



Minutes of a Town Business Committee Meeting held on Monday 1st December 2025 at 7pm at the Stonehouse Town Hall/Library, Queens Road, Stonehouse, GL10 2QA

Present: Councillors John Callinan, Carol Kambites, Val Randall, Keith Terry, Carol Trim and Theresa Watt (Committee Chair).

In Attendance: Town Clerk and a member of the public

All residents of the Parish are welcome to attend and a period of up to 15 minutes will be set aside at the beginning of the meeting for members of the public to raise questions.

Attendees are reminded that the Proceedings of this meeting may be filmed, photographed or recorded.

The attending member of the public did not wish to speak; only to observe.

B/933 To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Keren Capeling and John Parker

B/934 To receive Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest were raised by Cllrs Carol Kambites and Keith Terry in relation to agenda item B/938

B/935 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 6th October and 3rd November '25

Committee **APPROVED** the minutes for both the 6th October and 3rd November 2025 meetings

B/936 Matters arising

The Clerk provided an update on previous meetings' main actions

- SCA grant - confirmed with the association - payment is included in the payment list provided for the meeting
- Installation of new pump for septic tank - completed and working
- Pod repairs - works awarded to contractor - work to commence in new year
- Fig tree grant - confirmed with the Fig Tree
- Crimestoppers - orders for leaflets and social media work have been placed

- Change of bank signatories - changes being progressed although it was suggested that this may take some time
- Flags - email sent to GCC requesting the removal of flags from lamp posts

Cllr John Callinan was pleased to see that the flooding issue at Oldends lane was now hopefully resolved, it was his intention to arrange a working group meeting and include SCAAF to consider furthering the development of Oldends lane to include discussing energy efficient ways to heat the Pavilion building and its water.

The Clerk updated the meeting with the latest position in relation to the vandalism to the Town Centre flagpole - a Facebook post has been made today identifying what had happened - further posts will be made to update the public in terms of future actions.

Cllrs attending the recent first aid course thought highly of the course.

B/937 To receive the latest budget position

The Clerk presented the latest budget position.

Several queries were raised:

- A suggestion was made that perhaps travel expense budgets could be rationalised
- In light of the increasing number of grant applications received this and in previous years, the grant budget could do with increasing
- Why Magpies Social club had almost paid up the full year's rent. The Clerk would ensure that Magpies was reminded of the reduction in their rent.
- The reason for the significant overspend on Pavilion reactive maintenance. The budget report included a cost that had not been balanced off through an agreed reserve - this had yet to be actioned
- The youth worker costs were questioned. The Clerk confirmed that payments were on target
- Security costs seemed to be referred to in a number of main budget headings, some of which here not being used - the clerk stated that these were relatively small amounts and should exist to reflect the full cost of maintaining each building but, this could be reviewed through the budget setting process

Committee **NOTED** the total Actual Net expenditure of £298,281.14; total Actual Net Income of £427,752.01 and Reserve Movements of £32,456.20

Cllrs Carol Kambites and Keith Terry left the meeting 7.30pm in light of their declared interest in agenda item B/938

B/938 To approve the latest BACS payment list and provide retrospective approval for Debit Card Payments

There was a questions about whether prompt payment by GCC to the town council - this was confirmed albeit, invoicing for repair works was very slow
Committee **APPROVED** BACS payments totalling £33,522.58 and £4,199 respectively. Committee **RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVED** Debit Card payments totalling £1,391.57.

Cllrs Carol Kambites and Keith Terry returned to the meeting 7.35pm

B/939 To receive an update on the latest budget setting exercise for 2026/27 financial year

There had been no change to the previous update on the budget setting exercise. A further meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair is being planned - Cllrs are asked to feed in suggestions and concerns - a further update is to be provided at Business Committee at its meeting in January 2026. Mention was also made of ensuring that budget lines included comments on why budgets are not spent on lines where this was the case - the clerk stated that this would be the case and that changes made by council in recent years have seen revenue budget lines removed and some added to earmarked reserves - an example of this was in relation to local elections where budget spend was decided by external factors beyond the council's control. There was also an ongoing request that a budget sheet be developed showing budget spend profile during the course of the year. It was agreed that the clerk would recirculate the latest Precept calculations and Reserves. A further budget meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair would also be arranged for Monday at 4pm in the town hall - this would be open to all committee members

