

Draft Minutes of Meeting of Parish of Stow Community Council held on Monday 2nd October 2017 at 7.30pm in Stow Town Hall

Those present: C.Hendry (chair), J. MacKenzie, N. Hodgson, I. Peacock, A. McNeilly, A.Riddell,

J. Mushlin, Cllr Aitchison, Cllr Anderson, K.Gait, Tweed Foundation, A.Carlino

Apologies: Cllr Jardine, T.Millar, S.Jeffrey, R. Murphy.

K. Gait filled us in on the background to the River Tweed Commission, which was set up in Sir Walter Scott's time. In the 1980s the Tweed Foundation became the independent scientific arm of the River Tweed Commission. He showed members of the Community Council a video illustrating many aspects of the work of the Tweed Foundation. The Gala Water has very healthy fish. There are salmon, brown/sea trout, eels, stickleback, brook lamprey, minnow (baggie), stone poach (beardie), grayling, which colonize where they can. The grayling are not native and the minnow and stone loach might not be native.

The Tweed has two bits of legislation as a SSSI (area of special scientific interest) and SAC (special area of conservation.) This is because of animal and plant life. The Gala Water is included but some burns are excluded. The most important fish are salmon and brown/ sea trout.

In October they rise in the water. Over a thousand fish a week swim up the Gala Water to spawn.

There is a fish counter – a box in a small area which all fish have to travel through to spawn. This records fish coming through and gives a count of every migratory salmon. Both salmon and trout go through. There was no count in 2016 but has been a count from 2008- 2015. In 2015, 999 salmon went through and 2172 trout. A total of 3171. In the Gala Water there are more trout spawning than salmon. Otters also go through.

There are also Gala Water juvenile surveys which are done by electrofishing. There is an electrofishing backpack with a battery and 2 electrodes. The water allows the circuit to be complete and electricity spreads through the water. Fish are not stunned by electrofishing. Electricity makes the fish swim towards it. It is done for a set time and the numbers indicate what is there. It is useless for adult fish but is ideal in shallow water for juvenile numbers.

There are good results in the main stem of the Gala for salmon but further upstream the results are poorer. Salmon are in the main stem and trout in the small streams. The Gala is only a certain length, width and depth and as many eggs as the Gala Water can manage are wanted. There are more salmon coming in to spawn than you need juveniles. 3m - 7m eggs are laid by salmon. If all the salmon were lost one year, the River would recover quickly.

There can be poor results. There was a major problem at Toddleburn. It should have adult trout but they laid very few eggs. A culvert at the bottom of the burn made it impossible for fish to pass. They created pools for fish to jump to which gave more depth. There is a 700% increase in trout.

At Cockholm Burn Weir the water is too fast and shallow for fish to pass. As many are turned away as get through. Not enough get through to Cockholm Burn. Work was done in the 90s but more work needs to be done. It is very early in the planning process and permission is required from Bert Lofthouse and Jim West. The work will be below the weir and will have no impact above the weir. The plan is to create a small weir downstream. That will create depth, which will give fish the ability to get up the weir. They hope to start next year.

He showed a video of lamprey in the Mill Lade. Lampreys live for 5 - 6 years . They suck in mud. For the last few months of their life they come out of the mud, develop eyes and reproduce. For most of their life they just have a sucker.

The Tweed Commission only have powers for fish access. SEPA has vast powers, such as pollution. They sometimes include the Tweed Commission but that is not always the case.

All present thanked K. Gait for his informative talk and video and he left the meeting.

Unfortunately no one from Eildon Housing Association was able to attend the meeting. A. Carlino said that Susan Turner came to see him in March about the area by Mill Court that he would like to improve. He has removed rubbish, dog dirt from the area. Eildon Housing Association have been refused planning permission to build two houses on the area because of flooding a few years ago. They now want to sell the land. A. Carlino has done a survey with 14 people, both residents and people at the corner. People would like to have the grass cut more than once a year and trees and benches. No one is interested in allotments. Hilary Scott of Eildon Housing Association has offered to come on a site visit to Stow to discuss the Community having use of the land before it is sold. A. McNeilly, A. Carlino and Cllr Anderson are interested in this. The last week of October would be convenient on either Wednesday, Thursday or Friday morning. The Secretary will organise this. A. Carlino left the meeting.

Cllr Aitchison walked with S. Jeffrey to St Mary's Well. There is a possibility that Criminal Justice might have people able to work on the path. It is very complicated. There has been flood damage. A fallen log blocks the path, which could be cut out and the path established. The river also needs to be diverted. Cllr Aitchison will speak to the Roads Department regarding a more permanent fixture. The path has to be physically viable. A fence and gate needs done. A. Riddell, S. Jeffrey and Cllr Aitchison will discuss this.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Proposed J. MacKenzie, seconded A. McNeilly.

