

Draft Minutes of Parish of Stow Community Council Meeting held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 at 7.30pm in Stow Town Hall

Those present: C. Hendry (chair) J. MacKenzie, I. Peacock, A. Riddell, S. Jeffrey, A. McNeilly J. Mushlin, Cllr Scott, Sgt Marker, M. Craig, Owen Joiner (Oxton)

Apologies: T. Millar, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Aitchison

Owen Joiner described the proposed Bird Garden and Visitor Centre to the community council and showed plans. The land at Oxton Pottery is being transformed into a destination for visitors.

The Bird Garden and Visitors Centre are on The A68 and within easy reach of Stow.

The Bird garden houses flamingoes and other birds, including capercaillie and grouse and is also an area with red squirrels. The Visitors Centre will be working with primary schools throughout the area, including Stow and Fountainhall. The purpose of the project is conservation and it is a resource which is intended to extend beyond the communities of Oxton and Channelkirk. It will offer work experience, voluntary work, as well as employment opportunities.

The main building has a classroom where community activities such as yoga, french classes and photography can take place, as well as conservation and educational activities.

A Leader Grant has supported the whole project.

Owen Joiner is the Bird keeper and wants to stimulate children's interest in birds and conservation. The various species of grouse are his particular interest.

There will be full disabled access with changing places and accessible toilets. There will be token door entry. A ticket will last for a year, with no limit on the number of visits during this period.

A shop is being built, which can stock work by Stow craftspeople. There will also be a cafe.

There will be an abstract garden which will be sensory based, with car parking, which will be sufficient for coaches.

Currently there is a Flamingo House, with 7 hens and 9 baby flamingoes.

For more information visit [www.birdgardensscotland.com](http://www.birdgardensscotland.com)

The project has been approved by Oxton Community Council and is a Social Enterprise.

The members of Stow Community Council were impressed by the project and agreed that the Secretary may write letters of support on behalf of the Community Council.

Owen Joiner left the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Proposed: A. McNeilly. Seconded: J. MacKenzie

Mary Craig, Stow Archivist, attended a site meeting with Diane Munro and Craig Blackie, SBC at the graveyard. They might infill the area where the stones were lying flat. They might also allow work to the area which is not a scheduled monument area. Historic Scotland are happy and everything is progressing well.

The Midlothian Borders Tourism Action Group are doing a multilayered app for the Borders area. They are interested in history and culture. There are 13 points of interest in the Stow and Fountainhall area. Five of them might go on the app.

Ms Craig also requested the community council to consider commissioning a history of Stow. She has received requests for "A History of Stow – Rev Wilson 1924". There is likely to be demand for an update of this. The Community Council would need to apply for funding of £ 12,000 from the Windfarm . Ms Craig has drawn up a proposal which the Secretary will circulate around community council members for a decision at a later date as to whether to apply for funding. The book would be a fully referenced history book with a minimum of 100,000 words, around 225 pages, with images. It would be undertaken on a self-employed basis by the author. It is understood that a Windfarm application is not necessarily successful and the agreement to apply for funding would not be a commitment to commission the book. The book would sell for £10. It would not be a rewrite of Rev Wilson's book. It would make £3000 if sold out. However we are not allowed to do anything for gain under windfarm rules. This could maybe be used for a reprint or else for the community . There would be quotes for a Windfarm application. The first recorded mention of Stow is 900AD. The book would be from 900AD to the present day.

The booklet "The Gala Water & the First World War "has just been produced and is for sale for £5.

Ms Craig left the meeting

#### Police Report

Sgt Duncan Marker informed the community council that pc Jamie Entwhistle is the new community police officer for the area.

During the month there has been one callout about a speeding vehicle.

It was commented that the last police report omitted a road closure caused by 2 HGVs. Two members of the Community Council are members of the A7 Action Group and accurate statistics in the police report regarding incidents on the A7 North of Galashiels are extremely helpful.

Sgt Marker explained that the police throughout Scotland are expected by Police Scotland to standardise all reports. These are based around objectives and parameters, with templates.

