

MINUTES OF MEETING OF STOW & FOUNTAINHALL COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD
AT STOW TOWN HALL ON DEC 1ST AT 7.30 PM

Present: D Muir, J Mushlin, A Riddell, J Mackenzie, S Jeffrey, T Miller, A McNeilly, C Hendry, Cllr Aitchison, Cllr White, 2 members of the public - Iver Salvesen & Angus Miller

Apologies: PC A McNair, Cllr Herd

The minutes of November's meeting were approved (A McNeilly) & seconded (C Hendry)

The Chair invited Iver Salvesen, to say what he had come to say – which was that he felt we as a community had an opportunity to drive any development that was going to happen in Stow with the coming of the railway, in the direction that WE wanted;

Planning guidelines suggest communities are built around a hub & existing amenities, circular rather than linear.... Stow being laid out as it is, it is hard to build a group of new houses anywhere; furthermore, there is a danger of the village becoming almost two split communities - the older, heart of the village, and the newer part the other side of the river/railway. Stow should take a Proactive rather than Reactive approach as a community. The railway will result in its being a focus for development – how it is developed is something that this community can do something about, we have an opportunity to push it in the direction we want. What do we as a CC feel? Sandy summarised the situation & the difficulties that the village's situation presents in terms of areas for development. There is a strong feeling that the Wedale View area needs to be 'tidied up – but to build too many more houses there would lead to the potential splitting of the village mentioned above. Plus the sewage situation there is far from ideal. Up the Craigend road is at saturation point; and further building up there would amount to 'ribbon' development; Earlston Rd is at saturation point. Lauder road has well known pinch point plus the hazardous turn at Stow end & the bad gradient;

He mentioned in passing that it was an ill-considered decision not to have had stations at Fountainhall & Heriot, given that both these had far better development potential. The bottom line is, there is pretty well no where in Stow that is suitable for development.

We asked Iver what his ideas were?

His principal thought is that more than one landowner should join forces ; a combination of Stagehall, Bruce Weir & Muirhouse land – building around the contours of the village. All three of these landowners are happy to get involved in a project for building new houses; but what do we as a CC think?

Bruce Weir's proposal a few years ago for 50 houses in his field – was rejected

The scale of development Iver is imagining is possibly not even one that would be acceptable to planners, suggested Angus Miller. And the new road that would be essential for any development – who would finance this? The developer(s) would have to.

Another Major problem would be the sewage issue. Stewart was told that there would be no more development up the Craigend Rd until the current sewage situation had been solved; there have been 6 houses up there since then! The Wedale View reed bed system has never worked; the Developer there went bankrupt, leaving a situation that the council are having to sort out.

Sandy said none of the 28,000 new houses predicted in the local plan on the back of the railway was certain – no major new developments have come about with the exception of Melrose Gait.

Every new house would have to pay a supplement – to contribute to the cost of the railway plus social housing & education (payable by developer up front after planning permission has been granted, at a cost of – circa 10k) – this plus the road – and all before he's built or sold a house. Iver said nothing would work as an individual landowner – needs a joined up project with contiguous landowners.

Possibly the idea that many new houses will be required in Stow is based on solely on guesswork: what will actually happen when railway comes? Will people use it? Will people come from Lauder/Heriot? Old people have free bus travel why would they pay for train? People working outside central Edinburgh would find their cars as quicker and easier. We maybe should wait & see what happens.....?? But equally, having discussed the railway its likely effects and what to do about it ad nauseam, we are open to new ideas; notwithstanding the fact that we feel that we have looked at all the options! For example - it is rumoured that only rush hour trains are going to stop in Stow; daytime trains will go through. This might put off these potential people who are going to 'move to Stow for the Railway'....from wanting to move here. Yes we ARE aware of the potential for developing this village but no one has come up with any concrete ideas. We invited Iver to come back with some of these!

Iver Salvesen

General Matters

Station Rd bridge is in a bad state; SA has complained (3 yrs ago) and been told by the relevant dept at SBC that there was 'nothing wrong with it' !; some of the 'railway money' the Scottish govt. has promised – for the improvement of existing structures connected to the new railway – could this be used for it? Yes is the answer – but SA has discovered it will cost in the region of £40k. The council have said that they have plans to replace it....But is it in the Capital Programme? This is set for the next 5 yrs - and a new bridge here is not in it! What with the flood problems & everything else, if there was ever a time to look at the Bigger

Picture – it is now. (Apart from anything else, a new bridge should have no central pillar – which would help flow and stop flooding.)

JM has letter from SBC saying that a Reporter is looking into the Local Plan (he will consider our request that Wedale View be ‘tidied up’.)

