

# Stonehouse Town Council



**MINUTES (subject to agreement at the next Committee meeting)**  
**of a meeting of THE FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 5<sup>TH</sup>**  
**OCTOBER 2015 AT 7PM IN THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, STONEHOUSE**

**Present:**

**Rob Waite (Convenor of Committee)**  
**Jo Byrne (Deputy Convenor of Committee)**  
**Theresa Watt (Chair of Council/Town Mayor)**  
**Paul Stephens**  
**Pam Swain**  
**Tim Jackson**  
**Also Present:**  
**Gill Jennings Town Clerk**

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**Attendees are reminded that the Proceedings of this meeting may be recorded, filmed or photographed but that any person requiring such a record should inform the Chairman at the start of the meeting.**

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**K1/227 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies

**K1/228 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are reminded of their obligation within the requirements of the Adopted Model Code of Conduct to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests where applicable.

**Cllr Waite declared an interest in (K1/231.2 Website Host, K1/233.1 and 2 Payments) Cllr Jackson declared an interest in (K1/233.1 Allotment Rents)**

**K1/229 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(Maximum of 15 minutes – Any member of the public may speak only once in respect of any business itemised on the Agenda for a maximum of 5 minutes)

**No adjournment called**

**K1/230 TO FORMALLY APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JULY 2015**

**The Minutes were approved as a true record with the amendment of K1/220 “2 audits” to “4 audits”.**

**K1/231 COMMUNICATIONS**

1. To receive a report from the Communications Working Group meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – The Working Group had met to discuss the upgrade of the website to a PERCH system to ensure that it is compatible with mobile use. Cllr. Byrne suggested Wordpress as an alternative which was free. Cllr Waite felt there were security and speed issues with Wordpress. Cllr Byrne had been asked to draw up comparison of two the two platforms and gave a verbal report to the Committee whilst Cllr Waite left the room. She reported that Facebook was well used and might link to other community websites. F & S were asked to consider a standard Committee agenda item to draw in news items from members. The Working Group are keen to have another member on the group and were seeking volunteers from outside the council.

2. Website – to consider updating the Content Management platform at £1280. The Committee felt there was insufficient information and they need to understand the benefits, and consequences of not updating. **Cllr Waite was asked to provide a written report.**

#### **K1/231 Communications** (continued)

3. Review of the Town Guide – The Committee considered the current town guide and agreed that it was out of date but replacement would be too expensive. An alternative is to produce a town map with a simple index with important contact numbers. **Communications Working Group were asked to draft this.**

#### **K1/232 YOUTH WORK**

1. To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Youth Working Group of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and agree any actions. Cllr Swain gave a report that the young people have been working hard raising money for Breast Cancer Awareness. The Group are proposing to put on a skate jam next year together which might run alongside a music festival. Involve Gloucestershire are arranging to redecorate the youth centre interior in the Autumn. A young parents group are hoping to use the centre for a drop in session on Monday afternoons. The Committee considered this and agreed the use should be encouraged but that a donation towards running costs in the region of £400 would be required. (B/F next meeting)

#### **K1/233 FINANCE**

1. To check and agree expenditure/receipts totals against budget headings for July, August, September 2015 and bank reconciliation  
**July Expenditure £8057.96 Receipts £74470.75 agreed**  
**August Expenditure £94185.01 Receipts £1134 agreed**  
**Sept Expenditure £12788.34 Receipts £117694.50 agreed**  
**The Bank Balance of £143008.48 was agreed as correct**
2. To agree payments due to date – **Payments in October were agreed at £4788.92**
3. To receive the External Auditors Report on the closure of Audit – **The External Auditor had no matters to report. An additional fee of £237.75 had been incurred in dealing with a non-accounts enquiry from a member of the public. The Committee noted the closure of audit.**
4. Councillor training – to consider any requests  
**It was agreed that Councillor Watt should attend the Chairmanship Skills course at a cost of £95**
5. Grant Application – Stonehouse History Group  
**The History Group applied for £2000 toward expenditure on 12 information boards to be placed around the parish. The Committee agreed this was a worthwhile project. The Committee agreed to a grant of £1000 towards 1 board in this financial year and would make provision in the budget for a further board in the next financial year.**
6. To discuss any spending plans in 2016-17  
**The Committee would refer back to the Council strategy document and report to the next meeting.**
7. Insurance Cover – Third Party Liability – The Clerk advised the Council that their insurers were being slow in arranging cover for the building works and were putting the council at risk. The Committee discussed this and felt the Council had sufficient funds to cover the

