

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE PARISH OF STOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD IN STOW TOWN HALL ON MONDAY 2nd MARCH 2015 at 7.30 pm

Present: D Muir, J Mushlin, A McNeilly, T Miller, A Riddell, J Mackenzie, S Jeffrey, C Hendy, Cllr Bill White, Cllr Sandy Aitchison,

Jonathan Hepton, SBC (officer in charge, Railway Project), Stuart Mackay, BAM

Apologies: PC McNair, Cllrs Mitchell & Herd

The meeting opened with Jonathan Hepton updating us on the status of the railway

He talked about roads damage and proposed repairs (roughly a repeat of what Colin Ovens said last month); any new roads, paths and junctions are subject to a joint safety audit, and Scottish Borders Council will only adopt new assets when they are complete and defect free

The Station building in Stow: JH has been chivvying Network Rail on our behalf; AM read out an email that he & Bill Jamieson have received from Robert Little which was less than encouraging, in that it was putting off making any promises or decisions until after Abelio have taken over responsibility for the station building in April. All in all the situation is not particularly positive, with the station house falling between the two stools of Network Rail not wanting to concern themselves with it & Abelio not willing to engage with us over it at this stage.

By mid April the main works inside Stow station will be finished but work will continue right up until opening in June; Abelio won't take over til then. There'll be a celebration of the opening in Stow Town Hall on 12th June starting at midday & culminating on the following day in the evening; plans include an exhibition upstairs, & a buffet etc; downstairs Network Rail will put on a presentation; SM said BAM will contribute financially too; Stow school have been working on a 'Past Present & Future' railway project which will be shown at this event; BAM are planning to produce a publication with photographs taken of the construction of the railway from start to finish, to complement the exhibitions.

Sometime in the middle of March a special train will travel the length of the line, advertising the opening of the railway

There will be an Expo of all aspects of the Borders Railway, past & present, for a period on a designated platform at Waverley station.

Sep 4th: a special train ride for officials (& some members of the community incl possibly primary school children...?) along the route (probably non stop)

Sep 5th Golden Ticket Day - 8 trains will run on each day, one from each of the stations on the line; TBC who will get Golden Tickets!

Sun Sep 6th: The public service starts

Thereafter there will be a 6 week period when a steam 'taster' will run, as part of/in place of normal service (TBC)

Sep 9th: Start of a big campaign involving the Scottish Executive, SBC, Transport for Scotland etc to boost get public awareness of it: posterscommunity celebrations....'How to get involved'.....'Apply for funding'.....
Watch this Space (more news 2nd April)

JH spoke about the 'Blueprint for the Future: Maximising the Impact.....' document that has been published by SBC, with a view to encouraging people to ensure that the legacy & potential of the railway are both realised to the full. Jonathan or I can send the link to this or it is on the SBC website.

Re the cost of train tickets: For the 16-18 yr olds a 'Young Scot' card gives you a third off single/return tickets; half off season tickets ; National Rail card (all 6 types) : third off ; Children 5-15 pay half; Under 5's free (also blind & partially sighted). All the usual online ticket retailers will sell Borders Railway tickets anything from 12 weeks before journey. There will be no ticket machine at Stow; you can buy your ticket on the train.

Stuart Mackay said that the noise barrier adjacent to school will be constructed once the platforms have been completed, and the street furniture (benches etc) that are being supplied will be installed

He advised of 2 more activities which will have an impact on the community:
13th April to 4th May: at the high points on the back road (C11, back road to Fountainhall) - crash barriers where railway and road are very close will be installed, so this road will be closed for the period (properties will have access) Advance warning will be given.

The other main activity: By the section of road near Fernihurst/Bowland, there are large piles of earth/spoil/aggregate etc which can't stay there & needs to be moved to Falahill, they are waiting to do it once weather improves: 4 weeks of heavy haulage thro Stow.....late April/May?? Weather depending.