The Community Plan looks at the priorities. This is due to be reviewed next year and the new Community Plan will be issued in 2020. The Community Council should participate in the review to state local views.

The responsibilities of the Sergeants have now increased. There are now two Sergeants covering the whole of the Borders, where there used to be three.

A new proposal is the Community Speed Watch. A paper has been written suggesting that the Community could do their own speed checks. This is not in the public domain. Agreement is still needed regarding the draft. Under this proposal, each community could buy a speed gun, approved by the police and there would be a group of volunteers, trained by the police as to how to use it. The volunteers would be in fluorescent jackets and zap speeding cars. Then pass details of registrations to the police, who would issue warning letters. There would not be prosecutions. A speed gun would cost £1,500 and needs to be the same as the police issue so that they can calibrate it. There is no camera. One person clicks the gun and there need to be groups of 3 volunteers at a site. It is important to have no conflict .

A pop up Bob costs about £800. There are also smiley face signs.

The council are thinking of relaxing their restrictions. Everything needs to come to the Council for approval. Any initiative needs to be in a place the Council approves of. The Community Speed Watch would need to be away from the 20mph sign. The scheme has not had the go ahead, so it is a matter of waiting for its implementation.

Sgt Marker left the meeting

The two members of the public present wished to raise the need for the updating of Stow Website. Stow Community Council pays for the website . They felt that it needs to have links to social media and it was noted that most of the material on it is 2 – 10 years old and looks dated. There is a need to update the public about the station house by the community trust and have feeds for facebook and twitter.

It was also stated that there should be one central focus for Stow to bring the whole community together . It should link into the newsletter for people who are not on the internet. There are a lot of small groups. It could be used by artists. It is better to use something that is already up and running.

The site has always been paid for by the Community Council. Currently the Community Council is aware of the need to update and improve the site and looking at other options. Keeping the website up to date is labour intensive. The Community Trust see the digital promotion of the Station House as essential. It was suggested that the website could be abandoned and facebook be used. However the Parish of Stow Community Council already have a facebook page and it was felt that a website is essential. The members of the public were assured that their views would be taken on board .

The members of the public left the meeting

General Matters

The big gravestone against the wall of the church has only 2 inches holding it up. Craig Blackie will be informed of this.

The floodbank below the park has not been dealt with. It is 800 yards north of the new Station Bridge. The floodbank has been washed away next to the river

The Mill Lade next to Stow Park is rising and needs cleared out.

The Crash barrier has collapsed at the bottom of Bow Corner

There is a leak in the roof of Stow Town Hall, which might be due to a choked gutter. Putty needs replaced in the Windows. There is fungus in the ladies.

The Secretary will write to Neil Hastie, Estates Manager SBC ,asking him to arrange to meet members at Stow Town Hall, indicating our concerns. The local councillors should be copied into the correspondence.

It was commented that, under the Community assets programme, the Community could take over the Town Hall. However a few years ago it would have cost £28,000 a year to run, so this is not feasible.

It has come to the attention of the community council that people are saying that the original plan for the Station House was completely flawed and not sustainable. This was never raised in the past .

It was approved by Blueprint and the original concept was for a Bistro and crafts. Due process was followed with the appointment of architects etc throughout.

The proposed dates and venues for community council meetings in 2019 were circulated.

They were approved. Proposed by J. MacKenzie. Seconded S.Jeffrey.

The Secretary will confirm these dates once she has booked the venues.

S.Jeffrey applied for the second round of grants for the booklet of walks around Stow after the bid was unsuccessful in the first round. However he has now been told he has to reapply because there were not enough sustainable bids in the second round of the Community Bid Fund for it to take place. He will see Cllr Aitchison about any alternative routes of funding He has agreement for walks on the west side of Stow from landowners but needs to get agreement from landowners on the east side of Stow. The walks will be professionally planned and mapped.

There is black ice at the corners at the crossroads as the levels do not correspond.

