

Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 3 February 2026

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Best, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt, B. Kenney, P. Leason,
C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

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

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, J. Metters, A. Mottershead
J. Powell and N. Powell

GP26/104 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: A. Burgess, J. Davies, L. Davies,
K. Dawson, J. Metters, A. Mottershead, J. Powell 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.

GP26/105 Declarations of Interest and Declarations under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that as Councillor Townsend was a Council
appointed representative to Stone Community Hub Liaison Group he did not need
to declare an interest in agenda item 11d. (Minute Number GP26/114) – Grants to
Local Organisations, and was able to speak and vote at the meeting.

Councillor R. Kenney and Councillor Hood advised the Committee that although
they were members of St Michael's Hall Committee they did not have any
involvement in the finances and were not required to declare an interest in agenda
item 11e. (Minute Number GP26/114) – Grants to Local Organisations.

Councillor Hood declared a personal interest in item 11f. – Grants to Local
Organisations, but stated that she was intending to seek a dispensation under the
next agenda item.

GP26/106 Requests for Dispensations

The Committee considered a request for a dispensation from Councillor Hood in
relation to agenda item 11f. – Grants to Local Organisations.

Councillor Hood had in advance of the meeting requested a dispensation* to allow
her to speak and vote in consideration of the grant application from Alleyne's
Academy, as she was a school governor.

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RESOLVED: That Councillor Hood be granted a dispensation to speak and vote on agenda item 11f. (Minute Number GP26/114) – Grants to Local Organisations: Alleyne's Academy.

GP26/107 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 Staffordshire County Council had invited County Councillors to put out a call to residents about a service improvement plan that was underway jointly with Staffordshire Enhanced Partnership. The plan included a review of the County's bus services for the purpose of identifying how well they were operating, whether they were meeting the needs of communities and whether there were gaps in service that needed to be addressed.

Councillor Hood asked that Town Councillors inform their contacts (stressing the imminent close date of Friday 6 February 2026) and expressed her hope that something positive would come out of the review for Stone and the surrounding areas.

County Councillor Andrew Mynors

Councillor Mynors was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP26/108 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

Councillor Jill Hood

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that the Borough Council's Housing Options Team was aware that a homeless person was sleeping in the bus shelter in Walton. Housing Officers had done everything in their power to persuade the person to accept accommodation but the offer of help had been declined.

Councillor Philip Leason

Councillor Leason advised the Committee that the Borough Council was implementing a food waste service from April 2026 but a lot of negative comments had been received, particularly in respect of costs. He said the Borough Council was implementing a government funded strategy and not a local initiative. Borough Councillors were in support of the new service.

GP26/109 Representations from Members of the Public

None received.

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GP26/110 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9 December 2025 (Minute Numbers GP26/092 – GP26/103), be approved as a correct record.

GP26/111 Minutes of Sub-Committees

- a) Tourism & Town Promotion Sub-Committee held on 13 January 2026 (Minute Numbers TTP26/024 – TTP26/033), that the draft minutes be noted, and the recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP26/030 be adopted.

The recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number TTP26/032 was considered as part of Minute Number GP26/101 (agenda item 10).

- b) Environment Sub-Committee held on 13 January 2026 (Minute Numbers ENV26/026 – ENV26/034), that the draft minutes be noted.

The recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number ENV26/031 and ENV26/032 had been fed into the budget discussion which formed part of Minute Number ENV26/033.

The recommendations of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number ENV26/033 was considered as part of Minute Number GP26/101 (agenda item 10).

- c) Estates Sub-Committee held on 13 January 2026 (Minute Numbers EST26/011 – EST26/018), that the draft minutes be noted.

The recommendation of the Sub-Committee contained in Minute Number EST26/016 was considered as part of Minute Number GP26/101 (agenda item 10).

GP26/112 General Purposes Committee – Budget 2026-27 to 2028-29

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk* (which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting) examining the 2026-27 to 2028-29 budget requirements for the specific services managed directly by the General Purposes Committee, including those which had previously been the responsibility of the former Management Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommends for consideration later in the meeting alongside the proposals from Sub-Committees, the adoption of the standstill Committee budget for 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29, as detailed in the Clerk's report, with the following adjustments:

- a. An increased inflation provision of £208 in 2026-27, £248 in 2027-28 and £364 in 2028-29 for the Council as a whole as a result of

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budget changes put forward by Sub-Committees. *(NOTE: These figures will need to be recalculated if any of the budget proposals are changed when the overall budget for recommendation to the Council is considered later in the meeting).*

GP26/113 Budget 2026-27 to 2028-29 for recommendation to the Council

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk* (which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting) alongside the budget proposals from Sub-Committees and from this Committee.

RESOLVED: In respect of the Town Council's budget for 2026-27 to 2028-29, it is proposed that the following recommendations be made to the Council:

