

# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 1 April 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. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

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

**ABSENT:** Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Burgess, K. Dawson, I. Fordham, J. Metters,  
A. Mottershead and N. Powell

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### **GP25/139** Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, K. Dawson, I. Fordham,  
J. Metters, A. Mottershead and N. Powell

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

### **GP25/140** Declarations of Interest and Declarations

None made

### **GP25/141** Requests for Dispensations

None received

### **GP25/142** To receive the report of the County Councillors

The Chairman invited County Councillors to address the Committee:

#### **County Councillor Jill Hood**

Councillor Hood had no report to deliver on this occasion.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hood for her attendance at meetings and the  
hard work she had undertaken for the benefit of Stone during her term of office.

#### **County Councillor I. Parry**

Councillor Parry was not in attendance at the meeting.

### **GP25/143** To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee but there  
were no reports.

**GP25/144 Representations from Members of the Public**

Due to this meeting taking place in the pre-election period for County Council elections, the Scheme of Public Participation had been suspended.

**GP25/145 Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 4 February 2025 (Minute Numbers GP25/113 – GP25/133), be approved as a correct record.
- b) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 18 March 2025 (Minute Numbers GP25/134 – GP25/138), be approved as a correct record.

**GP25/146 Minutes of Sub-Committees**

RESOLVED:

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 18 March 2025, (Minute Numbers TTP25/035 – TTP25/041), that the draft minutes be noted.
- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 18 March 2025 (Minute numbers ENV25/036 – ENV25/045) that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number ENV25/045 be adopted.
- c) Estates Sub-Committee held on 18 March 2025 (Minute Numbers EST25/027 – EST25/034), that the draft minutes be noted.

**GP25/147 Appointment of Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor Elect**

The Committee considered the appointment of a Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor Elect for the year 2025-26 and the arrangements for Mayor Making.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the arrangements for Mayor Making will involve holding the ceremony at St Michael & St Wulfad's Church as part of the Civic Sunday Service, in line with previous years.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Jason Metters is appointed as Town Mayor Elect for 2025-26 and Councillor Andrew Best is appointed Deputy Mayor Elect.

**GP25/148 Grant to Local Organisation**

To receive and, if appropriate, consider the following request for a grant from a local organisation:

- a. **Organisation: Alleyne's Academy**  
**Amount Requested: £995**  
**Reason: To support the purchase of shelving and furniture for the school library.**

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\* 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.

- i. Turnover is over £100,000
- ii. Value of grant requested is over £500

The application did not meet the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated, but a proposer and seconder came forward to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant.

The Town Clerk confirmed that as the school library was not part of the core curriculum, the Town Council would legally be able to support the project if it so wished.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Alleynes Academy with the suggestion that the school approaches other local parish councils to seek their support for the remaining balance of the project.

**GP25/149 Annual Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**

The Committee undertook to review the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in accordance with the report\* of the Town Clerk.

The appendix\* to the Town Clerk's report (which included a copy of the revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations) had been included in the electronic version of the agenda (only).

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that one of the major changes to both documents was an update in the contract regulations. There were also a small number of other minor updates.

The Town Clerk reported that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had issued a new set of Model Financial Regulations and after reviewing the Town Council's current set against the model set concluded that the current financial regulations were more appropriate/suitable for the activities of a larger local council and should be maintained with amendments (as above) rather than be replaced.

RESOLVED: To defer consideration of the revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations until the next meeting of the Committee in accordance with normal practice.

**GP25/150 Review of Councillor Code of Conduct**

The Committee undertook a review of the Council's Councillor Code of Conduct. A copy of the document\*, updated for dates only, had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed that after a review of the document he did not propose any changes.

RESOLVED: To accept the Council's Code of Conduct after a review by the Town Clerk.

**GP25/151 Review of Scheme of Public Participation**

The Committee undertook to review the Council's Scheme of Public Participation.

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The Scheme had been reviewed by the Town Clerk, who had made changes to clarify that the scheme was open to Stone Town residents only, and that the scheme will be suspended prior to all national and local elections, not just Town Council elections. An updated copy of the document\* had been attached to the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED: To accept the Town Council Scheme of Participation with amendments made by the Town Clerk.

**GP25/152 Review of Staffing Guidelines**

The Committee undertook to review the Council's Staffing Guidelines.

The Guidelines had been reviewed by the Town Clerk, who made changes to clarify that in considering national pay awards, regard needs to be given to employees existing contracts of employment, to authorise the Town Clerk to implement nationally agreed changes to the living/minimum wage, and to remove reference to public sector exit payment caps, which were never implemented nationally.

An updated copy of the document\* with changes tracked had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED: To accept the Town Council's Staffing Guidelines with the amendments made by the Town Clerk.

**GP25/153 Heritage Centre**

The Committee considered an update on Stone Heritage Centre.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that a request had been received from the Borough Council for information on the grant money that had been spent to check that everything was in order. He said the value of the grant was £40,000 and a little over the sum (£40,019) had been spent.

**GP25/154 Town Council Payments**

RESOLVED: To note the list\* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 January to 28 February 2025.

**GP25/155 Update from Working Groups:**

**Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group**

There was no additional update from the Steering Group.

**Engagement with Young People**

Councillor Dawson was not available to give a report.

**GP25/156 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 the next meeting would be arranged after the County Council elections.

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### **Stone ATC**

Councillor J. Davies advised the Committee that after cancellation of the last meeting, he and Councillor Leason were waiting for clarification on the next meeting date for the Squadron's Civilian Welfare Committee.

### **Age Concern Stone & District**

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place.

### **Stafford & Stone Access Group**

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that a meeting of Stafford & Stone Access Group would be taking place on Monday 7 April 2025.

### **Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Townsend advised the Committee that a recent meeting of the Common Plot Trustees had taken place where a discussion had included the planning and ecological improvement of their ponds. There were also some interesting comments about management of their woodlands after losing a number of trees. Questions were raised about the course of action to take in respect of clearing and planting new trees.

### **Stone Community Hub Liaison Group**

Councillor Townsend confirmed that his first meeting of Stone Community Hub Liaison Group would be tomorrow – 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

### **SPCA Executive Committee**

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that the next meeting of the Executive Committee would take place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

### **West Midlands Railway and other Rail Matters**

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that a meeting of West Midlands Railway had taken place on 27 March 2025 where various items were discussed, mainly relating to the north of Stone.

**The meeting was suspended and reconvened after the Planning Consultative Committee meeting had taken place.**

#### **GP25/157 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**To resolve, 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 items of business.

#### **GP25/158 Confidential Minutes of Sub-Committees**

- a) Environment Sub-Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2025, Minute Numbers: ENV25/036 and ENV25/045.

RESOLVED: To note the Minutes of the Environment Sub-Committee and approve the recommendations contained in Minute Number ENV25/045.

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- b) Estates Sub-Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2025, Minute Numbers: EST25/027, EST25/033 and EST25/034.

RESOLVED: To note the draft Minutes of the Estates Sub-Committee.

**CHAIRMAN**