matter but the Clerk would continue to press AON.

#### **K1/233 Finance** (continued)

8. To request a review of Policies by the Policy Working Group

A new working group was appointed to make a review of policies: Tim Jackson/Pam Swain/Theresa Watt

#### **K1/234 STONEHOUSE CHAMBER OF TRADE**

To discuss format of event on 16<sup>th</sup> November and representation.

The Committee agreed that the Town Mayor would make a welcome presentation. Cllr Waite would create an ice breaker. There would be an opportunity for businesses to contribute to a goody bag. Cllr Byrne to create a display to encourage business interaction with council activities. Theresa Watt/Rob Waite/Jo Byrne to host but all councillors are expected to attend.

#### **K1/235 LOCAL CARE HOME PROVIDERS**

To discuss outcome of meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

Two out of the seven providers had attended. Councillors explained concerns on behalf of the community. Both providers, Home Farm Trust and The Elms are keen to work with the community and set up activities involving and informing them. They will both make contact with traders to offer support. The Elms identified access problems to the town centre with wheelchairs. Cllr Watt and Cllr Swain to contact those who did not attend.

#### **K1/236 TOWN HALL**

1. To discuss a plan of renewals and redecoration

**Clerk to obtain costs for redecoration and renewals for budget purposes.**

2. To review scale of charges and use of building

**The Committee considered the current charge of hire at £13 per hour and agreed that there should be no increase in this charge.** A new Facilities Working Group (Tim Jackson/Rob Waite/Neil Gibbs/Gill Jennings) were appointed to review the layout of the building to make it more secure for staff and available for exhibitions etc. In the meantime the Committee noted the departure from the licence to occupy by the police on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

#### **K1/237 COMMUNITY FACILITIES – WEST OF STONEHOUSE**

Stroud District Council have enquired of Eastington Parish Council and Stonehouse Town Council if either of them would be prepared to take on community facilities provided by West of Stonehouse S14/0810/OUT – **The Committee discussed this and agreed that there was a need for new community facilities in Stonehouse which would be welcomed and well used and supported for S106 funding and could be managed by the Town Council. Given the unequal distribution of population between Eastington existing settlement (cut off by the A419) and Stonehouse (cut off by the railway line) it was unlikely that the facilities provided at West of Stonehouse would achieve sufficient patronage to make them financially viable. The concern was that Stonehouse residents would eventually be subsidising a facility too remote from them. Facilities sited at West of Stonehouse would not therefore be managed by the Town Council but there was room for negotiation for facilities within Stonehouse parish.**

#### **K1/238 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**23<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2015**

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

The Council will by resolution exclude the public from the items listed below due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and publicity of the items would be prejudicial to the public interest.

**K1/239 STAFFING COMMITTEE**

To receive a report from the Staffing Committee and agree any recommendations.

The Committee agreed to amend the wording in the Deputy Clerk's job description and contract and to reduce the working hours to 30 per week compensating her with an increase to SCP 27 from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015.

The Committee agreed to adjust the Town Clerk's Salary to SCP37 with regard to her ongoing training.

The Committee agreed to extend the Committee Clerk's contract to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, for review at that time, and to increase the hours to 20 per week from 1<sup>st</sup> November.

These contract changes would be put to the staff for agreement.

**The Committee noted a request for a further Committee member. (For Resolution)**

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