Police Report:

Applications are open for next round of windfarm money; deadline 6th Feb 2015

Newsletter: it is renewal time for applying for our grant to pay for this (we get a grant for it for a two year period, this period is up)

Shall we put newsletter on the website? We will ask Wendy.

A.M

JM has spoken about security for the defibrillator that we have applied for; none have, to the knowledge of ‘HART, or the BGH ever been vandalised apparently; we would need a box (connected to electricity supply) – costing in the region of £260; we need to get permission from the council to instal it. Cllr White will ask for us (it will probably be put somewhere outside the town hall) B.W.

New Fountainhall road is Not Good; it is a wind tunnel, the traffic using it goes too fast, lighting is needed where pedestrians cross..... there are lights in the village and lights at the road end – and then a dark patch between, which is dangerous for pedestrians. Another request for STREET LIGHTS!

SA said that there are 14 extra lights at Heriot available (if we are able to move them!) DM will mention to Colin Ovens who will (hopefully) be coming to the February CC meeting.

But the likelihood of Fountainhall getting lights there is miniscule! He will ask again..... SA

Maybe we as a community pay for them (3 lights to fill in the gap) – Will the council maintain them though? The thought is , yes.....

There is no fence at back of football pitch & it is v dangerous; Sandy will ask about this SA

Can the fence on the football pitch be moved? No – as this would mean more mowing;

Railings at edge of gardens of ex-council houses opposite station damaged; not council responsibility; if AR wants to pursue it, it is not SBC/CC responsibility

AR chasing estimates for layby in Stow; wall needs to be taken down & rebuilt.

AR

Can we apply to the windfarm fund for the job to chase a second estimate

Alistair will do so – just needs

AR

Fountainhall road needs its potholes mended. CH has contacted Craig Blackie about these back in May – they are ‘on the agenda to be done’ no sign of it or any idea when.

Gordon Edgar said at Eildon Area Forum that he was going to meet with the contractors to discuss who was going to pay for the repairs to the roads when the building works are finished. Transport Scotland says that SBC must pay for the roads.....but Network Rail & SBC are both now realising that this is impossible given the wear & tear that the construction traffic are causing. It is very unlikely that anything will be done before heavy construction traffic is over (probably March)

We might ask Colin Ovens, 2nd in command to Philip Barr to Feb CC meeting...
SA

Monday 5th Jan too early – first CC meeting will be 12th Jan in Stow (7.30 pm)

April meeting will also be in Stow but by Sept ‘15 it will be in new Fountainhall hall

Requests have come in for another toilet in the football pavilion: Stow Football Club have had a large sum from the windfarm for renovating their premises; the bowling club are in throes of applying for large grant for updating their clubhouse; why don’t they get together & pool their money – ie new toilet facilities for both clubs..?

Old Cemetery

This is a very contentious issue; SBC have received a huge amount of correspondence/complaints about it; SA is totally aware of the community’s reaction to the existing situation. He is as appalled as everyone else, and is doing his best to get the graveyard right a top priority. It will be done but no promise when. (Jason Headley is the graveyards expert at SBC) The feeling of the village is well known & SBC are fully in support of the prevailing moodbut it is not a priority job. Philip Barr wrote to Jenny to say if we wanted to know more we could contact him; Sandy suggests waiting a while longer to see what happens, hassling them will not make it happen.

Tell Wendy to put update in the newsletter

DM

Put a sign on the gate of the cemetery to tell public what’s happening

SA

Quoiting Green/car park

Hamish Hunter has talked to Planning about using the quoiting green as a carpark; but who will maintain it? BW will report back next meeting

BW

Christmas Tree: Stow & Fountainhall trees to be bought from Stewart & Alison Runciman ; JM & CH

Alan will pay Stewart & Alison direct from CC funds
AM

Stow Sports committee will pay for putting up lights & elec etc - they put in a successful application for grant from windfarm

Fountainhall Xmas party - grant of £80 agreed.

Progress on railway: this has slowed owing to accident during which man lost his leg. HSE have stepped in and work has stopped but the work will continue again now. They'll start laying rails again on Weds

Sandy will try and contact Robert Little, the Network Rail person in charge of properties....Alan has had no reply to his two urgent requests for news re station. We need to know what is happening as we can't move forward with the building.

Opening weekend 5-6th September 2015? Lots of activities etc. planned. The first train might be a steam train.....TBC

Has anyone addressed the very real potential risk of cars crashing onto the railway if they leave the A7 in an accident? There are several spots where the rd is v close to the railway. Also the non stopping trains will be whizzing thro Stow very fast, & SA + Stow school staff have discussed the importance of trains being made to slow down here, strengthen fences in case of derailment etc etc - (despite the statistical unlikelihood of a derailment, it could happen....)

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm

Next meeting 12th January 2015 at 7.30 pm Stow Town hall, everyone welcome.