Jack Mackenzie asked: If we manage to acquire the old station house and have cycle hire, could the bikes be stored in cage under the footbridge? He has been told *probably* - but this was to be confirmed. Jonathan Hepton will follow this up.

Network Rail & Abelio are looking into the general security around the station building....Abelio are very pro the idea of the cycles so they will try to help with this idea in all likelihood.

The cycle tracks from Peebles to Clovenfords & Gala.....can we be linked in (this was raised at the Economic Development meeting).... ? The possibility of this apparently had not entered into any of the discussions; the response is that all ideas need to be (prioritised) and considered...there are lots of opportunities for cycle routes between here Gala & Peebles etc and any proposals for these will be considered in due course.

Before the last haulage activities....can they fill in the 'gaps ' at the edges of the road so that car drivers can pull in safely when lorries passing? Stuart Mackay said this is a fair point & he will liaise with Philippa Gilhooley & Colin Ovens on this. There is a Roads Coordination Meeting with BAM & the SBC Roads Department once a fortnight: Stuart M will put this on the agenda.

He will also raise the issue of the signage for the new railway bridge at Fernihurst which is very misleadingcould the sign have a width limit on it as well as weight limit pls? (SM explained that the signage was really to stop agricultural deliveries from using road as they damage the new bridge)

Sandy Aitchison acknowledged that BAM have done everything they can to help/accommodate the school & the children. A Budget last week was agreed for £97k to 'prepare the primary school for the coming of the railway'.... (cc tv among other things).

Previous Minutes/Councillors' Reports

These were approved by DM, seconded by AM

SA has spoken to Mr Blackie & Colin Ovens re white lines on the A7....as CO said last meeting, he is aware of the white line problems & discussions are already under way as to the schedule of repairs to the A7 & other roads. SA said most of the damage to the back road seem to be to the south of Stow now especially bad at Stagehall Farm; The Watherston bit is better, though still not great. Pot hole filling with cold fill is a waste of time; SA said he would rather wait until the final heavy traffic has finished & then get the whole lot properly done.

Stow Park: the area within the fence is to be left until the winter is over. It will be finished well before the Sports.....Money has been allocated to move fence when the time comes and put along the side of the pitch (along the Mill Lade)

The bit behind the bowling green hasn't been done yet: it will be chased.

All in all the park will be in far better condition than it's been for a very long time

Mill Lade is getting very silted up again: should the sluice gate be increased/opened altogether? SA will look into this.

The Old Cemetery: with regard to the uprooting of all the gravestones for Health & Safety reasons, this bewildering drive on behalf of SBC has not only affected Stow Old Kirk but various other old graveyards too, including the Gala Aisle (& it is rumoured, Melrose Abbey will be next.... It would be interesting to know whether this is a directive from the Scottish Government?? It appears to be mostly totally unnecessary. SA had asked repeatedly for a time scale re the restitution of our gravestones & an answer had not forthcoming; it is an enormous job, not top priority, especially as other historic graveyards are in the same state & Historic Scotland is involved with many of the etc etc etc. It was suggested by many that the graveyard be re-opened at least to the public with a

sign saying Enter at Own Risk etc . – but then Cllr Aitchison received an email from Craig Blackie during the meeting, informing him that SBC officer Diane Munro had been asked about the matter, and had issued the opinion that she could not see why the gates of the graveyard should not be opened to the public *unless there was a safety issue.....* So at least the gates can now be opened, given that the hazard of the potentially toppling gravestones has been removed.....

The Royal Hotel site is going to be remarketed; the owners contacted Cllr Aitchison off their own backs, unprompted, to tell him this. SA will pass on further details when he hears

Pavement outside it being fixed: this is on the programme of works

Can we have a copy of the 'Schedule of Work' for the next meeting? So that we can see exactly where on the 'list' our requested jobs/repairs etc. fall..... JM will ask at the next Eildon Area Committee.

