



Town Clerk

Les Trigg

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29 June 2026

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** will be held in the **Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone**, on **TUESDAY 7 JULY 2026 at 7:00pm** for consideration of the matters itemised in the following agenda.

Les Trigg
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Requests for Dispensations Received**
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. **To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 2 June 2026, Minute Numbers C27/012 – C27/023 (attached).**

6. **To receive the draft minutes and decisions of the under mentioned Committees:**
- a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on 19 May 2026, Minute Numbers GP27/001 – GP27/019 (attached).
 - b) Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 2 June 2026, Minute Numbers PC27/007 – PC27/012 (attached).

7. **Six Month Attendance Rule**

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

8. **To receive the forthcoming Civic Announcements** (attached).

9. **To receive the Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements** (attached).

On this occasion reports are enclosed for the Town Mayor 2025-26 and Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor 2026-27.

10. **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.

11. **Confidential Minutes**

To receive the Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 19 May 2026, Minute Numbers GP27/001, GP/27/018 and GP27/019 (attached).

Members of the public are welcome to attend the Town Council meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of the scheme are displayed in the Council's notice boards and website.

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

Stone Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 2 June 2026

PRESENT: Councillor A. Best in the Chair and
Councillors: J. Battrick, I. Fordham, J. Hood, T. Kelt, R. Kenney, J. Powell, N. Powell
and R. Townsend

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

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, B. Kenney, P. Leason,
J. Metters, A. Mottershead and C. Thornicroft

Prayers

Before the meeting began, Reverend Paul Kingman, led prayers.

C27/012 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson,
B. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters and C. Thornicroft

C27/013 Declarations of Interest

None made

C27/014 Requests for Dispensations

None received

C27/015 Representations from Members of the Public

None

C27/016 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 12 May 2026 (Minute Numbers C27/001 – C27/011), be 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.

C27/017 Committee Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) The Minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on 19 May 2026 (Minute Numbers PC27/001 – PC27/006), were noted.

C27/018 Internal Auditor's Report 2025-26

The Council considered the following documents which had been circulated with the agenda, prior to the meeting:

- a. Formal Internal Audit submission to the External Auditors*
- b. Report from Internal Auditor*

The Town Clerk advised the Council that the report of the Internal Auditor, the first of three reports that needed to be considered in relation to the presentation of accounts for the previous financial year, looks at and provides assurance as to what has been done in relation to the accounts of the Council.

The Town Clerk said that he was pleased to report that the auditor had found no material errors, omissions or irregularities in the financial records and had no significant concerns about the internal control procedures.

Councillor Fordham thanked the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk for the work they had undertaken on the Council's accounts.

RESOLVED: To note the Internal Auditor's report and submission to External Audit.

C27/019 Annual Governance Statement 2025-26

The Council considered the Annual Governance Statement* which must be approved prior to consideration of the Council's accounts.

The Town Clerk advised the Council that this report required the Council to declare whether it had sound systems of internal control including arrangements for the preparation of Accounting Statements. He pointed out that the only thing that was different to last year was a new Assertion 10 relating to effective information technology and data management in accordance with proper practices.

RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Governance Statement for submission to the External Auditor for the year 2025-26.

The Town Mayor signed the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26 to confirm that it had been received and considered.

* 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.

C27/020 Council Accounts & Audit Submission 2025-26

The Council considered the Town Clerk's report* and the accounting statement* which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

The Town Clerk gave a detailed explanation of the accounts, their variances between forecast outturn and actual outturn, and differences in the way some figures had been presented this year.

He said the underlying position of the Council's accounts was an underspend of £7,750 against budget.

The Town Clerk pointed out the underspendings referred to in report paragraphs 22 and 23 showing underspendings on the "Stone Heritage Centre Capital" and "Town Centre Improvements". He explained that the accounts for 2025-26 included the payment of these sums into earmarked reserves, rather than rolling them forward, as would have been done in previous years.

