

Draft Minutes of Meeting of Parish of Stow Community Council in Stow Town Hall on November 5th 2018 at 7.30pm

Those present: J. MacKenzie (chair), A. McNeilly, N. Hodgson, C. Hendry, T. Millar, J. Mushlin
Cllr Aitchison, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Scott, 11 members of the public.

The subject of the proposed felling of 5 trees in Stow Park was discussed. A report had been circulated after the previous meeting regarding the condition of the trees and their location. The following points were made:

. The Community Council do not have the power to review this decision, which is a decision by SBC.

However a discussion of the matter at this meeting was proposed at the October meeting .

. The question was raised as to why 2 trees were found to be unacceptable and three tolerable but it was proposed to cut all 5 trees down.

. Cllr Anderson responded that four of the trees are hybrid black poplar which only have a lifespan of 30 – 50 years and these trees are at the end of their lifespan.

. The tree in the park which was cut down because a branch fell down in high winds is now sprouting new growth.

. Cllr Aitchison responded that no one wants to see injuries to park users. Council Officers decided that the trees are marginal and will be removed. They will be replaced with more oak trees, which have a long lifespan and will do more to improve the environment. There will be more trees in Stow Park, with young trees planted behind the Bowling Green. The safety of children using the park is paramount.

. The Community cares about its trees. Young trees should have been planted 10 years ago.

. 2 trees have been assessed as unacceptable. The white willow has been assessed as broadly acceptable.

. The request was made to ask the Council if staggered felling is possible, while new trees are planted and the remaining trees cut back and made safe.

. Cllr Aitchison agreed to go back to the Senior Officer who made the decision to fell 5 trees to see if at least one of the trees can be saved and will ask him to review all the trees.

. It was agreed that it was a good in-depth report but there was no overall decision within it and it lacked any proposals as to what should be the course of action taken. No one doubted the validity of the report.

. The point was raised that the report said that the trees were dangerous as they are now but they would not be if pollarded

. How will the trees be cut down?

. A member of the community council stated that the Community Council supports trees. We support Wooplaw, even though it is not strictly within our parish. If an expert writes a report, it has to be taken seriously. We have asked for it to be revisited and see whether there are any feasible

alternatives to cutting down the trees. The bottom line is that we should back the planting of more trees and oaks are really good.

. Cllr Aitchison stated that The Council are very aware of litigation and would be liable if someone was injured after they had received a report. Maybe they are over careful but it is because of The reality of the legal profession.

. The Old Churchyard in Stow has been vandalised because one child in Glasgow was injured but the Community Council have raised the money to restore headstones.

.The question was raised whether the public had come to the right place, coming to the Community Council. Where else could they go?

. The three councillors present have listened closely to the views of the public and are going to make representations and find out what must come down. If the Senior Officer with the Parks Department says all five must come down, then that is the situation. The Councillors are listening to the community.

. A plea was made for pollarding and staggered planting and that this should be looked at sympathetically.

.It was felt that there had been a lack of communication about this and the whole subject needs to be put in the public domain. Information should be put in the newsletter.

. The question was raised as to what would happen to the income from the wood if the trees were felled.

. Cllr Aitchison responded that there would be unlikely to be profit. The income would be retained against the cost of felling. There is also talk about getting part retained for kids and people to enjoy .

. Cllr Anderson stated he would ask about income.

. A representative of Stow Park Committee stated that they would support whatever decision was made to ensure safety. The commemorative bench for Ian Anderson ,which the Community Council have commissioned , has been ordered.

All members of the public left the meeting at this point.

Apologies: I.Peacock, S.Jeffrey, A.Riddell, R.Murphy

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

The stones at Plen Plath have been removed.

As a result of discussions in October between Jenni Craig, SBC and Stow Community Council, there is a meeting for Community Councils organised for Tuesday November 6th. The point of this is for members of Community Councils to help to design the new Eildon Area Partnership. The meeting will be between Council Officers, who will come to listen and community councils.

Police Report – We have received a report from our new community beat officer, Jamie Entwistle. It was felt that , whilst there is a lot of information on scams contained in it, there is little regarding traffic incidents on the A7. The A7 was closed for 7 hours due to a road accident and it was closed due to road accidents on two consecutive days but this is not mentioned. The Community Council would like to see road closures reported as well as all the accidents which it is possible to glean from the police reporting system. Stow Community Council are active members of the A7 Action Group

and this information is crucial for this purpose. At the road closures, there were the problems which commonly occur of people being diverted where better local knowledge on the part of the police would have meant they need not be redirected.

General Matters

Cllr Jardine told the Secretary that Live Borders are considering a community gym in Stow and will contact the community council at some point regarding a suitable space for it in Stow Town Hall.

It was commented that in a recent medical emergency in Stow, the Ambulance Control Centre were not aware that Stow is on the A7 and thought it was in a really remote area. Their software appears to be poor. Certainly in medical emergencies in Fountainhall, they have had difficulty initially in establishing which region Fountainhall is in.

The Safety Camera Partnership will be coming back to Stow. There have been results from 3 speed surveys in Stow. In May 18, 2.5% of traffic were 15mph over the limit and 75% were over the limit at the North End of Stow. These surveys were before the completion of the junctions and a follow up was promised. This will be requested from the Council. It was noted that the results of these surveys can depend on where they were taken. A junction will slow down traffic.

Radar speed signs are available from Evolis, which could be purchased by the community via windfarm funds. Philippa Gilhooley and Brian Young have a policy which will not allow community funded signs. The Councillors present were asked to investigate and Cllr Scott said he would look into this.

The sign has to be accurate and can be either mains powered or solar powered. Solar power is at an extra cost. The council has to approve a site but if attached to a private property it is outside the Council's remit. An effort needs to be made to get the Council to support this.

Councillors Reports

Councillor Anderson stated that the Council do not want to lose a parking space, so it is not possible to get one allocated for cycle racks. This will have to be put on the back burner. The question arises whether an area by the Hotel could be used for this purpose.

Councillor Aitchison – The street lights are still flashing. This will be followed up.

Ditches at Watherstone Straight will be cleared out by neighbourhood services.

Cllr Scott has been to a conference at Hawick High School about the extension of the Borders Railway. This is not going to be in place for 10 or 15 years time. There should be more pressure on road improvement for goods and the A7 from Galashiels to Edinburgh needs improving.

Microgrants-

Stowed Out were awarded £300 for a radio mike, which is essential equipment.

Fountainhall Mothers and Toddlers Group were awarded £300 to cover the rental of Fountainhall Village Hall, whilst they reestablish this group.

Fountainhall Village Hall was awarded £300 for a new water heater in the kitchen

Fountainhall Childrens Christmas Party were awarded £175 towards the costs of the party.

There is £2500 remaining in EDF microgrants.

No funds remain in SSE microgrants but funding for the next year is due soon.

Planning –

Erection of dwellinghouse with detached garage.

Land South West of 2 Ferniehurst Cottages Stow Scottish Borders

The next meeting of Parish of Stow Community Council will be held on Monday December 3rd at 7.30pm in Stow Town Hall.

AGENDA

- 1 OWEN JOINER – OXTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL – BIRD GARDEN AND VISITOR CENTRE.
- 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.