

Draft Minutes of Parish of Stow Community Council held on Monday 3rd October 2018 at 7.30pm in Stow Town Hall

Those present: C. Hendry (chair), J. MacKenzie, J. Mushlin, S. Jeffrey, I. Peacock, A. McNeilly, A. Riddell, T. Millar, Cllr Aitchison, Cllr Anderson, M. Craig, D. Riddell, M. Naylor, K. Drury, S. Gibb (Earlston Community Council)

Invited Guests: Robin McMillan, (stonemason), Ms Jenni Craig (Service Director Customers and Communities), Ms Jenny Wilkinson (Clerk to Scottish Borders Council)

Robin McMillan described the work he has been doing on behalf of the Community Council at the Old Kirk. He has upgraded level 4 of the Bishop's Palace. The mortar was washed out from most of the stonework to a depth of 4". The main chimney is a feature of the building. If it fell down this would be a very ordinary building. There is a massive chimney inside which is now secure. Fine pointing will take a long time. He wants to do the West Wing but will tidy up loose stone over the winter. This was a massive building. The biggest in the village. The design of the chimneys and the main fireplace are 16th century.

Historically this is very interesting architecturally. It has not been touched since it was damaged by fire. The building is still as it was hundreds of years ago. The design of the fireplace and chimneys are very interesting, showing the transition from medieval to modern design

A great deal of time needs to be taken in pointing stones. Bad pointing ruins buildings and cannot be undone. The Bishop's Palace is a great asset to the Village. The East Gable is now sound and stable and Mr McMillan now wants to concentrate on the West Gable. The winter is too frosty for this work to be undertaken.

The board outside the building needs to be upgraded to show a picture of what it was like in its heyday.

Mr McMillan hopes it will be possible to get a windfarm grant to undertake work on the bridge.

There was a presentation to Mr McMillan in recognition of the dedicated work he has put into this.

The Community Council were informed that Historic Scotland are going to issue a preservation order on the Bishops Palace.

Mr McMillan, M. Craig and D. Riddell left the meeting at this point.

Ms Craig, Service Director Customers and Communities stated that there had been a survey about Local Area Partnerships lately around the community councils. There was mixed feedback. Some views stating that they are not working, others about needing time bedding in. There will be an evaluation after they have been in place for 18 months and in the Spring the Council will seek members' views.

Local Area Partnerships have come about as a result of the Community Empowerment Act. There is no tried and tested way of doing them. Most local authorities are making changes as they go along. Currently people are coming to terms with them. The main point is that more must be done at a localities level, which includes the Localities Bid Fund. The Council are part of a jigsaw which includes NHS and Housing Associations and are trying to get a platform where partners can get together with communities to reflect aspirations. This is in a less formal way, with more being done through workshops. The focus is to develop locality plans. The Community Action Plans were from top down.

The locality plans will be from the ground up. There needs to be a lot of conversation, with the locality plans becoming action plans in the early spring.

The response from the Community Council was that it currently is not working as well as Area Forums did from our point of view. At The Forums, community councillors were listened to and Councillors would get back with a response. Now there is no feedback. Individuals come when their particular subject of interest is on and skew the agenda ,so community councillors are drowned out. The current format is so large there is no spotlight on community councils. In the past community councillors could get information or there could be an issue raised at the local level that they wanted to find out more about. They discovered things of interest to their community at the Forum. Now that just does not happen.

There needs to be engagement at a community council level and also the priorities need to be ascertained.

A mechanism is needed to get both. An example is the transport situation in Stow. Nothing came back through the Eildon Area Partnership. Not every train stops at Stow, which has been a subject of concern ever since the railway opened. By chance, at a Scotrail celebration, a community councillor found out that there are plans for every train to stop in Stow.

The Eildon Locality Working Group was raised. After many meetings, involving many different sectors of the community a plan was drawn up and put out widely for consultation. Following this an action plan was drawn up in the field of health and social care in Eildon. Then the group was disbanded and told that it was now part of Eildon Area Partnership. What has happened to those proposals or the monitoring of the Action Plan which was about to start is unclear.

The Community Council were asked whether we are part of the Community Councils Network who have strong views about Area Partnerships. Stow Community Council currently do not go to these meetings and act on a local level. There are so many meetings. It is a matter of having priorities and finding a balance. Stow Community Council are on the A7 Action Group and work jointly with Heriot regarding windfarms. The Community Council work locally and get things done.

The administration need to explain the vision of what they are trying to do on Eildon Area Partnership.

Ms Craig explained currently there are 69 community councils, all looking after local issues. She is trying to bring all partners together and focus on strategic issues.

It was felt that there should have been information at the start. Earlston Community Council spent £15,000 on a community plan but have no grasp on what SBC want to do

Prior to the Area Forums, the Community Councils would meet in Melrose and discuss what problems there were and community councils would back each other. A Community councillor organised it and was not re- elected, which was how it stopped. There was strength then as people had a voice. Now it is just post-its

Ms Craig explained that the issue is that the Scottish Government require 1% of the budget to be decided by communities. The difference between the Area Forum and Area Partnership is that the partnership cannot just be with community councils. They are required to work together with organisations like Fire, NHS.

The Area Partnership seems to be working in Peebles and Hawick but not in Eildon. The time interval between post-its and results seems a long time. Now there are funds, with the locality bid fund. The

requirement from the government will be money for the Community to decide. The Area Forum was a place where the Community Council had a voice. Now there are resources but it feels like the Community Council has lost its voice at the Local Area Partnership. Eildon is such a large area. Smaller communities get drowned out. The challenge is to get a locality plan which reflects Eildon.

Ms Craig responded that she realised that the level of understanding of Local Area Partnerships shows that they haven't been explained fully. She needs to look into community councils feeling they have lost a voice.

