

# Stone Town Council – General Purposes Committee

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

**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and  
Councillors: A. Best, J. Davies, K. Dawson, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt, P. Leason,  
J. Metters, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

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

**ABSENT:** Councillors: J. Battrick A. Burgess, L. Davies, B. Kenney, A. Mottershead, J. Powell  
and N. Powell

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### GP26/119 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Battrick, L. Davies, B. Kenney,  
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.

### GP26/120 Declarations of Interest

None made

### GP26/121 Requests for Dispensations

None received

### GP26/122 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 still  
only had an interim Leader and it wasn't known when a permanent Leader would  
be appointed.

After attending some very important Corporate Parent meetings Councillor Hood  
made an appeal for foster carers to come forward as the County Council were  
desperately in need of additional support with this service.

#### **County Councillor Andrew Mynors**

Councillor Mynors was not in attendance at the meeting.

**GP26/123**    **To receive the report of Borough Councillors**

The Chairman invited Borough Councillors to address the Committee.

**Councillor Ian Fordham**

Councillor Fordham advised the Committee that Stafford Borough Council had resolved a Council Tax increase of 2.99% for the year 2026-27. The precepts for parished areas, including the Town Council, were noted.

The Borough Council had also resolved to appoint Councillor Mark Winnington as Borough Mayor Elect in preparation for the upcoming municipal year (2026-27) and Councillor Frank James had been appointed Deputy Mayor Elect.

**Councillor Jill Hood**

Councillor Hood informed the Committee that she had spent time today (on 3 March) at the Rising Brook Community Church, an incredible organisation that signposts people to various service agencies, runs a well-attended Open House Lunch Club and a successful furniture store.

She said the Community Church would be pleased to receive donations of furniture and were willing to collect and make deliveries.

**GP26/124**    **Representations from Members of the Public**

None received.

**GP26/125**    **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3 February 2026 (Minute Numbers GP26/104 – GP26/118), be approved as a correct record.

**GP26/126**    **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

There were no Sub-Committee minutes.

**GP26/127**    **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 handed out a copy letter that he and PC Duncan had produced about the early closure of the arcade shutter (at 1800hrs rather than the usual 2100hrs) leading to the car park at the rear of B&M. This was a temporary trial for one month in response to a recent increase in anti-social behaviour occurring during the evening. The letter was intended for businesses in the vicinity.

The Police will be continuing to host community events and will be holding a Copper Event at Bod on 9 March 2026.

Town Councillors asked the following questions:

- May we have an update on the situation on Westbridge Park?

PCSO Moffatt advised the Committee that he wasn't aware of any major issues occurring on Westbridge Park over the last couple of months. He said a small minority will give the park a bad name and Police patrols were undertaken as often as possible. Due to people in Stone caring so much about their town, incidents can sometimes be emphasised to a greater extent than in other areas and the Police were not always able to share information (to allay fears) when an investigation was in progress.

- Is there a problem with shoplifting in Stone?

PCSO Moffatt advised the Committee that there was not in his opinion a shoplifting problem in Stone, certainly when compared with neighbouring areas. He said the Police had been working with local schools and officers were present in the High Street as much as possible at school finish times. They were also working closely with B&M. A small number of shoplifters had been issued with Criminal Behaviour Orders.

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

**GP26/128 Review of Standing Orders**

The Committee undertook to review the Council's Standing Orders\* which had been circulated with the electronic version of the agenda for the meeting.

The document circulated had already been reviewed by the Town Clerk who was not proposing any changes other than updating the Procurement Act 2023 contract thresholds.

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

**GP26/129 Review of Financial Regulations**

The Committee undertook to review the Council's Financial Regulations\* which had been circulated with the electronic version of the agenda for the meeting.

The document circulated had already been reviewed by the Town Clerk who was not proposing any changes other than updating the Procurement Act 2023 contract thresholds.

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

**GP26/130 Annual Review of Risk Management**

The Committee received the report\* of the Town Clerk on the Annual Review of Risk Management, which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

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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.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the Council was required to consider risks on an annual basis and only very minor updates had been made since the review undertaken last year.

The Town Clerk said he would amend the description of 'dog bins' on page 14 which were now general bins that accepted dog waste.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Review of Risk Management be accepted by the Committee.

