



Town Clerk

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5 January 2026

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2026 at 7:10pm**, or on the rising of the Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee, if later.

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

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

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

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest and declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**
3. **Requests for Dispensations**
4. **Representations from Members of the Public**

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

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Sub-Committee held on 18 November 2025, Minute No's ENV26/018 – ENV26/025 (attached)

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

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

7. **Crown Meadow**

To receive an update from the Chairman.

8. **Budget 2026-27 – 2028-29**

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

9. **Reports of Working Group**

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

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

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

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

Stone Town Council – Environment Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 18 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
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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 - Environment Sub

Dept	Job Description	Details	Current Status	Approved Budget	Est Date
Allotments	Asbestos Removal	Remove and dispose of asbestos. Asbestos survey confirmed issues as low risk and requires monitoring.	MP has removed asbesto pile from plot 2A and stacked in a layby on the site. MP will add to the pile as he gradually clears asbestos items from other plots. MP will inform us when finished, and we will then obtain a quote to have asbestos professionally removed by a specialist. Raised borders on plot 13 to be dug out and replaced with sleepers as budget allows - MP is liasing with the plot holder on this, as they need to agree to the work. 30.08.24 MP confirms that the plot holder is going to give up the plot soon, and then work can commence on the removal. 24.10.24 Plot holder has renewed for another year, investigation underway to resolve before next growing season. Nov 24 - MP will investigate using gravel boards as a cheaper alternative to sleepers. March 2025: No immediate prospect of being able to remove asbestos sheeting from Plot 13 until an affordable option for new boards is reached. Costs to STC to replace with gravel boards or sleepers is too great.	1825	Work started March 24
Grounds Maint	Walton Roundabout pruning and re-planting	Cut back/prune exisitng shrubs & ivy to promote new growth. Insert new shrubs where required.	March 2025: Pruning and cutting back has been completed. Spaces left by dead shrubs and Formia have now been filled by new growth. Mick recommends that new plants are not necessary at this stage and other more pressing remedial work is required. Use remaning budget towards restoration of other town borders, specifically the overgrown laurel copse opposite the Star Inn and for pollarding of overgrown silver birch trees in town borders on Christchurch Way and Stafford Street.	600	Mar-26
Grounds Maint	Town borders pruning and re-planting	Cut back/prune exisitng shrubs & trees to promote new growth. Insert new shrubs where required.	Time sensitive. Has been rolled over from 2022/23. MP has now done some cutting back in Spring 2024. Remaining budget will be used for further cut back and planting new shrubs later in 2024. 27.8.24. MP confirmed the plan to cut back, remove and replant where required and particularly on Stafford & Lichfield St borders. 24.10.24 - MP confirmed that work has commenced and is ongoing. Nov 24 -MP has indicated that work will be completed by 31.03.25. 10.3.25 Town borders were visited and reviewed by Mick, Robert and Rachel. Several areas for replanting were agreed with the aim of getting this done by end of current Fin Yr. Some remedial tree work and pollarding was	600	Mar-26

			also identified to keep some trees in Town Borders manageable and safe. Mick to advise on how much of this work can be done within existing budget (£600 + £600) and from the tree maintenance budget. 7.11.25 - work is ongoing, larger tasks are scheduled and will be completed in Spring 26		
Grounds Maint	Re-install Lock Gate	Replace damage lock gate on Walton Roundabout	Canals Trust to source lockgate or MP to manufacture. Agreed that MP will make if Canals trust does not supply soon. 27.8.24. MP is committed to reinstating lock gate. No date given. 10.3.25: Waiting on Canal Trust to find us a lock balance arm. 28.6.25 DTC to discuss this project with MP and seek a way forward. 03.09.25 - CRT have promised to source a lock balance arm. 7.11.25 - CRT have confirmed that they have sourced a balance beam and will deliver it soon. (no date given yet)	400	
Environmental Initiatives	Foot path improvements to alleviate against flooding	Raise the level of the diagonal foot path so that floodwater runs off it rather than in to it.	Budget for this project approved for 2025/26. Mick will scrape the footpath to widen it then use the scrapings and additional aggregate to build up the footpath by a few inches where necessary so that the water runs off the footpath, rather than into the footpath. 03.07.2025 - Work to commence in late Summer early Autumn. 7.11.25 - work is scheduled to be started soon and will be completed by Mar 26	1560 +£1000 contingency	Mar-26
Allotments	Mare's Tail infestation at Mt Rd allotments	Assess the current problem. Evaluate possible solutions. Develop action plan.	11.11.25. Robert and Rachel visited Mount Rd to look at extent of the problem. It is severely affecting allotment Plots 1a and 2a. It is spreading outwards to other allotments and will continue to do so. Initial research says that MT is impossible to eradicate but it can be reduced and contained. The first action is find a new tenant for 2a who is familiar with Mare's Tail, knows how to deal with it and not spread it. The tenant of 1a unexpectedly renewed recently. This plot needs remedial work to tidy it up and to contain MT as it has got away from the tenant.		

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to determine the level of budget for services under its control that the Sub-Committee wishes to recommend to the General Purposes Committee.

Background

2. The General Purposes Committee on 9th December 2025 considered the standstill budget for 2026-27 and indicative figures for the next two years based on a number of assumptions contained within the report.
3. The standstill budget was prepared on the basis that all Council services will continue at broadly their current level. Inflation has not, however, been included in Sub-Committee budgets beyond 2025-26. A separate estimate of inflation beyond this date has been made across the whole of the Council and will be considered by the General Purposes Committee.
4. The figures for this Sub-Committee on the above basis are:

Actual		Budget	Forecast	Budget	Budget	Budget
2024-25		2025-26	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
£		£	£	£	£	£
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	-	-	-
25,791	TOTAL	31,635	30,560	21,480	21,480	21,471

5. . In respect of these figures, Sub-Committee Members should note that:
 - a. The Grounds Maintenance budget figure includes regular maintenance (£22,650) an annual provision for bridge cleaning/painting (£600) plus a contingency for unforeseen events (£400).
 - b. The Crown Meadow Improvements forecast includes the footpath (£2,560), replanting the town borders and Walton roundabout (£1,200) and replacing the Walton Roundabout "Lock Gate" (£400).
 - c. The Allotments budget for 2026-27 and subsequent years includes provision for water charges (£850), general maintenance (£1,430) and the allotment competition

(£250). Against this is set estimated annual income of £4,700. The 2025-26 forecast includes £1,825 for asbestos removal.

- d. The Environmental Initiatives budget has currently spent £300 related to Crown Meadow articles. The remainder is currently unspent, though there is an outstanding commitment for the remaining amount of the budget that is currently in dispute. Any remaining allowance as at 31st March 2025 can be rolled forward for spending in 2026-27. In line with normal practice, no budget provision has been made beyond the current year. If the Sub-Committee wishes to provide for additional budgets in future years, this will need to be recommended to the General Purposes Committee.
6. As reported to the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 9th December 2025, the standstill budget is just the starting point for the budget process. Members of the Sub-Committee will want to review this standstill budget and the amounts provisionally included. In addition, there are likely to be other areas where the Sub-Committee will want to undertake new developments or stop/change the things that they are doing now.
7. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the standstill budget and any areas of growth or savings which they would want to be taken into account in setting the budget for 2026-27 and future years.

Recommendations

8. The Sub-Committee is asked to recommend their proposed budget for consideration by the General Purposes Committee.