

**DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARISH OF STOW
COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD IN FOUNTAINHALL VILLAGE
HALL ON MONDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2012 AT 7.30PM**

Those present: D. Muir (Chair), A. Riddell, A. McNeilly, G. Saunders, J. Mushlin, T. Miller, Cllr J. Mitchell, Cllr S. Aitchison, J. Williams (Heriot Community Council), and two members of the public.

Apologies: I. Anderson, J. Mackenzie, Cllr White, Cllr Herd.

Speakers: E. Rafaluk – Community Wind Power, C. Walker – Muirhall Energy.

E. Rafaluk outlined the advantages of combining two wind farms with one at Girthgate. There will be one access route, one scheme instead of two, and a single planning application. There will be 35 turbines, 133m to tip at 4-megawatt capacity. An alternative access route avoiding Lauder has been found. The community benefit is planned to be £2,000 per megawatt. Work is also ongoing on a project with Thirlestane Castle which has matched funding. There will be public exhibitions in October with the submission just before Christmas. There will be a nine-month period of consultation by the Scottish Executive. There are 26 viewpoints from the North East and South, but members of the Community Council perceived that there is a lack of viewpoints from this area.

The Reporter will give his verdict on Rowantree before the New Year. This proposal is taking Rowantree into account. The sites will feed into existing power lines. Funds will be distributed between three separate Community Councils. It was felt that £2,000 per megawatt is too low a payment, but it was stressed that we are currently discussing the entire proposal and its planning, not community benefit.

The issue of intermodulation noise was raised. A full noise assessment is needed. The frequencies of different wind turbines have a cumulative effect and research has found it can affect hearing. The maximum will be 35 decibels. If noise assessment does not comply with regulations, turbines will be removed. The height of wind turbines produced five-six years ago was 125 – 126m. The latest generation are 7-8m taller. They produce more power. The candidate turbine will not necessarily finish up as the actual turbine used. It was commented that local wind farms do not translate into either local jobs or even British jobs.

The minutes of the last meeting were proposed by D. Muir and seconded by G. Saunders.

General Matters

There were difficulties for local motorists when the A7 was closed recently as the police were not local and did not know the area. A member of the public was waiting for the bus in Edinburgh at the time, and Traveline could not give any information regarding the road closure. He was waiting for four hours to get home. Concern was expressed that bus users from Galawater are stranded when the road is closed, and First Bus make no attempt to get them to their actual destination.

On another occasion, a member of the Community Council had given a lift to a woman who had left the bus at Fala to walk to Fountainhall. D. Muir will write to First Bus regarding this. It is also unclear what contingency plans are in place for schools when pupils from rural areas are affected by a road closure, as pupils from Gala Academy were on Wednesday 29th August, when the A7 was closed for a while due to flooding. Parents had to travel to the school to pick up their children, some going a considerable distance out of their way along back roads to do so.

The A7 Action Group is at Hawick on Friday 14th September. Transport Scotland are responsible for maintenance of the A7 South of the Kingsknowes Roundabout. SBC are responsible North of Kingsknowes.

It was commented that nothing has yet been put on the Stow website giving full details of Stow Parish Trust.

Dave Richardson is measuring the movement of the wall on the A7 at the Pack Horse Bridge. It has moved 10mm in three months. There is a question whether the wall should be taken to ground level. Also, the ownership of the bridge is an issue – is it the Council's or the Farmer's? The wall supports the structure of the bridge, so what happens if the wall comes down? The layby should be closed. Dave Richardson will come in October. Cllr Aitchison will say that there are new cracks and ask for inspection to be brought forward.

The Community Council thanked A. Riddell for clearing the old Kirk.

It was agreed that the Community Council would purchase a chainsaw chain.

At a meeting with Mark Douglas and Chris Bowles it was agreed that the old church is a very important site. Cllr Aitchison will try to contact Historic Scotland. It was suggested that there should be a Stow Heritage project to promote and publicise Stow. The graveyards were taken over by the Council in the 1920's. In 1904 the churchyard was closed and taken on by the heritors of Stow church, so no one actually owns it. Mark Douglas would help with the project. Members wondered if the Archive Group would be interested in taking it on.

We can go ahead with a small amount of pointing at the bridge. The bill is £400. £249 from the Community Fund, and £150 from Community Council funds. Materials might be donated from the Council.

It was also agreed to allocate £249 from the Community Fund for work on the church.

Cllr Aitchison stated that the National Lottery have said we can submit the first stage of our application to the Lottery for Stow Park.

No bill has been received for transport for the school children to see the Olympic Torch.

Alison Sutherland from Stow Primary School applied for funds for the school from Stow Community Fund. It was agreed to give her up to £100. The money is needed for 27th September, so she needs to give us a figure before the next meeting of the Community Council.

Cllr Mitchell is holding a constituent's surgery on Friday 12th October from 4.30pm – 5.30pm in Stow Town Hall.

There is a new structuring of committee meetings by SBC. One meeting has been held in Peebles, and one in Eyemouth. Councillors now have the option of voluntarily paying for their lunches.

Cllr Nicholas Watson has resigned from the Council.

The Council needs to find an extra two million pounds next year.

There will be a Community Resilience meeting to gauge interest in the Stow area on Thursday 27th September, in the main hall of Stow Town Hall at 7.30pm. We need to find a drop off point for completed questionnaires.

Correspondence

Clare Malster – CC Network Re-launch
Energy Saving Trust

SES Plan – Proposed Strategic Development Plan: Submission to Ministers.

Emma Rafaluk – Girthgate Wind Farm Joint Community Council Meeting Agenda and Minutes.

Consultation on the Proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill – D. Muir and J. Mushlin will do.

AOCB

The trees need to be done on Church Wynd. This will cost £750 + VAT. We can consider up to £250 for any project that is of community benefit. Cllr Mitchell will speak to SBC about this.

The next meeting of Parish of Stow Community Council will be held in Stow Town Hall on Monday 1st October 2012 at 7.30pm.

All welcome.