**GP26/131 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, following the review of the Town Clerk.

**GP26/132 IT Policy**

The Committee considered an IT Policy\* drafted by the Town Clerk and enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the policy was based on a NALC template and covered all current uses of IT (in addition to existing related policies such as the iPad Policy and Use of Removable Media) and reflected current day to day practices already in operation.

RESOLVED: That the Committee adopt the IT Policy.

**GP26/133 Local Government Reorganisation**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk\* which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The report considers the proposed local government reorganisation, and Stone Town Council's potential comments to a Government public consultation to aid consideration of the individual proposals submitted by Staffordshire principal councils.

Based on the Town Clerk's understanding of previous discussions he had also drafted a potential reply from the Town Council including a matrix with responses to the individual questions detailed in the online questionnaire (in the public consultation).

Town Councillors expressed the view that it was important to point out the disadvantages of Stone losing its local connections. It was concerning that the potential size of the wards in some of these areas will be too big, threatening working relationships.

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The Town Clerk said that he had emphasized in the content that the people of Stone were used to dealing with Stafford and that this connection was a critical one. Stone currently looks to Stafford in respect of County and Borough services and any solution not involving Stone looking to Stafford would cause significant confusion.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approves the Town Clerk's draft reply to the public consultation on the reorganisation of local government in Staffordshire (subject to a slight amendment to the first line on page 9) based on its support for Preference 1 as described in the report.

**GP26/134 Town Council Payments**

RESOLVED: To note the list\* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 to 31 January 2026.

**GP26/135 Update from Working Groups:**

**Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group**

The Chairman advised the Sub-Committee that a meeting of the Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group had taken place last week with progression of a program that included the development of the 'Story of Stone' and '250 years of the Trent and Mersey Canal' (in 2027).

**GP26/136 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 Davies advised the Committee that a meeting of Stone Area Parish Liaison Group would be called as soon as practicable now the Government had issued its public consultation on Local Government Reorganisation, and after the upcoming SPCA briefing (on Friday 6 March) on the proposals for Staffordshire.

**Stone ATC**

Councillor Davies informed the Committee that he had attended a meeting of the Stone ATC Civilian Welfare Committee on 24 February where it was reported that the Squadron was in good heart and looking for things to do in the year.

Unfortunately, their biggest issue was currently that they were unable to use their headquarters building because it had not been health and safety inspected. The Army Cadets have kindly allowed the Air Cadets to share their premises and it was good the two cadet units were working well together in these circumstances.

**Age Concern Stone & District**

Councillor Thornicroft advised the Committee that a meeting took place on 6 February and the Treasurer reported that the finances were in good order and continuing to operate on a not for profit basis. One of the main sources of income for the year was a sponsored ultra marathon undertaken by volunteers, raising £1,300.

The meeting discussed raising the profile of the services offered by the Cumberland House GP practice.

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There were currently four volunteers allowing the Age Concern office to be staffed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (for pre-arranged appointments). Six volunteers was the ideal number but it was difficult to recruit volunteers who were sometimes faced with demanding situations. The hospital appointment scheme was running well despite there being no new drivers.

Councillor Thornicroft said there was some discussion about the Town Council building and the upcoming local government reorganisation. Their Chairman had commented that it was vital that Age Concern continued to have a presence post reorganisation.

#### **Stafford & District Access Group**

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that the next meeting of the Stafford & District Access Group would be held on 23 March 2026.

#### **Stone Common Plot Trustees**

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that the Common Plot had formed a fund raising group that had met for the first time. The group was planning to approach a number of local authorities for funding and had lots of ideas. They talked about using the Plot Barn Classroom which was built for educational visits and the Treasurer appealed to the group for people to come forward to decorate the classroom.

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

Councillor Townsend informed the Committee that no meeting had taken place but a meeting was scheduled for late April 2026.

#### **SPCA Executive Committee**

Councillor Kelt informed the Committee that no meeting had taken place but one was planned for later in the month.

He also informed the Committee about an upcoming SPCA online presentation on Local Government Reorganisation in Staffordshire on Friday 6 March 2026.

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

Councillor Kelt advised the Committee that a meeting had taken place but the content was not connected with Stone.

**CHAIRMAN**