RESOLVED:

- a) To approve the Council's Accounts for 2025-26 as set out in the report of the Town Clerk, including the use of the rollover reserve to allow the transfer of budgets between financial years and the proposed use of those budgets in 2026-27.
- b) To note the variances between the forecast outturn for 2025-26 and the actual outturn, and the reasons identified for the major variances.
- c) To approve the financial statement for submission to the Council's External Auditors.

The Town Mayor signed the Accounting Statements 2025-26 to confirm that it had been received and considered.

**C27/021 Local Government Transparency Code 2015
Openness of Public Bodies Regulations 2014**

The Information* for Quarter ending 31 March 2026 was noted.

C27/022 Civic Announcements

The Civic Announcements, which had previously been circulated, were noted.

The Town Mayor called for Councillors to enter a team at his Quiz Night in support of his charities.

* 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.

C27/023 **To receive the Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's Reports of Engagements**

The Town Mayor's and Deputy Town Mayor's reports of engagements, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

On this occasion reports were enclosed for the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor 2025-26 and Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor 2026-27.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Best, gave an account of the engagements he had attended as Deputy Town Mayor 2025-26 and the engagements he had attended during May 2026.

The Deputy Town Mayor 2026-27, Councillor Townsend, gave an account of the Craig Sumner Art Exhibition at Stone Heritage Centre.

The Town Mayor 2025-26, Councillor Metters, was not available to give his report.

TOWN MAYOR

* 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 Town Council – General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 19 May 2026

PRESENT: Councillor R. Kenney in the Chair, and
Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Best, I. Fordham, J. Hood, B. Kenney, J. Metters,
J. Powell, C. Thornicroft and R. Townsend

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

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, T. Kelt, P. Leason.
A. Mottershead and N. Powell

GP27/001 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, T. Kelt,
P. Leason 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.

GP27/002 Declarations of Interest and Declarations

None made

GP27/003 Requests for Dispensations

None received

GP27/004 To receive the report of the County Councillors

The Chairman invited County Councillors to address the Committee:

County Councillor Jill Hood

Councillor Hood advised the Committee that the Council had not met for some
weeks while the local elections were taking place. She said there had been a lot of
enquiries made about potholes with replies suggesting they were not a priority.

Councillor Hood forewarned Town Councillors that a number of roadworks would
be in operation in Stone during July and August.

County Councillor A. Mynors

Councillor Mynors was not in attendance at the meeting.

GP27/005 To receive the report of Borough Councillors

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

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GP27/006 Representations from Members of the Public

None

GP27/007 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7 April 2026 (Minute Numbers GP26/137 – GP26/156), be approved as a correct record.

GP27/008 Minutes of Sub-Committees

There were no Sub-Committee draft minutes.

GP27/009 Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the terms of reference* for the Council's Sub Committees, Steering Groups and Working Groups (which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting).

The Town Clerk advised the Council that after review he was not proposing any changes other than the dates and inclusion of the new Heritage Centre Steering Group and Community Hub Liaison Group terms of reference that had previously been agreed by the General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference for the Council's Sub-Committees, Steering Groups and Working Groups be accepted.

GP27/010 Dissolution of Estates Sub-Committee

The Committee considered the report* of the Town Clerk (which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting) with a proposal for dissolution of the Estates Sub-Committee after a review of the consequences.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that after cancellation of a number of Estates Sub-Committee meetings questions had been raised about whether the Sub-Committee was needed and whether its work could be absorbed into the General Purposes Committee.

He said that dissolution of the Estates Sub-Committee would also offer an opportunity to streamline the Council's meetings schedule, potentially reduce the number of programmed meeting nights for 2026-27 from 17 to 13.

The Committee supported the proposal and welcomed simplification of the system.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agrees that:

- a. The Estates Sub-Committee be dissolved with immediate effect.

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- b. All current responsibilities of the Estates Sub-Committee should be absorbed into the General Purposes Committee.
- c. The revised programme of meetings enclosed with the Town Clerk's report should be adopted for the remainder of the 2026-27 civic year.