1. The Standstill Budget included in the Clerk's report to this meeting be recommended to the Council for adoption with the following amendments:
 - a. Estates:
 - i. A one-off contingency provision of £500 should be made in the Frank Jordan Centre 2026-27 budget for improvements to parking arrangements.
 - b. Environment:
 - i. A provision of £1,100 should be made in the current year's budget for the repair/replacement of the boundary fence at Mount Road Allotments.
 - ii. A provision of £2,000 in 2026-27 and £3,000 per annum in subsequent years should be added to the Environmental Initiatives budget to provide funding for the proposed Crown Meadow Management Plan.
 - c. Tourism and Town Promotion:
 - i. A one-off provision of £3,000 should be made in 2026-27 for the replacement of outdated Christmas lighting display features.
 - ii. An ongoing increase of £1,000 per annum should be made to the Tourism and Town Promotion budget to provide additional funding for a summer holiday children's event.
 - d. General Purposes:
 - i. An increased inflation provision of £208 in 2026-27, £248 in 2027-28 and £364 in 2028-29 for the Council as a whole as a result of budget changes put forward by Sub-Committees. *(NOTE: These figures will need to be recalculated if any of the other budget proposals for recommendation to the Council are changed at the Council meeting).*
2. As a consequence of the above, the precept on Stafford Borough Council for 2026-27 would be £431,362.01, with Local Council Tax Support Grant of £29,184.05 to be added. This would result in a 2026-27 Council Tax for this Council's purposes of £66.99 for a Band D property, an increase for the

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year of £3.00, with indicative Council Tax levels of £70.27 and £73.71 for the following two years.

GP26/114 Grants to Local Organisations

The Committee considered requests for grant aid from local organisations. Before consideration, the Town Clerk informed the Committee that £3,111 remained within the Grants budget.

The following organisations met the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy:

- a. **Organisation:** Stone Alzheimer's Club
 Amount Requested: £350
 Reason: To purchase a speaker and microphone system to aid communication and to play music at meetings.

 RESOLVED: To award a grant of £300 to Stone Alzheimer's Club.

- b. **Organisation:** Tilling Drive Allotments
 Amount Requested: £500
 Reason: To support the replacement of a self-laid water pipe system which is showing signs of wear.

 RESOLVED: To award a grant of £400 to Tilling Drive Allotments.

- c. **Organisation:** Stone Lions Club
 Amount Requested: £500
 Reason: Prostate screening.

 RESOLVED: To award a grant of £500 to Stone Lions Club.

- d. **Organisation:** Stone Community Hub
 Amount Requested: £500
 Reason: To start a series of activities in 2026 to promote health and wellbeing.

 RESOLVED: To award a grant of £400 to Stone Community Hub.

The following organisations did not meet the eligibility criteria within the Council's grants policy for the reasons stated but the Committee agreed to instigate a discussion about making an award of a grant:

- e. **Organisation:** St Michael's Hall
 Amount Requested: £500
 Reason: To support redecoration of the hall.
 - i. Level of reserves
 RESOLVED: To award a grant of £400 to St Michael's Hall.

- f. **Organisation:** Alleyne's Academy
 Amount Requested: £250
 Reason: To purchase materials to start a gardening club.
 - i. Turnover in excess of £100,000

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RESOLVED: To award a grant of £250 to Alleyne's Academy.

- g. **Organisation:** Futures2gether
Amount Requested: £500
Reason: To purchase gardening tools to maintain a community garden.
 - i. Turnover in excess of £100,000

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £400 to Futures2gether.

- h. **Organisation:** Stone Community First Responders
Amount Requested: £500
Reason: To purchase a Laerdal Suction unit (LSU) for use in emergency medical situations to clear a patients airway.
 - i. Level of reserves

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £450 to Stone Community First Responders.

GP26/115 Meeting Schedule for 2026-27

The Committee considered a proposed meeting and civic events schedule* for the period May 2026 to April 2027 which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The Committee noted that as Stafford Borough Council's 2026-27 programme of meetings was not yet available, some amendments may subsequently need to be made to avoid future clashes.

RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council's meeting schedule for 2026-27 with the August meetings removed. Any further, necessary amendments during the year would be determined by the Town Clerk in consultation with the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee Chairman, in line with the current practice.

GP26/116 Town Council Payments

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

GP26/117 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that the first meeting of the new Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group had taken place with the Heritage Centre Manager receiving direction on the Heritage Centre's next stages of development. Over the next year or so this will include themed events such as '250 years of the Trent & Mersey Canal' and the development of the 'Story of Stone'.

The Chairman said the meeting was most productive and reported that the Group would soon be taking on some new co-opted members.

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GP26/118 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

The Chairman reported on behalf of Councillor J. Davies that there had not been a recent meeting of the Stone Area Parish Liaison Group. A meeting will be called as soon as the Government's decision regarding reorganisation in Staffordshire is published.

Stone ATC

The Chairman reported on behalf of Councillor J. Davies that a meeting of the Stone ATC Civilian Welfare Committee was held on Tuesday 13 January 2026 which unfortunately clashed with the Town Council meetings that evening. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 24 February 2026.

Age Concern Stone & District

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that there had been no meeting of Age Concern Stone & District. The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Friday 6 February 2026.

Stafford & District Access Group

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that no meeting of the Stafford & District Access Group had been held.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Townsend advised the Committee that the newly formed Funding Sub-Committee had met for a second time and was formulating proposals to access new streams of funding for the Common Plot. A meeting would be held on 9 February 2026.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Battrick informed the Committee that he and Councillor Townsend had attended a meeting of Stone Community Hub Liaison Group (on 3 February 2026).

The group had discussed a number of items including the Frank Jordan Centre car park and flooring, and the Hub representatives confirmed at the meeting that they were happy with the service provided by the Town Council office.

The General Purposes Committee discussed the role of the Liaison Group, and it was agreed that this needed to be clarified.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Kelt informed the Committee that a meeting had taken place with the usual reports given. The main topic of discussion was council elections and the likelihood of them taking place over the next two years.

West Midlands Railway and other Rail Matters

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that he hadn't been able to attend the last meeting of West Midlands Railway. He said it did not appear there were references to Stone town directly and pointed out that the train operating companies had now reverted to public ownership.

CHAIRMAN

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