

MINUTES OF PARISH OF STOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7.30 pm in STOW TOWN HALL ON MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2015

Present: D Muir, J Mushlin, A McNeilly, J McKenzie, A Riddell, Cllr B Herd, C Hendry, Cllr J Mitchell

Colin Ovens, SBC Roads, 1 member of the public Mr I Junor

Apologies: Cllr B White, Cllr S Aitchison, T Miller, S Jeffrey

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved J McKenzie, seconded A Riddell

SBC Roads Dept:

Colin Ovens had been invited to update us on the current state of the roads in the area as a result of the ongoing railway works. SBC are fully determined to do their utmost to extract appropriate contribution from Network Rail & BAM to the costs of the renovations required. Once the extraordinary traffic connected with the railway project has ceased, a full assessment will be carried out of the roads' conditions, including, (importantly in terms of seeking contribution from the contractors), the level of deterioration as a direct result of the heavy railway traffic. Attributing proportionality of defects to the railway project is key to the success in obtaining this contribution – ie, how bad a state were the roads in before the works started?

So far, general carriageway & drainage analyses have been carried out; road marking analysis is just about to be carried out, including a study into full replacement costs of this. The roads department assure us that they are constantly gathering data & collecting information on all the roads affected by the railway & its traffic, & they are using a system of red/amber/green - red being very bad, amber: needing attention, green ok.

The Contracts Division are supplying examples of rates for all types of works required, eg resurfacing, relining, filling, re-edging etc etc – so that everything will be in place to start the works as soon as conditions allow.

By the end of Feb they hope that an itemised document will be in place to take forward to the management team and thence to NetworkRail.

Cllr Herd asked if there will be any input from local community who know their particular areas of road well, and know what level of deterioration has been caused in this particular area by the Project.

He also raised the question of walls – in particular old dry stone walls - alongside roads being damaged & crumbling as a result of heavy traffic; is any work projected to happen to these? Colin Ovens said not really; roadside walls are always a contentious issue as the ownership of - & therefore responsibility for – these is often called into question. Usually it is the individual landowner & not the Council who are responsible.

A McNeilly said MORE MONEY must be allocated to A7 as it is such a dangerous road & its markings are misleading ( eg places where there aren't solid white lines allow people to think they can overtake - *when it is manifestly not so*) etc etc; So Cllr Herd's point about local knowledge is very valid.

JM raised the question of the possibility of Re trunking the A7???? To which Colin Ovens replied that (as we know) this has been raised more than once at the A7 Action Group meetings – but gets lost in the small issues that are also raised, eg individual drain, individual gully, individual pothole..... He has drafted an action plan, and tried to get the A7 Action Group to concentrate on the major, huge problems such as the A7 & its use/trunk status, rather than smaller issues that can be taken up with Small Schemes at SBC. JM & AM said that the previous A7 Action Group meeting was extremely positive & helpful - & they & Colin Ovens agreed that hopefully Gordon Edgar will put together a proposal following on from the feedback he got then, on the 'bigger picture' of the state of the A7.

Cllr Mitchell asked Colin Ovens if SBC had spoken to Airdrie & Bathgate council to find out what they did, with regard to seeking getting back road-repair costs from contractors; no –but they have consulted with Midlothian over their experience, especially with reference to the Pathhead/Tynehead road; they have already submitted their claim

Charlotte Hendry mentioned the back road between Stow & Fountainhall: just by the BAM entrance down onto the railway – there are 2 or 3 potholes which are extremely bad, & worsening all the time owing to water coming down onto the road at this point – and are currently full of frozen water; they need IMMEDIATE attention. Colin Ovens took note. A McNeilly mentioned the broken crash barrier – C. Ovens noted to look into it; which led to a question about crash barriers on the bits of road close to railway? we were informed that this will be BAM's responsibility – it is an issue that all parties are aware of, & SBC Roads Dept will keep BAM up to it!

If SBC are successful with their chasing of BAM for payment/part payment of road renovation - they will of course still need to prioritise the works; so some areas or repair/renovation will happen before others and some roads will need to be closed during repair/resurfacing. Colin Ovens warned us to expect that inconveniences will be ongoing!

He will look into the issue of the street lights in Fountainhall vis-à-vis the excess of lights at Heriot!

AR mentioned that he had heard reports of members of the contracting team using council-owned vehicles to get home from work; and of other members of the workforce being badly treated under the terms of their contracts. Colin Ovens told us to tell anyone with a complaint to contact Brian Park, the Contracts Manager; he can give advice on all matters including travel arrangements for the works teams, if anyone has any concerns about this.

Finally: When will the works be finished? June....exact date t.b.c

At AR's request Colin Ovens will send an expert from his dept to go and look at the layby .

Matters Arising:

JM & SJ attended the Land Use Strategy meeting at Eddlestone last month. There is a useful framework in place which we could consult should a major development be proposed in Stow or Fountainhall.