Cllr White will chase the person at SBC about whether or not we need planning permission to wall-mount the defibrillator box on the town hall; the defibrillator itself is currently in the post office.

Police Report from PC Anne McNair

Incidents of note

On 5th February and again on 10th February residents in the Earlston Road, Stow area have reported a young male calling at doors asking for money or food/alcohol. It is requested that residents or relatives/friends of residents continue to contact police to report any such activity and a reminder NOT to let anyone into your home you don't know.

Road Traffic Collisions

Around 5a.m. on 2nd February on the A7, south of Stow a single vehicle road traffic collision occurred. No injuries were sustained.

Around 8a.m on 17th February on the A7, approx. 2 miles south of Stow (Bowland) a road traffic collision occurred between a car and a motorcycle. A male sustained serious injuries. The road was closed until 3.30 p.m.

Nearby Area Collisions

Around 07.25 a.m. on 20th January a three vehicle collision occurred on the A7, near to the Bowland junction. Two drivers were charged with road traffic offences. No injuries were sustained.

Relevant Information

Scottish Borders Alert (SBAAlert) Community Messaging System

SB Alert is an online, secure, two-way community messaging system that allows authorised administrators to send dynamic and up-to-date messages to Resilient Communities groups, Neighbourhood Watches and other interested members of the community. The system is designed to put you in touch with the people and services that matter to you.

Messages are sent by email, telephone or text message by a range of approved information providers including Scottish Borders Council (SBC), Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, and NHS Borders. You will receive alerts about severe weather, crime and community safety issues in your area (e.g. bogus callers, metal or farm thefts). The SBAAlert system enables public sector agencies to work with the Resilient Communities groups and others in a new, efficient and secure manner.

Join hundreds of others in our online SB Alert community. Sign up to receive free crime and community safety alerts, along with crime prevention advice for the area where you live or work in the Scottish Borders - straight to your inbox or phone. If you have any questions or you want to find out more about getting involved in your local resilient community, please get in touch using the details below:

Resilient Communities

Emergency Planning, Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA

Tel 0300 100 1800

eps@scotborders.gov.uk

**Please email any feedback from your meeting to
GalashielsDistrictCPTCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk**

PC Anne McNair

Community Beat Officer

Galashiels & District

Police Station

Bridge Street

Galashiels

TD1 1SP

anne.mcnaire@scotland.pnn.police.uk

It was noted that the report did not include the serious accident on the A7 on the morning of Tuesday 17th Feb which closed the A7 for most of the day & resulted in an extremely serious injury. DM will ask Anne why the police had not included this in the report.

(Tell Wendy that we have been asked by Foundation Scotland to be consistent with our 'title' which is 'The Parish of Stow CC' - ie no mention of Fountainhall)

SJ asked whether an application could be made to the windfarm fund to floodlight the church all the time in the dark, and not just weekends? Particularly in view of the fact that people will be passing through on the train. It was suggested that

an application maybe be put in to update the existing floodlighting to a more modern system using LED bulbs - thereby saving the cost in the long run.

Stow church clock face is weathered & in need of renovation..... SJ thought an application already in for renovating this.... But if not, this will be an application to the windfarm for the future.

A request for a microgrant for £70 towards this year's Easter Egg hunt in Fountainhall was made by Alison Kerr on behalf of Fountainhall School parent council, and was granted.

The regular (£432) grant from SBC (the 'Access Maintenance grant) has been received.

Wooplaw Woods have had their container broken into and had lots of tools stolen; the container/lock up has had its lock totally destroyed in the process.

The bench by Pirntaton has been stolen - again.

The signage for the new road to Fountainhall off the A7 is misleading: it looks as though the access is still via the old road. SA will ask about this.

Can we see the estimates that the Council contractors have asked for re the re-righting of the gravestones.....

The meeting closed at 10 pm

The next meeting will take place in Stow Town Hall (nb not Fountainhall) on 13th April 2015 at 7.30 pm (NB not 6th April) **ALL WELCOME!**