

MINUTES OF MEETING OF STOW & FOUNTAINHALL COMMUNITY COUNCIL AT
STOW TOWN HALL ON MONDAY 6TH OCTOBER AT 7.30 pm

Present: D Muir, J Mushlin, C Hendry, J MacKenzie, S Jeffries, A Riddell, Cllr
Aitchison, Cllr White, T Miller

Chris Wemyss, Alistair Wright, Brian Middleton

Apologies: Cllr Mitchell

Ina Peacock has tendered her resignation from the Community Council; the Chair
has written a letter of thanks to her for all her time serving on the CC.

Chris Wemyss came to introduce 2 representatives from Stowed Out's chief
sponsor, Renew Green Energy:-

Alistair Wright & Brian Middleton told the CC about how their organisation
started; RenewGreen Energy came about after a group of engineers in Gala in
2010 carrying out renewables projects for Fjordhouse (in Gala). They broke
away as a separate business & went from strength to strength; they are the
exclusive partner for renewables for the BMR. and therefore, owing to the work
they do for farmers etc across the Borders can boast excellent credibility. They
installed a Biomass boiler for Hartswoods, and hence came to meet Chris. The
company has sponsored Stowed Out for the last two years. Alistair Wright's
theory is that the best type of sponsors are those who work in partnership with a
community. The company initially looked at Bowden with a view to getting
involved there; theirs is a similar type of community to Stow, in that it is off-grid,
has a range of sizes of house, most of which use oil or LPG for heating. Having
done the job in Stow, and with one of their installers living in Stow, and having
met Chris, he has been thinking of ways to take, in this particular instance, the
sponsorship of a music festival further into the community. The idea is - they
give the community money, and in return find more customers/business in the
area.. Sacrificing margins for increased volume of sales. Would we as a CC
enorse them/this enterprise?

We asked: Does this go against our rules as a CC, ie promoting an individual
business? And decided it probably does. However, Cllr White will get back to us
once he has investigated how far a CC is allowed to 'promote' an individual
company.

Minutes of previous meeting:

Approved: J MacKenzie, seconded: A McNeilly

Cllr Aitchison went through the issues that he had undertaken to investigate:-

Street lights in Fountainhall would cost £3k per light. 4 lights are required.....
SBC say No. J Mushlin said that Mr P Barr, Deputy Chief Exec of SBC has written
to G Saunders in Fountainhall echoing this. However, she also said that at a
meeting between some of the Fountainhall residents & BAM, BAM had said they

would pay for the lights; but SBC will not undertake their maintenance or running costs.

Quoting Green carpark: J Frater (SBC) & Cllr Aitchison will meet at the site; JF says that currently due to the intensive works in Station Rd, any further works there are impossible; after main railway works there have lessened he will see if Planning will allow it.

Old Bridge Wall: the DLO (Direct Labour Company) will look into this and come back with a price

The grant to Stow Football Club has been paid.

Request for traffic calming/20 mph signs in Craigend Rd: Cllr Aitchison contacted Jim McQuillin at SBC about this, and received the reply that the 'knuckle' halfway up the road (where in fact, the potential for accidents increases) & the parked cars temper the speed along the road and so speed limit/signs would be ineffectual. Policy is that 20mph speed restrictions are only around schools. Mr McQuillin added that imposing a restriction here would be unlikely to attract the support of the police, as ultimately they would be responsible for its enforcement & they are already over stretched. He concluded that the current signage was adequate, but that the visibility needed improvement.

The sign at the junction at the A7 end of Craigend Rd has been vandalised & will need to be repainted.

The hedge at the old school needs attention, and Cllr Aitchison will chase this up.

Fountainhall will have a polling station in future.

Broadband - there will be a presentation at SBC HQ on 7th Oct to show where new BBand areas are..they don't want to come and do separate presentations all over the valley; If we want a local presentation, Stow could host it in the evening and get the outlying areas & Heriot Fountainhall etc to come; the BT representatives at SBC they will come back with dates.

A McNeilly said £250 to Galawater Camera Club exhibition had been agreed (Microgrants); but they don't have bank a/c so he will pay their invoices up to £250.

Patient Transport Scheme: the CC will give £100 grant to cover insurance & mileage costs;

Planning - had agreed to let A Riddell know about railings at the Old Bridge; he has heard nothing. Cllr Aitchison will speak to the relevant dept about getting a DLO price & then get Stuart Herkess there

The pavement by the crossroads outside the Royal is being taken care of

The works at the Royal Hotel are sub standard & are being re-done - by a contractor employed by the owners of Royal hotel...

The next A7 Action Group is

There was no Police Report

Windfarm panel:

The CC's application for money to pay for an independent commercial survey of the community on their behalf, was turned down .

Stow Bowling Club have made an application for a large grant - & have been asked to make a more detailed application.

The EDF fund stands at £32,292.02. The SSE fund stands at £84,021.16 (this includes the £27k 'green' sum) The SSE variable amount, £4,600pa, is no longer variable; it is now set at this amount til further notice

Both EDF & SSE want to see more applications.

