MJ Plant	Install safety warning signs at CM	165.00

Date: 01/12/2025

Time: 10:13:41

Stone Town Council - Payments

Page: 2

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
08/10/2025	82	MJ Plant	Grounds Maint - Aug of Amp, Cm, MR, Abbey St and	1,784.00
08/10/2025	88	MJ Plant	MR - Hedge cutting	110.00
08/10/2025	81	MJ Plant	Grounds Maint - July 25	1,784.00
08/10/2025	85	MJ Plant	Marquee Set Up July	835.00
08/10/2025	90	MJ Plant	Repairs to Crown Meadow gate	140.00
09/10/2025	GB57TMPFZAEUI	Amazon	HC - Blue Roll	17.08
09/10/2025	6000001011	MidlandFlags	STC Flag	62.48
09/10/2025	12488806	British Gas	Elec Usage - Feeder Pillar 1, 30 High Street 25.08 to	19.56
09/10/2025	201615202588694	Pozitive Energy	Gas Usage - Heritage Centre 01.09 to 31.09	45.03
09/10/2025	DS-AEU-INV-GB-20	Amazon	Audio cable for PA System	6.66
10/10/2025	GB57TOIG1AEUI	Amazon	Antibac Spray - SSTN	12.77
13/10/2025	1000101742	The Flag Shop	Flags and bunting used annually at Trafalgar	73.00
14/10/2025	444008-045	Virgin Media Business	Telephone rental and calls to 21.10.25	97.53
14/10/2025	12532445	British Gas	Elec Usage 61 High Street 25.08 to 25.09.25	23.93
15/10/2025	INV325756109	Zoom Video Comm Inc	Zoom Subscription - Oct 14 to Nov 13 25	25.98
15/10/2025	SI-251295	Mailing room	Franking machine rental to 31.01.26	60.00
16/10/2025	BCB	Miscellaneous	Donation Envelopes	1.50
16/10/2025	206994433	WM Morrisons Supermarket Ltd	Port for Trafalgar Dinner	100.00
16/10/2025	FF27677	FLAGS AND FLAGPOLES	Union Flag samples	7.99
20/10/2025	206994434	Miscellaneous	Port for Trafalgar Dinner - Sainsburys	20.25
20/10/2025	01529072	VALDA ENERGY	SSTN Elec 1.10-31.10.2025	323.59
20/10/2025	01529071	VALDA ENERGY	SSTN Elec Usage 01.09 to 30.09.25	2.29
20/10/2025	01529072	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Elec Usage 1.10-31.10.2025	327.68
20/10/2025	01529072	VALDA ENERGY	SSTN Gas 1.10-31.10.2025	354.67
20/10/2025	01529072	VALDA ENERGY	FJC Gas Usage 1.10-31.10.2025	436.89

Date: 01/12/2025

Time: 10:13:41

Stone Town Council - Payments

Page: 3

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
21/10/2025	7070297607	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Qtr Office Rent 20.01.26	150.00
22/10/2025	FF27729	FLAGS AND FLAGPOLES	50 Union Flags	189.00
22/10/2025	17305	All Print Equipment Ltd	Copier usage - Sept 25	15.53
22/10/2025	SBC	Stafford Borough Council	High Street Annual Premises Licence	70.00
22/10/2025	SBC	Stafford Borough Council	SBC Annual Lottery Licence	20.00
22/10/2025	SPFA	Staffordshire Playing Fields Association	SPFA annual subs 2025/26	20.00
22/10/2025	CD-244134530	Culligan	Water Cooler Rental - October 25	23.06
22/10/2025	53656	Panda Press (Stone) Ltd	Trafalgar Dinner Menus	85.00
23/10/2025	GB50HZV25Y8LLI	Amazon	10 Wooden Broom handles for flags	24.98
24/10/2025	743014903/001/10	Virgin Media Business	Broadband Usage - 6 Oct to 6 Nov 25	50.00
27/10/2025	12679574	British Gas	Elec Usage - HC - 9 Sep to Oct	121.39
27/10/2025	227955	Prism Solutions	Prism IT Managed Service - Nov 25	1,405.20
27/10/2025	206993788	Water Plus	Water Usage - SSTN to 05.10.25	109.79
27/10/2025	wp-INV10527480	Water Plus	Water usage - FJC to 06.10.25	89.12
28/10/2025	SOT1153584	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection FJC - Sept 2025	113.30
29/10/2025	2510039	Crown Highways	Installation of poles at Walton for Christmas lights	749.75
29/10/2025	INVOICE006	KTC Security Services Ltd	Install/Remove Bollards Oct 25	60.00
29/10/2025	11104266	Chubb Fire	SSTN Fire extinguisher service and replacement	238.50
30/10/2025	SOT1153585	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Waste Collection SSTN - Sept 2025	78.25
30/10/2025	206993794	Water Plus	Water Usage - Mount Road - 09.09 to 09.10.25	48.93
31/10/2025	53824	Panda Press (Stone) Ltd	Remembrance Day order of service sheets	259.00
				16,460.05