The Secretary emailed pc Chang Leng regarding this meeting but received no reply. Apparently he is no longer our community police officer. The Community Council recognise that we have been very privileged in having such excellent attendance, support and police reports from pc A. McNair and wish our excellent relationship with the community police officer to continue. The Secretary is to email Anthony Hodges of Police Scotland regarding this.

Bill Jamieson has alerted the community council to the fact that discussions are happening regarding the future train timetable. A strong letter needs to be sent to say that every train needs to stop at Stow. The Secretary will send this letter. Letters from the public to request this would also be helpful.

When the leaves have come off the tree by the public toilets, it will be felled.

The electrics in the Hall need to be reported to Live Borders. The lights in the lift need repaired.

Trees are growing out of the wall at the Old Kirk. The Old Kirk is a listed monument and the building belongs to the heritors of the church. However the Council owns the wall. Cllr Anderson will look into this.

The application to the windfarm for planters and planting has been submitted. The total requested is £5604.80. The application is for 7 planters. A 5% increase for the cost of planters has been anticipated. J. MacKenzie will speak to Pat and Jackie as to whether the other 3 can be used at the Royal Hotel. A total of £2250 has been requested for planting for 3 years.

R. Murphy attended the recent A7 Action Group

Parking Restrictions came up at the Eildon Area Committee. They are at the corner of Craigend Road and Galashiels Road, Mill Road and Station Road. Cllr Aitchison will find out if these are final or whether there will be consultation.

The Church have requested two members of the Community Council to go on a committee which is putting together a request for a maintenance grant to the Windfarm. S. Jeffrey is willing to do this. It was felt that T. Millar would be ideal for this committee if he was willing to do it. The Secretary is to contact him to see if he is interested in this.

The grit bin at the top of Fleming Place was removed 2 years ago. When there is rain, water pours down Fleming Place and can freeze leading to very treacherous conditions so the bin is needed at the top of the street as well as the foot of the street. Cllr Anderson will look into this.

W. Ball has been speaking further with J. Mushlin regarding a social gathering of all groups in the area so that everyone can be kept up to date with activities. A subcommittee needs to be formed to organise this. January would be a good month for this to take place and, hopefully, the Community Council will authorise a microgrant for costs. J. Mushlin will be the Community Council representative on this subcommittee.

The recent meeting, sponsored by the community council, in Fountainhall Village Hall regarding tree felling was extremely well attended.

There was recently an incident in Stow where it was apparent that the presence of a defibrillator at the Town Hall was not known. Luckily this did not lead to a potentially avoidable tragedy. Signage is needed for the defibrillator. The Secretary will contact Kenneth Gunn of HART to find out where to get signage from.

The Treasurer reported that a grant of £630 has been received from Clare Malster, SBC, as well as reimbursement of £22 for the rental costs of Fountainhall Village Hall for community council meetings.

The Fountainhall WI received a microgrant of £250 to help with the cost of speakers.

Galawater Camera Club will get rental costs met through a microgrant

Fountainhall Bowling Club requested a microgrant of £250 to cover costs. A breakdown of these costs is being requested.

C. Hendry received a grant of £246.50 to cover the costs of taking all the children at Fountainhall, including nursery children to the pantomime.

Correspondence

John Williams, Chair Heriot Community Council, e-mailed that SBC refused planning permission for Gilston Hill windfarm. There is now a 3 month wait to see if 2020 Renewables will appeal.

SP Energy wrote to say they are working on fixing the fault in Stow and plan to complete this work by mid-November.

New white lines are needed on Earlston Road.

The graveyard wall is falling down.

The guttering and trees at the Town Hall have been reported.

Cllr Aitchison reported that a communities fund has been set up . £ 150, 000 has been allocated to the Eildon Area for projects wanted by the community. Any constituted body can apply. There would be a possibility of £5000 being available for St Mary's Well. The cost of streetlights at Fountainhall are likely to be too expensive to be approved for this fund. There are 5 locality committee chairs. 1% of the council funds should be allocated to the communities fund but there is still discussion as to what should be counted in, whether staff costs apply.

The next meeting will be on Monday, November 6th 2017 in Stow Town Hall at 7.30pm. The Secretary tendered her apologies, that she will be unable to attend the meeting

AGENDA

1. PAUL MCGREAL - THE GREAT TRAIN RIDE
2. APOLOGIES
3. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING
4. POLICE REPORT
5. GENERAL MATTERS
6. TREASURERS REPORT
7. COUNCILLORS REPORT
8. PLANNING
9. CORRESPONDENCE
10. AOCB