The notion of the Creation of an endowment was again brought up at the meeting; The response from both EDF & SSE was not especially encouraging - however SSE did indicate that they might well come up with an offer, following the meeting. Community Foundation do already offer an endowment scheme, but the minimum input is £25k which is far too high for us. The SSE fund is now open for applications of up to 10k

J Mackenzie brought up the matter that several potential applicants, himself included, have had difficulty accessing the application forms on the website. D Muir will contact our liason people at both the funds about this.... The process needs to be simplified/dumbed down - especially since some of those wishing to access the forms may not be particularly computer literate. We need to get correct phone no's for a start, for these liaison people (Ciara Wilson at SSE & Tom Black at Foundation Scotland for EDF) as the current phone no on the SSE form is not correct; J Mackenzie had had a person answering his phone call who had not heard of Ciara..; he said he'd pass on a message, but no return call was ever made.... etc etc If the forms were easier to navigate, it would encourage people to apply!

Councillor's Reports:

Cllr Aitchison

A Playground Group under Helen Houston has been set up; they will be making an application to the Windfarm fund soon for new equipment for the Stow playground for older children; she/the group have also met with Jean Robertson re grants; and they have been extremely proactive in other areas eg they have looked at several other playgrounds across the Borders

Lights in Galashiels road – they will be in in the next 2 weeks. The next ‘tranche’ of new lights will be put in in some date in the future TBC.

The Park is very nearly ‘healed’; it is much better but it will be at least another month til the fence comes down.

Wedale View planning application: (to complete Wedale View): this has taken a long time but is going to the Reporter for a decision rather than SBC; the decision will not be made for another 3 months, however.

Water trough at Torquhan: Cllr Aitchison is waiting for a price for moving it to the centre of the village (Small Schemes, Chris Hardie)

Stow school being in middle of huge building site, effectively, has caused much upset and stress; BAM ‘s project head met with the school heads and it was agreed that arrangements will be made for work requiring excessive noise around the school, especially compacting work, will be suspended for the next few weeks, between 9-3; extra work will be carried out at weekends and over half term etc) Cllr Aitchison roundly praised Amanda Findlay, head teacher, who has managed the difficult situation brilliantly and been an excellent liaison with BAM and has coped admirably in extremely testing circs.

The old graveyard: this is in a dangerous state and after inspection (last Thursday, 2nd Oct), which Cllr Aitchison attended, as well as Historic Scotland, it was declared that some 65 gravestones/slabs were dangerous, and that the whole graveyard should be closed for safety reasons; Robin McMillan will still be able to gain access to continue his work to the Old Kirk, at his own risk. The trouble is, it having been declared Unsafe & therefore to be closed – there is no way of going back. The recently lowered wall means children are able & tempted to go in & play. Historic Scotland agreed that the Council must do some emergency work, which will be carried out in due course. The dangerous stones will be laid flat, and then will ‘join the queue’ for future work to restore them safely to upright positions. It being an inactive burial ground it is not high priority, and therefore no timescale is currently available for the completion of this second phase. The graveyard can be accessible to the public as soon as the laying flat of the gravestones is finished

The current graveyard also has some very dangerous stones; SBC will have to deal with this. The sloping nature of the site and poor drainage is largely responsible for the impending collapse of some of the graves & stones.

General Matters

Re the new street lighting - what about the vegetation? It needs to be cut back, as large areas of shadow are being created, negating the benefits of the new light!

Clovenfords have got white lines for speed reducing, can we have similar please, at top of the village? Cllr Aitchison responded that this would need to wait until the current heavy traffic has reduced.

Speeding in Fountainhall: Some temporary signs that had been put up by BAM to tell drivers to slow down have been removed by SBC. The speeding is now very bad again. D Muir commented that there does not seem to be anyone at BAM to whom we can address complaints or comments or take issues.

Fountainhall does need to contact SBC as a community and set up a liaison with the timber companies – as when the timber is harvested there will be more heavy - & dangerous – haulage traffic. Cllr Aitchison will let D Muir know who to contact.

It was commented that the incessant noise from the railway works over weekends is irritating.

The Station Building is now not going to be partially used by Network Rail/Transport Police & is therefore wholly for the use of but also to be funded by, the community. Even if part of the building is used as a ticket office/waiting room, the rest would be what? Archive/museum seems to be an obvious use as the building is the only original Victorian railway building along the whole line. The question is, how would this be run/financed in the long term?

Flood banks: last Thursday there was a digger in the Gala water south of the old bridge, & also at the north end of the village, digging up stone/doing work for the railway; this, just as the water was rising after a long period of no rain, therefore the delayed autumn run of salmon would have been trying to come up. And SEPA have prevented us from doing any dredging in the river in the centre of the village for this reason!

The flood defences have failed at the areas where BAM were carrying out railway works.

Microgrant Applications:

Sound Out family night on 1st Nov in Town Hall (free for under 16's accompanied by adults): £141.50 for hire of hall and decorations etc. Granted.

Toddlers' Music Group in Fountainhall. A McNeilly needs detailed costings, & then this will be granted.

Planning:

2 applications: no comment on either

AOCB:

A McNeilly has got the wreaths for Remembrance Sunday. We proposed that John Aitchison lay this on the war memorial. S Aitchison will put this to him

We have received our CC grant from SBC

C Hendry said that they have 7 volunteers now to be trained as 1st Aid trainers; the sessions will take place sometime in November, tb.c.

A vote of thanks was proposed to Wendy Ball for all her hard work and the time she puts in to the Newsletter, the latest issue of which is just out.

There is a tree at the foot of Fleming Place which badly needs to be pruned back, as it is currently obscuring sight lines.

BT have put their Broadband boxes *on* the footpath at the corner of Fleming Pl just by the village hall....extremely inconvenient!

The next meeting will be on Monday 4th November 2014 at 7.30 pm in Stow Town Hall.