GP27/011 Appointment of Members, Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to the following Sub-Committees

RESOLVED: To appoint the following Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and Members to the Sub Committees for the municipal year 2026-27:

Tourism & Town Promotion

Chairman: Councillor J. Hood

Vice Chairman: Councillor A. Mottershead

Members: Councillors: J. Battrick, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, B. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters and J. Powell

Co-opted Member: J. Cook

Environment

Chairman: Councillor R. Townsend

Vice Chairman: Councillor T. Kelt

Members: Councillors: A. Burgess, I. Fordham, J. Hood, J. Metters, J. Powell, N. Powell and C. Thornicroft

Mayor's Charity

Chairman: Councillor A. Best

Vice Chairman: Councillor R. Townsend

Members: Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, I. Fordham, T. Kelt, R. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters and J. Powell

In addition, the Town Mayor and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee are ex-officio voting members of all committees and sub-committees where they are not members in their own right, as set out in Standing Orders.

GP27/012 Appointment to Steering/Working Group

RESOLVED: To make the following appointments to Town Council Steering and Working Groups for the municipal year 2026-27:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

All Councillor were appointed to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

It was agreed that a co-ordinator would be appointed at the first meeting.

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

Councillor Members: R. Kenney (Co-ordinator), P. Leason (Vice Co-ordinator), J. Davies and J. Hood

GP27/013 Appointment to Outside Bodies

RESOLVED: To make the following appointments of Council representatives on outside bodies:

Stone ATC (Town Mayor plus 1 member)

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Councillors: Town Mayor and J. Davies

Age Concern Stone & District (2 members)

Councillors: J. Davies and C. Thornicroft

Stafford & Stone Access Group (1 member)

Councillor T. Kelt

Trustees of the Town Hall Charity (all members)

All Councillors

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group (3 members)

Councillors: J. Battrick, J. Hood and R. Townsend

Stone Area Parish Liaison Group (1 member)

Councillor J. Davies

NOTE: Current membership of the following bodies will continue until the stated dates, or until retirement by an individual member, even if the members cease to be members of the Council

Stone Common Plot Trustees (5 Members for a four-year term)

Councillor C. Thornicroft (term runs to May 2030) and Councillors:

A. Burgess, J. Hood, T. Kelt and R. Townsend (terms run to May 2027)

Richard Vernon Trust (3 members for a four-year term)

Councillors: J. Davies, P. Leason and J. Powell (all members' terms run to May 2027)

SPCA Executive Committee (1 member for a two-year term)

Councillor: T. Kelt (to December 2027)

West Midlands Railway and other rail matters

Councillor T. Kelt

GP27/014 Town Council Payments

RESOLVED: To note the list* of Town Council payments made during the period 1 March to 30 April 2026.

GP27/015 Update from Working Groups:

Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group

The Chairman advised the Committee about a meeting that had taken place last week. Talks were in progress with various schools about having a photographic display and to use the facility more for their history walks and talks throughout town. Various art exhibitions were programmed and the Heritage Centre Manager was continuing to work on the Story of Stone. The Steering Group was dealing with some new signage.

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GP27/016 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 was not available to give a report.

Stone ATC

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

Age Concern Stone & District

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

Stafford & Stone Access Group

Councillor Kelt was not available to give a report.

Stone Common Plot Trustees

Councillor Townsend advised the Committee that no meeting had taken place since the Annual General Meeting.

Stone Community Hub Liaison Group

Councillor Townsend gave a report on a meeting today (19 May). A number of items were discussed. One of their staff members was leaving and the Manager had advertised for a replacement (20 hours a week). They were also looking for a volunteer minute taker at board meetings. He said that some interesting data had been shared on the number of clients they were servicing and new initiatives started six months ago.

SPCA Executive Committee

Councillor Kelt was not available to give his report.