She suggested that a meeting should be set up for community councils about a week before the Area Partnership. There are 9 community councils in Eildon. They could discuss community council views at this meeting and represent them at the Local Area Partnership.

It was felt that this is the way forward and it would be useful to have the background to the Area Partnership and Community Plan explained at the first meeting. The question was raised as to who decides on priorities, voting of local communities. What exactly happens? The first meeting for community councils is likely to be in late October and this can be outlined then.

Ms Craig stated that the Community Empowerment Act means that we all need to speak with each other. Other Councils are just as lost but in 2021 the Community will decide. We will get a better idea of how things will improve.

The Chair thanked Ms Craig and Ms Wilkinson

Ms Craig and Ms Wilkinson left the meeting . Ms Gibb also left the meeting

K.Drury raised concerns regarding the proposed felling of trees in Stow Park, stating that this had been proposed 25 years ago and pollarding was all that was necessary. He wondered how many trees were to come down and what state the trunks were in. Cllr Anderson will get the report and give it to the community councillors and members of the public. The timeline is not known . However the report will be discussed at the November community council meeting. Mr Drury stated that the trees merely need pollarded and that the tree that was cut down had a perfectly healthy trunk. Around the bowling green trees are looked after and pose no hazard and he wonders why the trees in the park are not looked after.

K.Drury and M. Naylor left the meeting.

Apologies: Cllr Scott

Amendments to previous minutes

Cllr Scott advised that the police will not attend minor damage only accidents unless there are allegations of dangerous, careless, or inconsiderate driving, or allegations of drunkenness or other criminal behaviour associated with the incident. They will attend all accidents reported to them involving personal injury.

Cllr Scott has raised the graffiti problem with Network Rail who will deal with it.

The minutes were approved. Proposed by A. McNeilly. Seconded J. MacKenzie

New time clocks are being fitted in the signs that are flashing. This has been caused by power surges.

Live Borders – Mrs Sim booked the Town Hall for the play in November but the booking system did not record it and someone else booked the Hall. Fortunately the play can take place at the Church.

However the community council are concerned that the system obviously did not work. Cllr Aitchison will speak to Cllr Jardine about it.

An email was forwarded about the A7 Action Group. It was noted that there is no funding for this section of the A7 during the coming year.

The corner by Sheriffs is very dangerous.

The crossing in the centre of Stow takes a long time to change for pedestrians to cross. Southbound traffic is not being picked up by the sensor. If no traffic is coming the crossing changes quickly. However if a car is coming, there is a long wait.

A road sign on Station Road is blocking the pavement on the side where it is wide enough to walk safely.

It was commented that the A7 carries more traffic than many A roads. The white lines have still not been done.

Treasurer's Report

Community Council General Funds- £479.18

Funds raised by A.Riddell - £762.70

Funds for Mill Court - £180

SSE microgrants - £857

EDF microgrants - £3200

The Treasurer wondered what the situation is regarding the memorial bench for Ian Anderson in Stow Park. The Secretary will try to find information about this.

The Camera Club requested a microgrant for £288 for a projector which they are willing to lend to other groups. This was agreed with the stipulation that if another group borrows it and breaks it, they are obliged to replace it.

Fountainhall New Age Kurling requested a microgrant of £123.50 to cover all costs of a tournament with Clovenfords. This was granted.

The cost of paint for the decking at Fountainhall Village Hall is £194.42

Councillors Reports

The manhole cover opposite Springbank has not been touched. Cllr Anderson will follow this up.

Cycle parking – Cllr Anderson will look into the possibility of a parking space in Townfoot being used for cycle parking, with cycle racks. He will discuss this with the cafe and shop.

It was noted that vehicles park in Townfoot all day long which makes parking for the cafe and shop difficult. More parking is needed in Stow. It costs £6000 to construct 1 parking space. £60,000 for 10 parking spaces. The question was raised whether it might be possible to have parking spaces on the quiting green.

Cllr Anderson reported that he had been to a What Matters Hub in Galashiels and was very impressed. The Secretary explained that the Hubs are a means of people getting the services they need without waiting for a long time on Social Work waiting lists, sometimes to find that they do not

qualify for anything. The hubs have a social worker, voluntary sector, whenever possible an occupational therapist and people can drop in and get information on whatever they need on the spot. The emphasis is on what is important to an individual, rather than box ticking. There is a training course "effective conversation" which is free and open to anyone, which enables people to learn how to have conversations with people who have a problem, which acknowledges the problem but finds out what is important to the person rather than just assuming a solution. If anyone wishes to go on this training course , please contact Jenny (the Secretary). It was agreed that it would be excellent to have a pop up "What Matters" hub in Stow, one possibility being at the Lunch Club. The Secretary is to look into this further.

Cllr Aitchison congratulated Stow School on their recent plastics exhibition, which was fantastic.

The Parish Trust will be providing some funds towards the gravestones.

Planning – South Lodge, Crookston, Heriot

Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse and erection of greenhouse.

It was felt that, whilst Crookston is officially within the parish of Stow, it is generally considered to be part of Heriot and this application will be passed on to Heriot Community Council for their comments.

AOCB

Some outlying areas of Fountainhall ,which used to have the newsletter delivered, are no longer receiving it. The Secretary will raise this with W .Ball

The next meeting will be on Monday November 5th in Stow Town Hall at 7.30pm.

AGENDA

- 1 OWEN JOINER - OXTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL – THE BIRD GARDEN AND VISITORS' CENTRE, OXTON.
- 2 APOLOGIES
- 3 MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING
- 4 POLICE REPORT
- 5 GENERAL MATTERS
- 6 TREASURERS REPORT
- 7 COUNCILLORS REPORTS
- 8 PLANNING
- 9 CORRESPONDENCE
- 10 AOCB

ALL WELCOME