



Stone

Town Council

Town Clerk

Les Trigg

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5 January 2026

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **TOURISM & TOWN PROMOTION SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2026 at 7.05pm**, or on the rising of the Planning Consultative Committee, if later.

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

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

Councillors: Mrs J. Hood (Chairman), A. Mottershead (Vice Chairman), A. Best, A. Burgess, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, B. Kenney and J. Powell

Co-opted
Member: Mr J. Cook

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 Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 18 November 2025, Minute No's TTP26/017 – TTP26/023 (attached)

6. Calendar of Events

To consider the Town Council's Calendar of Events (and give updates on events that have taken place) including:

2025

Taken Place

- Christmas Lights Switch-On (Thursday 20 November 2025)
- Texas Flag Raising, marking the anniversary of Texas joining the Union on 29 December 1845 (Monday 29 December 2025)

2026/2027

Upcoming/To be agreed

- Texas Flag Raising, marking Texas State's independence from Mexico (Saturday 7 March 2026)
- St George's Day (April 2026)
- Floating Market (possibly May 2026)
- Children's Event (August 2026)
- Summer Street Party (August 2026)
- Florence Brass Band Concert & Burma Star Commemoration (August 2026)
- Vegan Market (September 2026)
- Classic Car Event (possibly July 2026)
- Bike Event (possibly August 2026)
- Alternative Car Event (September 2026)
- Any suggested new future events

7. Stone Traders' Group

To consider Stone Traders' Group's proposed event schedule for 2026 (attached).

8. Rebekah

To consider the future of Rebekah, the narrow boat on the canal bridge.

9. Budget 2026-27 – 2027-28

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

10. Reports from Working Groups

- Remembrance Plaques Working Group (Co-ordinator: L. Davies)
- Market Strategy Working Group (Co-ordinator: J. Hood)
- Friendship Agreement Working Group (Co-ordinator: J. Davies)

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 Tourism & Town Promotion 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.

Please access the Council Chamber from the rear of the building.

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.

TPP26/022 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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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 Traders Group Proposed Events 2026

Acknowledgement of Support from Stone Town Council

We would like to thank Stone Town Council for their continued support, which enables us to actively promote the town centre through the events we organise throughout 2025. The ongoing collaboration with the Council has been instrumental in the continued success and vibrancy of our activities.

The events held within the town are widely recognised as essential for increasing footfall and engaging both residents and visitors. Their impact is evident in the enhanced atmosphere, economic benefits, and greater community participation, all contributing positively to the town's reputation and vitality.

Event Organisation and Structure

Role of the Stone Traders Group

The Stone Traders Group is responsible for organising and overseeing all scheduled events throughout 2026, with a primary focus on maximising benefits for both the town and its wider community. The Group aims to ensure that each event positively contributes to the local area, supporting its reputation and vitality and enhancing the target on making Stone destination location for visitors.

Event Administration and Logistics

To facilitate the smooth running of each event, the Stone Traders Group enlists external support for event administration and logistics. The costs associated with these services are covered by the income generated from the events themselves, ensuring a self-sustaining approach.

Governance and Community Focus

Although day-to-day administration is managed by third parties, the Group retains overall oversight and provides strategic direction to keep activities aligned with its objectives and the needs of the community. Operating as a not-for-profit limited by guarantee, the Stone Traders Group reinvests any surplus generated back into local initiatives, further supporting the town and its residents.

Proposed Change of Event Days

It has been proposed that two of the upcoming events may be rescheduled to take place on Saturdays, subject to approval from Stone Town Council. This potential change is aimed at maximising accessibility and convenience for both participants and attendees. The final decision will be contingent on the agreement and support of the Council and feedback from our members if agreed by STC.

Stone Street Food Events

The Stone Street Food event has become a well-established and popular fixture in the town's annual calendar. Building on the positive response and success of previous years, we plan to maintain the same format as 2025. The events will take place on the third Friday of each month, running from June through to October, between 15:00 and 21:00. This consistent scheduling is intended to continue attracting both residents and visitors, thereby supporting local businesses and enhancing the vibrancy of the town centre.

Friday 17th April

Break in May due to Stone Food & Drink Festival

Friday 19th June

Friday 17th July

Friday 21st August

Friday 18th September

Emergency Services Day – Sunday 20th September

The Emergency Services Day was a highly popular addition to the town's event calendar in 2025. The event brought together a range of emergency service vehicles, providing an excellent opportunity for the public to engage directly with the organisations that serve the community. Many of the participating services expressed a strong interest in repeating the event in 2026, recognising its value in fostering connections with residents and visitors alike.

A key highlight of the day was the chance for children to interact with the various emergency vehicles on display. This hands-on experience allowed young attendees to learn more about the vital roles played by emergency services, while promoting public awareness and appreciation for their work.