West Midlands Railway and other Rail Matters

Councillor Kelt was not available to give his report.

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

GP27/017 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.

GP27/018 Markets

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on the Town's Market provision which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report for a new trial market to take place in the town.

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GP27/019 **Information Technology**

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

RESOLVED: That the Committee accepts the recommendations in the Town Clerk's report to implement a new and updated information technology system.

CHAIRMAN

Stone Town Council – Planning Consultative Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at 15 Station Road, Stone, on Tuesday 2 June 2026

PRESENT: Councillor T. Kelt in the Chair, and
Councillors: J. Battrick, A. Best, I. Fordham, J. Hood, R. Kenney, J. Powell,
N. Powell and R. Townsend

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

ABSENT: Councillors: A. Burgess, J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson, B. Kenney, P. Leason,
J. Metters, A. Mottershead and C. Thornicroft

PC27/007 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: J. Davies, L. Davies, K. Dawson,
B. Kenney, P. Leason, J. Metters and C. Thornicroft

PC27/008 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Councillors R. Kenney, I. Fordham and J. Hood advised the Committee that, as
members of Stafford Borough Council's Planning Committee, they would not
speak or vote on the planning applications listed on the agenda.

PC27/009 **Representations from Members of the Public**

None

PC27/010 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Consultative Committee meeting held on
19 May 2026 (Minute Numbers PC27/001 – PC27/006), be approved as a correct
record.

PC27/011 **Planning Applications**

Application Number – 26/41992/HOU

Applicant – Mr & Mrs Holdway

Location – 6 Ridge Croft, Stone

Development – Single storey extension to rear, 2 storey side extension over
existing garage. Single storey extension to front.

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 26/41972/HOU
Applicant – Mr A. Robinson
Location – 20 Thomas Avenue, Stone
Development – First floor side extension

Observations: No objections

Application Number – 26/42012/HOU
Applicant – Mr & Mrs M. Axon
Location – 17 Griffiths Way, Stone
Development – Demolish existing conservatory. Conversion of existing garage to form utility, WC and study area. Single storey rear extension to form kitchen/family space.

Observations: No objections

PC27/012 **To note the following items considered under delegated powers where no objections were forwarded to Stafford Borough Council due to no Member asking for the item to be considered by a special meeting of the Committee**

None

CHAIRMAN

Introduction

1. This report considers the waiver of the six-month Councillor attendance rule in order to prevent the disqualification of a Councillor.

Background

2. Section 85 of the local Government Act 1972 automatically disqualifies a Councillor from office if they fail to attend any meeting of the authority within a consecutive six-month period, unless the Council approves the reason for non-attendance.
3. Due to illness, Councillor Lin Davies has been unable to attend meetings for some time, and it is currently unclear when she will be able to return. She has requested that the “six-month rule” be waived for the period of her absence.
4. The last meeting attended by Councillor Davies was on 17th February 2026. If the Council does not approve Councillor Davies’s absence as being for an acceptable reason, then her term of office will cease automatically on 17th August 2026.
5. Should a waiver not be granted, a casual vacancy would need to be declared after the 17th August 2026, which may lead to the need for a by-election. A by-election would be likely to cost the Council around £10,000 based on previous experience.

Proposal

6. Non-attendance by a Councillor due to extended illness would be a valid reason for waiving the six-month rule, provided there is a reasonable expectation that the Councillor will recover sufficiently to enable them to continue their Council duties at a later date.
7. It is therefore proposed that the requirements of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 be waived in respect of Councillor Lin Davies for an indefinite period, to be further reviewed by the Council at its meeting on 9th February 2027 if Councillor Davies has not returned to attending meetings by then. This will allow for a further six-month period for Councillor Davies’

recovery, with consideration of the position at the first Council meeting after this period has expired.

Recommendations

8. It is recommended that the Council:
 - a. Agree to waiving the requirements of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of Councillor Lin Davies for an indefinite period.
 - b. Review the position at the Council meeting on 9th February 2027, if Councillor Davies has not returned to attending meetings by then.

TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 7 July 2026

Councillor Andrew Best

Saturday 6 to Sunday 7 June – Stone Carnival 2026

The event was extremely well attended and the rain stayed to a minimum. The parade was lovely with more floats than last year so that's great. Myself and Rob were driven in the parade in a rolls Royce and we thoroughly enjoyed it. On the Sunday I judged the dot show with Sir Gavin Williamson who knows his dogs better than I do. The memorial walk organised by the carnival team and the Alzheimer's club was sensational. To watch the big body of people all walking the same route to spend the time remembering lost ones was a very powerful image. I hope the organisers make more of this event next year. The line dancing section of the weekend was definitely an eye opener. The people of Stone can really do the moves. I think a line dancing event on its own should be planned for next year.

Sunday 14th June 2026 – Staffordshire Moorlands Civic Sunday

A very well attended event to celebrate Linda's Chairmanship. It was very nice to meet the different local dignitaries and the service was lovely. Thank you for inviting me to Ipstones.

Saturday 20 June 2026 – Stone Rocks at Christ Church Academy

I look forward to this event yearly. My children perform in it and in 10 years it's grown to be a shining exhibition of the young musical talent we have here in Stone. Kieron Harrison and his team at Christchurch Academy work so hard to put on a great show and they should be very proud of not only the children but of themselves. My family and I had a wonderful day and thoroughly enjoyed it. It's a shame he's taking a year off from it but I look forward to a bigger event in two years' time. Thank you CCA and thank you to all the people of Stone that made that a great event.

See photographs below.

Sunday 21 June 2026 – Stone 10K Road Race

Chris and his team hosted an amazing 10k race. It was lovely to be a part of such a nice event. I blew the whistle to start the race, handed out water and sweets at the end and the Guides and I got to give out the medals to the winners. The fastest time was 36 mins. Incredible! Thank you to Chris.

Thursday 25 June 2026 – Town Mayor's Quiz Night

The Quiz was a massive success. We raised in total £800 (approximate). we had to change the venue to Christ Church Academy and it was the best decision. Mrs Thorn helped us set up and was very accommodating. Jon and Nancy's questions were brilliant and we all had a very hot but enjoyable evening.

DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 2 June 2026

Councillor Robert Townsend

The Deputy Town Mayor joined the Town Mayor at Stone Carnival on Saturday 7 June. See the Town Mayor's report above.

TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 1 April to 12 May 2026

Councillor Jason Metters (Town Mayor 2025-26)

Friday 3 April 2026 – James & the Giant Peach Immersive Production at the House of Lawrence, Stoke on Trent

Sarah and I attended the new House of Lawrence theatre in Stoke-On-Trent. The group had been performing together for a year, and the passion that the actors showed was contagious and a brilliant conversion from an old favourite book and film to a well-adapted pantomime, utilising the stage effects brilliantly. Sarah and I were treated very well and the team at the House of Lawrence went out of their way to express their gratitude. I was incredibly impressed by the young actor playing James, who not only delivered a fantastic performance, but was also responsible for organising the invitations to the civic heads. Sarah and I commented how wonderful it was to see performing arts available in the city centre, providing a meeting place and venue for local fans of the arts, and hopefully encouraging those in nearby towns to bring their custom to the Stoke-On-Trent area.

Saturday 4 April 2026 – Stone Town Mayor's Street Collection & Easter Egg Trail

I was delighted to have been so well supported by the street collectors on the Easter weekend, and whilst our move towards a cashless society makes it challenging to collect in the traditional ways, the number of volunteers who came out for the day to help raise money collectively contributed more than expected! Furthermore, I was grateful to spend the morning and afternoon with Trudy and Lindsay who helped organise the Easter Egg Trail event. This was an activity for young children in the high street that day and involved visiting some of our local shops. My hopes were that it would drive footfall and promote local businesses, whilst raising some money for my charities, and of course providing an opportunity for participants to win some of the Easter Eggs. A special mention goes to our "competitors" from St. Michael's Church, who attracted lots of attention with their free easter eggs, but forwarded donations on to our tent next door. I was extremely grateful to this kind gesture from the volunteers from the church, and it made me very happy to be a part of this town and the good people in it. The children and parents participating seemed to have fun.

