

Draft Minutes of Parish of Stow Community Council Meeting held on Monday 7th February 2022 at 7.30pm on zoom

Those present: J. Mushlin, C. Hendry, S. Jeffrey (chair), J. Williams (Chair, Heriot Community Council), G. Stewart, A. McNeilly. Cllr A. Anderson, Cllr H. Scott, G. Murray

Guest: Colin Smyth, MSP

Apologies : Cllr Aitchison, T. Miller, A. Riddell, Christine Grahame, MSP, Craig Hoy MSP

The main part of the meeting was a question-and-answer session. The questions can be found on a separate sheet. Christine Grahame was unable to attend the meeting and sent her responses to questions prior to the meeting. Please see the sheet detailing her answers. These were read out first and then Mr Smyth responded.

Mr Smyth felt that onshore windfarms have their place, but they do proliferate in the South of Scotland and there are communities which are surrounded by windfarms. He welcomes offshore wind farms.

Fountainhall has had a great deal of disruption due to the railway works and Mr Smyth agreed that it was a fair point that this disruption should be taken into account when considering permission for Greystone Knowe Wind Farm, which will cause even more disruption to the village.

A description was given of the unsuitability of Old Stage Road for further traffic.

The circular turning point for lorries is by Still Haugh (the centre of the village) and close to the primary school. Old Stage Road is the only route to the bus and is much used by walkers and dog walkers. John Williams stated that, according to documents issued by Coriolis, the Developer, there will be a minimum of 75 lorries per day and a maximum of 350 per day. These will go up a track to the back of houses in the village and cause a great deal of noise, as well as petrol fumes. The school is very close and constant noise could make learning difficult. The additional fumes are a health hazard for children in the playground. Mr Smyth said he would take up the matter of access, especially as it is so close to a school. Transport management can be considered as part of the application. Mr Smyth stated that he would put in his own objection.

The communication at the last meeting from representatives was so poor that it could not be called professional. Community engagement was non-existent. The representatives stated that Fountainhall had been leafleted prior to the internet consultation. No one can recall receiving a leaflet. This compares with Heriot who

have had 3 years communication about Greystone Knowe windfarm. Many people in Fountainhall, at this late stage, still do not know that there are plans for a wind farm very close to the village. There was no public exhibition, but displays were put up in the Village Hall. Many people did not know about this. The detailed paper montages are in the Village Hall. J. Mushlin will open the Hall at any time there is not a let and John Williams will come to explain the contents of the volumes for anyone who wishes. It is not too late to put in individual responses to the Energy Consents Unit. Please copy them to Colin Smyth at colin.smyth.msp@parliament.scot

Christine Grahame stated that she would be happy to take up lack of community representation with the relevant Minister. Mr Smyth is also going to do so.

There has been concern that outside bodies can invest in the wind farm and make a profit from all the inconvenience that Fountainhall will experience. This is completely different from the community benefit scheme, which only goes to affected communities. Coriolis plan to allocate 10% for investment. This could be by the community, but anyone could invest. It could be multinational corporations.

Road Safety and Transport

The 20mph speed limit is likely to be kept. The problem is enforcement. The police do not enforce the 20mph speed limit. The argument is lack of resource. SBC employ a police team, who should be able to enforce speed limits. From a legal point of view police cannot choose what to enforce and there is no difference between 20mph and 30mph. Mr Smyth will write to Police Scotland.

There have been 3 bad accidents outside one house at the North end of Stow. Christine Grahame indicated that she was not aware of problems at the North end of Stow, and she would take this up. If details were sent to her. Mr Smyth also said he would take this up.

There was discussion of traffic calming methods. The Community Council have been concerned about the houses at Galabank directly on the A7 for years. A 40mph speed limit has been requested for a long time. Traffic goes between 50 - 70mph at that point.

In the middle of the village, traffic builds up next to the children's playpark. There are problems with heavily loaded lorries. There is a fear that there will be severe injury or a fatality in the future.

The SBC Community Action team were created to stop antisocial behaviour. Speeding is definitely antisocial.

The Community Council have been asking for the A7 to be retrunked for years. Mr Smyth stated that there is zero chance of retrunking the A7. This was reviewed 2009 – 2010. All investment is in the A68

The lack of white lines is another issue. When they are put on, they are not maintained. Cllr Scott informed the meeting that there is a proposal to white line north of Galashiels.

Mr Smyth has been heavily involved with the X95 bus service and is trying to improve the service. He sees the need for an hourly service. Once a bus is less frequent than hourly, people find alternatives. The route cuts through different council areas and all councils need to subsidise the route. There is a shortage of bus drivers, so the bus company are focussing on certain services. There are 3 strands of funding: the bus operator's grant, covid funding and funding for bus passes. Bus companies could change services so long as they retained the same mileage. There was no stipulation that they had to run the same service, so they changed services. 10 million fewer people now use bus services than did in 2018-2019. Mr Smyth is the Transport spokesman for the Labour Party and continues to campaign for the X95 bus service to become hourly.

People in Fountainhall want to see a station at Fountainhall. Christine Grahame stated that if there was sufficient demand for this, she would take it up. Colin Smyth said that there is no proposal in the Strategic Transport Plan for any closed stations to reopen. The time to take this up would be when the line is to be extended. A. McNeilly stated that he had it on good authority that it is impossible.

The next subject raised was active travel. Colin Smyth said that there has been an increase in spending in the Budget 2022- 2023 to 10% of the Transport Budget for active travel. This is primarily through local authorities. There is funding available for active travel projects. He is pressing for more South of Scotland funding and for more funding for rural areas.

This was the final question for MSPs. Christine Grahame's answers are on the accompanying sheet. The Chair thanked Mr Smyth for participating in the meeting and Mr Smyth left the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Proposed by C. Hendry, Seconded by A. McNeilly

Treasurer's Report

The website costs £222 pa

The Christmas tree for the crossroads cost £141

Insurance for the strimmer etc which belong to the community council used to be included in the insurance through SBC. However, this year it costs an additional £245 for the year. It was agreed to allocate a microgrant for this.

Cllr Scott has spoken to Alan Scott, Road Engineer who has agreed to meet with us to explain the road access for wind farms and what developers have to agree. The meeting will take place on TEAMS on Monday 14th at 7.30pm. Cllr Scott will send invitations to the meeting

G. Stewart has submitted a paper on signage in Stow. It was agreed that this will be on the agenda at the next Community Council meeting.

G.Stewart was due to meet G. Murray to discuss the new Stow domain. Circumstances made this impossible.

It was agreed that for the time being, Community Council meetings will be held on zoom

A microgrant of £300 was approved for Galawater Singers for rental costs and the costs of music

Planning: Mrs Val Main

Erection of two dwellinghouses, Land North West and South of Watherstone Farmhouse,
Stow

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 7th at 7.30pm on zoom. All welcome. For a zoom invite please contact jjmushlin@gmail.com

AGENDA

- 1 ROSE HOGG, DOG EDUCATION OFFICER SBC
- 2 APOLOGIES
- 3 MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING
- 4 POLICE REPORT
- 5 SIGNAGE IN STOW
- 6 GENERAL MATTERS
- 7 TREASURER'S REPORT
- 8 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
- 9 PLANNING
- 10 CORRESPONDENCE
- 11 AOCB

