**DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARISH OF STOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD IN STOW TOWN HALL ON MONDAY 1st OCTOBER 2012 AT 7.30PM**

Those present: D. Muir (Chair), J. Mushlin, T. Miller, G. Saunders, A.McNeilly, J. MacKenzie, A. Riddell, I. Anderson, I. Peacock, Cllr S. Aitchison, Cllr White, 4 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr J. Mitchell, Cllr B. Herd.

The old church in Stow urgently needs work done. The Community Council Fund has given £250 to get one wall done, but the whole building is in crisis. There is a question about ownership. It is thought that it belongs to the people who donated the ground. Ownership could be vested in the Church of Scotland (who say it could be handed to a local trust). Cllr Aitchison is investigating who the actual owners are. The Council took over ownership of the old graveyard. The old church is a B listed building. Historic Scotland say they could only give funding if there was matched funding. Mark Douglas suggested we should cut down vegetation and A. Riddell has cleared most of the trees. The Community Council has given money from the community fund for work on the bridge, but this is not urgent. The old church is the priority. Stage 2 will be an inspection and costings. Scheduled monument consent is needed. Stage 3 Funding bids. Stage 4 Work on site once funding is secured.

There is scope for a Stow Heritage project, which includes training in conservation skills. The archive group are interested in the local heritage and there are 8 in the core group who are all supportive. A lot of initiatives are going on and there is general interest in the community in the fabric of Stow. In the longer term it would be useful to create an asset register. This could pull many strands together, e.g. “promote tourism,” “provide heritage.” There is a great deal of expertise in the community. There are environmental projects going on and the possibility of improving walks around Stow. As far as we know, the Church of Scotland did not accept the old church once the roof was off. We have to decide whether to preserve the church (keep it as it is) or conserve it (make some improvements). There would be an advantage in roofing the church and creating a centre for the 5 surnames, which originated in the valley and are now worldwide. Something needs to be done now, at least, to keep what we have left.

It was agreed to set up a sub-group of the Community Council. A. Riddell, T.Miller, J. MacKenzie and A. McNeilly will be on this group. Members will be invited from other groups in Stow. Mark Douglas will be invited, but it is crucial that the community is consulted first. W. Ball has a concept idea for discussion. The first meeting will be in early November.

The previous item was additional to the normal agenda and 3 members of the public left.

An amendment to the minutes of the previous meeting was agreed. Nicholas Watson is considering resigning as a councillor.

Cllr B. White stated that he had attended the A7 Action Group in Hawick, but the A7 seems to stop at Kingsknowes. BEAR always has someone at the meeting, but there is no official from SBC who is responsible for the A7 North of Kingsknowes. He was disappointed that no one from the North attended. The next meeting is at Langholm on the 11th January, Members of Stow Community Council have attended this meeting and, on one occasion, J. MacKenzie organized Stow as the venue for it.

Inspector Jones extended his apologies for being unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr Aitchison stated that there will be electronic bus reporting on the A7. Fountainhall has not been mentioned in the press releases, so the question was raised whether Fountainhall road end will be included. Also whether the electronic boards will be at all stops in Stow, or only the centre of Stow. It was commented that as many people get on the bus at other stops as at the centre of Stow.

There have been no further developments regarding the pack horse bridge.

Stow school managed to raise the money for transport to tree planting elsewhere, so the community fund did not need to fund this.

There has been vandalism at Stow school. When the new play park is in place Cllr Aitchison will attempt to find funding for closed circuit TV.

The police have been in the middle of Stow with speed cameras.

Chris Hardie is going to look round Stow at the effects of flooding – blocked drains, etc. It was pointed out that there is a lack of gullies at the top end of Stow rather than blocked drains.

Stow Park

An initial application is now being drawn up for lottery funding for Stow Park. The postcode for the funding applies to the fields around the park rather than the park itself. The case that areas whose postcodes are covered use the park has to be proved. The construction manager for the railway has offered to raise the level of the park and construct banking. SEPA is involved in anything which affects flood defences. The park belongs to the Council. The railway is trying to avoid paying for putting soil in landfill. A complication is the type of soil from Midlothian – some is from industrial sites. Jason Hedley and Steven Renwick are involved in preliminary discussions. The park would be closed while the work is going on.

Currently there are 2 possibilities for the park:

1) A lottery application.

2) The railway raising the level of the park.

The wind farm is not involved in the project for the park.

There was no planning.

Correspondence

Scottish Climate Action – Clare Malster.

John Muir Trust – invitation to meeting on land reform.

Stuart Young – tree risk management project.

Longpark wind farm extension.

Clare Malster – Earthship energy fair.

Helen Jeffries will be putting forward a proposal for planting and maintaining tubs in Stow. It was agreed that this could be funded on receipt of a letter itemizing costs.

AOCB

The state of the public toilets in Stow was commented on.

The Community Council will pay £1,000 for essential work on the old kirk. 7 people attended the meeting to set up a Community Resilience Project in Stow. They were all enthusiastic and Allan and Judy McNeilly will be the first coordinators.

There was a suggestion that Stow needs new notice boards.

It was mentioned that SSE are paying £5k per mgw elsewhere. Currently Stow receives £2k per mgw. The Secretary will write to SSE about this.

The Portakabin at the school is a mess. Cllr Aitchison will deal with this.

The newsletter was discussed. W. Ball had received a quote from the printer for increasing the size to A3. It was felt that delivering it to all households in the area, especially the outlying areas, is difficult and frustrating. In the next newsletter it was suggested that people should be asked to let us know if they want it delivered by email. It was agreed that the current size does not need to be changed.

The question of solar panels on Stow school was raised.

I. Anderson tendered his resignation from the Community Council. He has been a member of Stow Community Council for many years, including serving as chairman and vice chairman. The Community Council expressed their thanks to him with a round of applause.

Regarding the memorial to Tom Murray and Barbara Baker, the Murrays have suggested a weather station, but the Bakers have made no suggestions. A. McNeilly will ask the Bakers again.

Hamish Hunter will provide information on Stow Parish Trust on the community website.

T. Miller outlined the situation regarding the wind farm funding and applications.

At the last wind farm meeting 2 applications were approved. Stow Kids Club was successful with a grant of 75 per cent of the amount requested.

The first major award over £10,000 was made to Stow Sports Council – the multicourt will get a face-lift. They have raised funding from other sources. The wind farm has awarded £15,000.

On 21.8.2012 – EDF released £66,000. The current balance was £54,678 less £20,000.

SSE released £31,518 over 2 years. Funds remaining £7,367.

Of the 2 grants awarded last month, one was from EDF and one from SSE.

Money from EDF is consistent nearly every year. SSE money has a variable element – increasing each year. Scottish Hydro are taking their funding in-house, instead of through the Scottish Community Foundation. The Advisory Panel approved a new structure:

Applications between £250 and £5,000 will be awarded by SSE. Applications over £5,000 will be awarded by EDF, through the Scottish Community Foundation.

The Annual Report of allocation of microgrants was given to the Scottish Community Foundation and the Advisory Panel. The Advisory Panel was very positive regarding their disbursement. They have raised the question of the allocation of 5 per cent of funds for microgrants by SSE. The Scottish Community Foundation will ask both EDF and Scottish Hydro if money can automatically come to the Community Council every year on receipt of the Annual Report.

A member of the public raised the question whether all bus stops in Stow will have the electronic system. The bus time keeping is extremely poor.

**The next meeting of Parish of Stow Community Council will be held in Stow Town Hall on Monday 5th November 2012 at 7.30pm.**

**All welcome.**