Saturday 11 April 2026 – East Staffordshire Mayor's Charity Ball at Burton Town Hall

The theme for the last event of the East Staffordshire Mayor, Councillor Kim Smith, was Glitz and Glamour. Kim and I met as Deputies before the commencement of our Mayoral term, and I have become very well acquainted with her and her consort. All of the civic guests in attendance seemed to feel the same, that the year has gone so fast and that we know each other well enough to appreciate the event all the more. The Town Hall hosted a fantastic event as we danced the evening away with a very talented live singer, and raised some money in our waistcoats, sequins, tailcoats and ballgowns! Kim is very well known and supported in her community but still made time to greet everyone she could. I will miss them dearly, but it was wonderful to share this occasion before our last farewells!

Friday 17 April 2026 – Staffordshire Moorlands Chairman's Charity Ball at Alton Towers

Sarah and I attended the Alton Tower's Charity Ball to support the Staffordshire Moorlands Chairman, Adam Parkes, and his consort. During the silent auction after a very opulent dinner, I was the delighted winner of one of the prizes! An annual fishing season ticket to enjoy commencing after the civic year. Whilst we were all lamenting the end of the mayoral term, we had cause for renewed celebration: Adam and Katrina had arranged the final details for their wedding, commencing after their duties end. An occasion worth looking forward to indeed. Katrina and Adam have been real friends to Sarah and I, and we were so happy that they had the opportunity to spend time with one

another after a very successful year of serving their communities and their chosen charities. Adam is a true champion of mental health awareness after some challenges and struggles, and we raised money in support of this noble cause. We were so happy to hear how much his fortune has changed now that he has Katrina. A wonderful occasion, with much cause for celebration.

Thursday 23 April 2026 – Stone Common Plot Annual General Meeting

I was welcomed to attend the Stone Common Plot Annual General Meeting, and was given the chairman's seat during the re-election period. Familiar faces were in attendance, many of whom keep Stone going! I was grateful for their kind welcome, and appreciated this opportunity to express gratitude to them for their work.

Friday 24 April 2026 – Stone Town Mayor's Civic Dinner

Sarah and I welcomed friends, family, civic guests, Sir Gavin Williamson MP, and local supporters of the charities that I am raising money for this year. It was a deeply meaningful evening at the Stone House as it was here where I first started to meet the civic heads last year during my term as deputy. The difference this time is that I had got to know so many of the people in attendance very well over the year, and my family and friends had the opportunity to see this too. I express such profound gratitude to the attendees supporting me with special mention to Trudy Williams who organised the event with the staff at the Stonehouse, Deputy Lieutenant, Brigadier Barry Smith, who gave a wonderful lecture on the Lieutenancy office and the philanthropic work of the crown and those holding the positions royally appointed to them. Finally, Councillor Jill Hood who helped with the raffle and auction, bringing cheer and humour to the evening. Her support over the last year has been felt throughout and Sarah and I were honoured to be able to express this on the evening.

Saturday 25 April 2026 – St George's Day in Stone High Street

This year's St George's Day parade was another fantastic turnout! Adults and young people alike turned up to see the knights battle it out in the heat as the knavish Black Knight once again attempted to beat St George. Sarah and I watched from the comfort of Saint George's tent with the intention of handing the crowd old coins featuring King George VI. As we watched the knight's battle, the Black Knight stole the coin purse from Sarah and I, until I took up a sword myself and battled him into submission! After retrieving the purse and distributing the coins to the excited crowd, the final battle between St George and the Black Knight commenced. Once more, St George won the day!