All the benches have been put into the park. One was meant to be put at the crossroads.

K.Lofthouse is trying to get the council people to rectify this.

The bin in the quoting green has been moved to the park. A bin is needed at the quoting green .

#### Councillors Reports

Cllr Aitchison spoke to the Senior Officer responsible for Stow Park, as requested. However the decision to remove five trees has not been changed. The contract has been agreed with a contractor but action is unlikely before the New Year. As agreed the trees will be replaced.

#### Park development

The school wants to take on the project of the "triangle" of land bounded by the Mill Lade, Bowling Green and Station Road. They will create a glade of fruit trees and wild flowers which are bee and bird friendly as part of their "outdoor education programme". The council are fully supportive and will provide help and expertise in the New Year. It is completely optional whether the Community Council wish to be involved or not.

Station Bridge . Looks wonderful and a much better welcome to the village. Cllr Aitchison has been fighting to get this done for the last 10 years. The Council deserve credit on completing this on time and within budget.

Plenploth - the white stones have been reinstated and spread to other households. The view of the members was that the smaller stones at other households do not present a hazard to drivers and can stay. The only concern is the large white stone which has reappeared at Plenploth and could be a hazard.

Back road from Stow – The drainage is still awful. Cllr Aitchison will try again to get action, especially the bits before Watherston. He extends his apologies that he has not managed this after asking for so long.

Locality Bid Fund – The relaunch of LBF2 was approved. The changes are that there is an increase for constituted bodies to £15k and part salary can be applied for, as can building repairs. Established groups can apply. It does not have to be a new idea.

There is a considerable amount of Eildon money. £30k was handed back from the first round because the project could not be done. (Earlston Minibus )

Galashiels Academy and Gala Schools. The Council approved the progress of Galashiels Academy as the next school to be replaced in the Scottish Borders. There was still to be a meeting with the Scottish Government regarding this at the time of Cllr Aitchison's report, so it is not yet definite. The Council have to prepare a concept in advance, as the Scottish Government tend to come up with money and expect there to be a plan in place.

Cllr Aitchison will speak to Stuart Jeffrey to help him progress his plans for the "Walks Round Stow" booklet.

Heriot Community Council were interested in knowing who the Contractor was who raised the stones in the Old Churchyard.

Cllr Anderson

Felling of the trees in the park is likely to occur in January. It is proposed to use the trunks to form seating in situ and also to plant a hedge alongside the fence bordering the A7, using a low maintenance fruiting species such as blackthorn with help from the Woodland Trust. SBC seem happy with this but need a more detailed proposal. It is hoped that the relatively small cost could be met with a small windfarm grant. Cllr Anderson will bring details to the next community council meeting.

Unfortunately there has been lack of progress with items such as drainage on the back road, lighting and repair of the crash barrier at Bow Corner.

Cllr Scott

The flashing signs in Stow will be removed.

The sign in Galashiels cannot be altered to make people aware of closure of the A7. A road closed sign is needed further up the A7, with Torwoodlee as a turning point for large vehicles.

Treasurers Report

The bill from the school for hire of the Hall was £106.25

There is £240 in the fund for restoration of the gravestones which was raised by donations from the public.

The Christmas tree will be purchased by Hamish Hunter from Alison Runciman

A cheque for microgrants is coming from SSE.

Planning

Replacement Windows – 25 Townfoot, Stow, TD1 2 QN

Correspondence

Request for participation for my dissertation ( subject: the impact that the 2013 formation of Police Scotland has had on community policing and police/community engagement in the Scottish Borders).

The Secretary was nominated to take part in this research.

The next meeting will take place on Monday January 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 7.30pm in Stow Town Hall.

All welcome

#### AGENDA

- 1 APOLOGIES
- 2 MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING
- 3 POLICE REPORT
- 4 GENERAL MATTERS
- 5 COUNCILLORS REPORTS
- 6 TREASURER'S REPORT
- 7 PLANNING
- 8 CORRESPONDENCE
- 9 AOCB