Halloween Festival – Saturday 31st October

The Halloween Festival proved to be a resounding success again this year, attracting strong community participation and generating a vibrant atmosphere throughout the town. Despite the positive reception, the event faced some challenges due to funding constraints. In 2025, we were unable to secure Government funding through SBC, as had been the case in 2024. This shortfall necessitated a reduction in the number of complimentary activities we could provide during the day, which impacted the overall offering, particularly for families and children.

In light of these circumstances, we would like STC to consider providing a subsidy for the 2026 Halloween Festival. Such financial support would enable us to reinstate and expand the range of free activities available to children, ensuring the event remains accessible and enjoyable for all members of the community.

Would STC consider allowing us to run this on Halloween day itself Saturday 31st October instead of a Sunday and if so would need the financial support of STC or SBC to go ahead in its current format.

Christmas Markets

The Christmas Markets continued to stand out as a real highlight for the local Traders throughout the year. Their significance was particularly notable due to the strong retail aspect, which contributed substantially to the town's shops during the festive events. The markets provided an invaluable boost for businesses, attracting visitors and shoppers, and generating increased footfall across the retail sector. This positive impact was keenly felt by shop owners and traders, who welcomed the opportunities presented by the markets to showcase their products and enhance sales during the holiday period.

To allow residents and visitors who may work one weekend day or another, would STC like us to consider holding one of the two Christmas markets on a Saturday in 2026?

Saturday 28th November 10.00am – 3.00pm (if not then Sunday 29th November)

Sunday 13th December 10.00am – 3.00pm

Stone Food & Drink Festival 2026 Westbridge Park – for information only.

Event Overview

Now entering its 21st year, the Stone Food & Drink Festival is organised by four Directors: Ed Stant, Angela Arnold, Cath Haigh, and Charlotte Eglington. Each director shares equal responsibility for the ongoing success of the event. For the 2026 festival, there will be a particular focus on strengthening engagement with town centre businesses, with the aim of creating stronger connections between the festival and the wider town.

The Stone Food & Drink Festival is scheduled to take place from Friday, 8th May to Sunday, 10th May 2026. All necessary preparations have been made in advance, including the submission of the Event Management Plan, Risk Assessment, and all other required supporting documentation to SBC. Outline approval for the festival has now been granted by SBC.

Features and Attractions

In keeping with the tradition established in previous years, the 2026 festival will feature appearances by celebrity chefs and well-known media personalities. Their participation is expected to raise the profile of the festival, drawing increased attention and encouraging greater numbers of visitors to attend.

Economic Impact

The heightened visibility and increased attendance associated with the festival are anticipated to deliver substantial economic benefits for local businesses. The event continues to serve as a key driver for trade and hospitality in the town, stimulating growth and offering strong support to the local commercial sector.

Ed Stant

Stone Traders Group

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 2024-25	£	Budget	Forecast	Budget	Budget	Budget
		2025-26	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
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
-2,139	Town Market	-2,020	-3,940	-2,090	-2,090	-2,090
46,604	TOTAL	49,240	42,550	52,710	51,210	51,210

5. In respect of the figures above, Sub-Committee members should note:

- a. The Christmas Lights budget includes the cost of providing the lights, and the electricity to run them, but not the costs of the switch-on event which are included in the Sub-Committee's Tourism & Town Promotion budget. This budget reflects the agreed contract payments to Christmas Plus, the cost of erecting, removing and storing the poles for the Walton Shops lights and a contingency for maintenance and replacement of the infrastructure and Council owned lights. The 2026-27 budget includes the periodic cost of anchor testing, but no specific allowance has been made for any tree re-wrapping that may be required over the budget period.
- b. The Tourism and Town Promotion forecast to the current year includes a grant of £6,000 from Stafford Borough Council towards the cost of the Christmas lights

switch-on event which was not included in the original budget, offset by an overspending of £2,800 on VE/VJ Day events. The budget for 2026-27 and subsequent years includes the cost of hanging baskets in the Town Centre (£6,000), the Christmas lights switch-on event (£4,300), High Street Christmas Trees (£4,000), a general provision for town promotion events (£16,000) and a contingency for unforeseen items (£1,000).

In the current year, the cost of hanging baskets was around £3,000, rather than £6,000, due to a reduction given by Stafford Borough due to the reduced quality of the 2024 displays.

- c. The Town Market forecast for 2025-26 shows a slightly better than expected surplus. For 2026-27 and subsequent years, income and expenditure have been budgeted for at broadly current levels with an annual contingency of £2,000 for ongoing maintenance. No provision has been made for Market Square rental income.
- 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.