The Community Planning Meeting for the school railway project took place at Stow school; the children have worked extremely hard, each year group having, among other things, singled out an individual character from Stow's railway history (eg year 7-8 have identified a railway navvy & have gone as far as reconstructing his shed & are looking for a horse & cart of the type he would have used!) There was discussion about the exhibition of the work that has gone into this project, & where & when it will take place – a provisional date of 12<sup>th</sup> June pm-13<sup>th</sup> June a.m, in Stow Town Hall, having been picked; perhaps the project can be put on the website. The school have asked for a microgrant towards renovating their window boxes? BAM have promised to contribute but the school want it all to be looking spick & span & ready for the exhibition & feel understandably that it would be safer to go ahead & get it done in good time.

Cllr Mitchell has checked camera outside old police house – it is an ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) one & was put there by the police;

AM asked Cllr Mitchell what the Parish Trust should do re the station house, progress on which has reached an impasse; after the local business meeting with Abellio – which was well attended - worries were expressed that Abellio do not seem to be particularly willing to consult locals re the station house and whatever amenities/attractions will be in it; who owns the actual old Station House (ie the building)? Network Rail. Robert Little of Network Rail had approved, up til now, all the Parish Trust's plans for the station house – museum, cycle hire, information centre, archive etc etc etc – however he seems, currently, to be totally disinterested in further discussion, preferring to defer any til the summer; by which stage it will be too late to get things up & running in time for the railway opening; all the plans are in place, & apparently approved, but frustratingly no progress is being made; Cllr Mitchell will look into it and get back to us.

A note of thanks had been received from Sound Out for the microgrant for the Halloween event held in theTown Hall.

Margaret White has applied for a microgrant on behalf of the Rural, to cover their running costs: £250; agreed.

Cllr Mitchell will chase as to what is happening re the old gravestones

Cllr Herd talked about the ScrapStore initiative in Selkirk, which is currently under threat. Teachers should be made aware of it if they aren't already. It is open to everyone, but needs supplies & customers!

Re forthcoming Council budget: Anyone can go onto the SBC website and make suggestions on the forthcoming budget – which Cllr Mitchell assured us would all be considered. On SBC website look for ' budgetsimulator.'

Fri 27<sup>th</sup> Feb Cllr Mitchell is holding surgery at Langlee Community Centre

Jenny asked if the parking at the top of Fleming Place could be restricted as the turning area is being blocked by parked cars

JM

Litter picking initiative forwarded by David Melrose: Council will supply bags, gloves, help in getting into Keep Scotland Beautiful competition, will uplift full rubbish bags from a location to suit the pickers.....any interest contact him [dmelrose@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:dmelrose@scotborders.gov.uk). DM will forward his email to Stow & Fountainhall primary schools.

DM

This coming Thursday Stuart Mackay from BAM will be hosting an exhibition in Fountainhall village hall to show anyone interested what the proposed landscaping plans for the railway through the village are – 6.30-8 pm Thurs 5<sup>th</sup> Feb.

See below for 2 letters with updates on the railway.

Report 6.

**BordersRailway**  
Edinburgh • Midlothian • Scottish Borders

Buchanan House  
58 Port Dundas Road  
Glasgow  
G4 0LQ

Cllr Bill Herd  
Council Headquarters  
Newtown St. Boswells  
Melrose  
TD6 0SA

19<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Ref: BR00177

Dear Cllr Herd,

**Rail installation and remaining railway works**

In recent weeks, the installation of rail along the Borders Railway route has made rapid progress. The changing nature of this work means that people living along the route **will notice** that we are beginning to make use of the railway to carry out our continued construction activity.

As such, please find attached a copy of a letter which has been distributed to **12,000 residents** who live next to the Borders Railway. It advises them of the construction work that is **currently** being undertaken and what to expect during the final six months of the project.

I trust that you will find this information useful when speaking to constituents.

If you require any further information, then please do not hesitate to contact the team via one of the following methods;

Email: [info@bordersrailway.co.uk](mailto:info@bordersrailway.co.uk)  
Helpline: 0845 604 4146

Yours sincerely

**Craig Bowman**  
Senior Communications Manager  
Network Rail Scotland



Midlothian



EDINBURGH



[www.bordersrailway.co.uk](http://www.bordersrailway.co.uk)

**Station works**

There are seven new stations along the route, six of which have car parks. The station works include installing drainage, building the platforms, building the car parks and installing the station 'furniture' such as CCTV cameras, lighting, waiting shelters and information systems.

Many of the stations are already at an advanced stage but work will continue until June 2015.

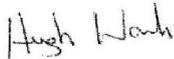
All of the project works will be completed by June 2015. Following this, there will be a period of driver training on the route as the new drivers familiarise themselves with the route. Passenger services will start on 06 September 2015.

If you would like more information, or wish to make comments in relation to the project please use one of the following contact methods:

Website: [www.bordersrailway.co.uk](http://www.bordersrailway.co.uk)  
Email: [info@bordersrailway.co.uk](mailto:info@bordersrailway.co.uk)  
Helpline: 0845 604 4146  
Twitter: @BordersRailway

Our website will continue to be regularly updated with news and information. You can also sign up to receive regular project updates by email.

Yours sincerely,



Hugh Wark  
**Project Director**  
**Network Rail**

The meeting concluded at 9.10 pm

The next meeting will be in Stow Town Hall on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March at 7.30 pm