This event draws so many people to our town, and it is wonderful to see the best in our national spirit, all united in mutual celebration, community, and tradition. I was delighted to have been invited to take part.

Saturday 25 April 2026 – Stone Choral Society Spring Concert: Brahms Requiem 'Ein Deutches Requiem'

My fourth, but certainly not final instalment of the Stone Choral Society's events took place once more in Holy Trinity Church in Eccleshall. I was impressed at the great variety of music that the society is capable of. Having heard their own material, innovations on Christmas Carol's, and sea shanty's, I was greatly impressed to hear their proficiency in classical style operatic pieces. I learned a lot whilst there by talking with the locals and members afterwards, and Brahms Requiem was written and performed in German in order to bring religious awe to the common man, breaking from the tradition of Latin. Whilst my German is far from fluent, I did appreciate the sense of awe, and once more, I thank them sincerely for their invitation and hospitality.

Wednesday 29 April 2026 – Stafford Borough Mayor’s Civic Dinner at Stafford Rugby Club

This year's final event at Stafford Rugby Club was a lovely opportunity to say goodbye to everyone that I had befriended this year, and to raise a glass to a very successful term for the Lord Mayor of Stafford, Jenny Baron. Jenny and Ray will be well missed by Sarah and I, but there could not possibly be a better reminder of the mutual sense of wider community that Stafford and Stone share than the topics of discussion during the evening. I am hoping that Stafford continues to thrive and took great interest in the developments and future plans for the town. Jenny has been dedicated to her community and the charities that she has supported this year, and it was lovely to see how glad she was to have made a difference. We all gave farewell to civic friends made over the past year, and wished the new High Sheriff of Staffordshire all the best for the coming year.

I will miss everyone that I met this year, but I am glad to have had the opportunity to express gratitude and appreciation for all of my new friends made during our terms in office. A wonderful end to a memorable year.

TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 7 July 2026

Councillor Andrew Best

Saturday 6 to Sunday 7 June – Stone Carnival 2026

The event was extremely well attended and the rain stayed to a minimum. The parade was lovely with more floats than last year so that's great. Myself and Rob were driven in the parade in a rolls Royce and we thoroughly enjoyed it. On the Sunday I judged the dot show with Sir Gavin Williamson who knows his dogs better than I do. The memorial walk organised by the carnival team and the Alzheimer's club was sensational. To watch the big body of people all walking the same route to spend the time remembering lost ones was a very powerful image. I hope the organisers make more of this event next year. The line dancing section of the weekend was definitely an eye opener. The people of Stone can really do the moves. I think a line dancing event on its own should be planned for next year.

Sunday 14th June 2026 – Staffordshire Moorlands Civic Sunday

A very well attended event to celebrate Linda's Chairmanship. It was very nice to meet the different local dignitaries and the service was lovely. Thank you for inviting me to Ipstones.

Saturday 20 June 2026 – Stone Rocks at Christ Church Academy

I look forward to this event yearly. My children perform in it and in 10 years it's grown to be a shining exhibition of the young musical talent we have here in Stone. Kieron Harrison and his team at Christchurch Academy work so hard to put on a great show and they should be very proud of not only the children but of themselves. My family and I had a wonderful day and thoroughly enjoyed it. It's a shame he's taking a year off from it but I look forward to a bigger event in two years' time. Thank you CCA and thank you to all the people of Stone that made that a great event.

See photographs below.

Sunday 21 June 2026 – Stone 10K Road Race

Chris and his team hosted an amazing 10k race. It was lovely to be a part of such a nice event. I blew the whistle to start the race, handed out water and sweets at the end and the Guides and I got to give out the medals to the winners. The fastest time was 36 mins. Incredible! Thank you to Chris.

DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 2 June 2026

The Deputy Town Mayor joined the Town Mayor at Stone Carnival on Saturday 7 June. See the Town Mayor's report above.