B/940 To recommend for town council approval the latest updated policies:

- **Financial Regulations**
Committee **RECOMMENDED** the revised Financial Regulations for town council approval
- **Risk Management**
Subject to a change to the last paragraph under the headings 'Implementation' and 'The town council will' - the new paragraph to read 'Officers should consider, investigate and reference risks and identify suitable mitigation measures associated with any proposal put forward for council approval'
Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Risk Management Policy for town council approval
- **Investment Strategy**
The issue of ethical investments taking a more prominent position in the decision making process when determining future investments - It was stated that the council's investment strategy mirrored that produced by Stroud District Council and was fairly sound. This was agreed. It was suggested that clause 5.2 be removed as it did not make sense and it was recognised that investments can only be considered committed when they were paid over the counterparty
Committee **RECOMMENDED** the investment Strategy for town council approval subject to the removal of clause 5.2 from the strategy document

- **Reserves policy**
Committee **RECOMMENDED** the latest Reserves Policy for town council approval
- **Code of Conduct**
It was confirmed that the town council had adopted a Model Code of Conduct established for use by both the district councils and Glos County Council
Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Code of Conduct for town council approval
- **Scheme of Delegations**
Question in relation to planning
Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Scheme of Delegations for town council approval
- **Scale of charges**
It was agreed that there should be no increased charges
Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Scale of Charges for town council approval

The Clerk suggested that as the council's policies had been developed over time from different sources, there was a need to re format all policies - communication working group to determine the new format to be adopted.

B/941 To discuss and approve a financial contribution towards the Open spaces Society's legal support work

Cllrs were in agreement that the Open Spaces Society had shown the town council significant support throughout its engagement on Verney fields and had as a result saved the council a lot of money and helped direct the council to what will hopefully be a successful outcome for the residents of Stonehouse. It was therefore considered that the society's request should in itself be supported with a grant of £500; this being such a small amount compared to the help the council received.

Committee **APPROVED** a grant to the Open Spaces Society of £500

B/942 To consider and approve an annual Warranty for the town council's service vehicle

This was debated and it was agreed that there was merit in continuing to pay for a warranty as a useful fallback measure

Committee **APPROVED** to pay for a further warranty period of 12 months for £623 plus vat

B/943 To recommend for council approval revised Terms of Reference for the HR Sub Committee

Committee **RECOMMENDED** council approve the revised Terms of Reference for HR Sub Committee subject to a change to para 3 to read 'The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected at the first HR meeting immediately following the annual town meeting'

B/944 To receive updates from the following working groups:

1. Climate Change Action Forum

Action plan is out of date but is currently being reviewed by SCCAF. Two key projects are being looked at and includes the use of solar panels on the Pavilion to and the use of a thermal heat gun to help homeowners understand improvements they can make to their homes to prevent heat loss

2. Communications

The comms group are meeting more regularly. A recent meeting was held to agree the future use of Social Media - the group has now set up a 'Whatsapp' group to speed up decision making on future comms/posts

3. Oldends Lane Development

To arrange next meeting now that the flooding issue seems to have been resolved. It was agreed that the next few meetings will combine discussions with SCCAF to focus on ways to deal with the level of energy use within the Pavilion

4. Support Stonehouse

Warm spaces now out of date in shops and website - it was suggested that council may wish to consider funding the distribution of electric throws through third parties to help those struggling to keep warm in their homes

5. Youth

A quarterly meeting is due on 17th December with The Door. It was noted that external funding for their mentoring work had stopped but they would continue to continue with the mentoring paid for by the town council

6. Policy

Making good progress - there is a need to set another meeting date

7. Internal Audit Panel

Latest audit undertaken in Nov 25 - due to be presented to BC at the next meeting

8. Local Government Review

Cllr Carol Kambites currently has a list of District council Assets to share with other interested parties; it was likely that the transference of any assets would take place after the reorganisation process. It was likely that following potential Gov't changes to the Planning system, developments built within 3 miles of a railway station will not require planning - this was of particular importance to Stonehouse

B/945 To note the date of the next meeting - Monday 12th January 2026

Committee **NOTED** the date of the next meeting