

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE PARISH OF STOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL, HELD ON MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2015 IN STOW TOWN HALL

Present: D Muir, J Mushlin, A McNeilly, A Riddell, J Mackenzie, Cllr S Aitchison, T Miller

Bill Jamieson, Fiona Hodgson

Apologies: C Hendry, S Jeffrey, Cllr B Herd, Cllr B White, PC A McNair, Cllr J Mitchell

The meeting opened with Fiona Hodgson, on behalf Stow Primary parent council, presenting a traffic survey that they commissioned (from SBC); the findings of this were, as expected, over a third of vehicles thro the village overall, were speeding. However, the statistics as they were presented by the SBC Surveyors, were not very helpful in that they only took an overall average.....however, we are all only too well aware of the on going problem of speeding through the village & elsewhere on the A7 in the Gala Valley! The A7 Action Group will not be meeting again til after the General Election, but we suggested that Fiona presented this most recent survey to them, if only to show that we are not going to give up with our pestering for action!

This led to Alan & Diana relating the outcome of their meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> April with Brian Young & Jim McQuillin of SBC Roads Dept., who, after being driven along the stretch of A7 north of Stow to Heriot & back agreed with us about the dangers, and conceded that the whole stretch of road needed to be re considered in terms of white lines, signage, sight lines etc etc; although obviously nothing will happen in any great hurry; re the actual village, we were told that 30mph roundels were outwith their remit - which led us to ask who actually is the responsible member at SBC for deciding where & whether these are necessary?! (they are required outside Fountainhall school too). Fiona Hodgson then said that she had spoken to Robbie Yates (Assistant Roads Engineer at SBC) who said they would do the 30 mph roundels next time the white lines were being done..... watch this space! Sandy A said that a bid has been put in to Transport Scotland for 1.5 million to upgrade the A7 & its supply roads in the Galawater corridor from Heriot to Tweedbank: crash barriers, painting, lights, catseyes..... The replacement white lines at the edge & on the middle of the main A7 carriageway will be (or should be carried out as a matter of urgency in the very near future, however. Obviously this is going to have to wait until the spoil from the Bow area has been removed to Falahill for disposal, which will necessitate a lot of heavy lorry traffic....In itself, this is contentious as they would have to go past the school; a decision on this will hopefully be made very soon.

Philip Barr, the Deputy Chief Exec of SBC spoke with Sandy this morning (13/4) & said that SBC won't be signing off ANY of the railway works (roads, bridges etc) until they are happy with the state of them after their final inspection, which

will hopefully prevent BAM from wriggling out of any remedial works they are required to carry out or finance.

Sandy will try & get Inspector Hodges (Gala police station) and Robbie Yates/Jim McQuillin/Brian Young to come to the May CC meeting & ask if we can have a flashing sign - even if we fund it ourselves, which is what it looks as if we will have to do.

The Minutes of previous meeting were proposed JM, seconded AR.

There was no police report

Windfarm Panel; nothing to report; today was the deadline for this quarter's applications which will be reviewed at the next Windfarm Panel meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015.

A microgrant application for £250 has been made by Stow Community Trust (the Station Building fund): this is in order to keep their bank account open, pending further applications for the building development, which in turn is depending on decisions about the Station Building being made! These are resting with Abellio. The application was granted.

A microgrant application for £250 has been made by Stow Parent Council towards paying for childrens' swimming trips, to top up funds already raised by them. The application was granted.

Alan told us that still, despite all efforts to publicise the windfarm funds available, local groups within the community remained ignorant of these! It was felt that we cannot really do more to tell people!

General Matters/Councillors' Reports:

Re Stow Park; SA had meeting there last Tue with the Football Club & the group that has formed to carry forward the new playground, plus Hamish Hunter from Stow Sports: the result was good progress; things WILL happen, albeit slowly; a request was made for the alignment of the small pitch to be altered slightly, so that the worn area round goalpost should not be on the running track; the bridge (from the Toddlers' park to the main park) will be replaced in due course; there is the possibility of pathways across the park for children going to school; rabbits are big problem but council cannot undertake the kind of cull that would be necessary owing to the fact that most of them come from/live in private properties adjoining the Park.

TM requested a rough plan/map of the layout of the park once it's finished, ie showing the positioning of the pitches, re-aligned fence, new playground, pathways....etc etc. Such a map will be available in due course. SA will be meeting with Craig Blackie on 14<sup>th</sup> April about the Park & will report back.

TM also said that we must not lose sight of flood prevention measures; especially when large sums of money are being spent on the Park.

Sandy is also pushing for the bottle banks to be moved so that they are angled in order to allow access to the back of them, to avoid the mess that builds up there & spills into the park.

Jenny said Thank you for the bench in Fountainhall at Pirntaton road end. TM suggested using sheer bolts/nuts to fasten it. SA will talk to Craig Blackie about this.

The pavement outside Stow P.O is not in this year's budget according to SBC! So Sandy suggested we write to Donald Scott.

Layby: AR has received a communication from Colin Ovens at SBC with suggested (& inappropriate) remedial works for the retaining wall. But the ultimate response from SBC is unchanged: the layby & its retaining wall are NOT the council's property or responsibility. It was therefore proposed that the flower planters be removed, and if lorries/cars park there & the layby collapses the council will be forced to take over ! SA will tell Colin Ovens this! And report back at the next CC meeting.

Railway Celebrations: Anyone throughout the whole Borders can apply to the £50k fund that SBC has made available for 'celebrations' for the railway opening. Applications are not restricted to communities directly along the railway route.

#### Stow Station

Abellio talked to SBC on 2<sup>nd</sup> April & appeared to be fully supportive of community projects; they even mentioned Stow Trust & the plans & ideas that had been put forward for the station building. Sam Smith is the person at SBC who is the liaison between the community & Abellio. However, neither she nor Abellio had responded to Alan's attempts to contact them. The lack of information or updates is extremely frustrating. SBC, The Scottish Executive, VisitScotland etc are all promoting the Borders Railway as one of THE great scenic routes of Scotland. At the moment there isn't a great deal to see in Stow or encourage/keep potential visitors here.....we really need to move on with this but Abellio need to come to some decisions! SA will chivvy Sam Smith to get in touch with/reply to Alan McNeilly with some news. And he will see if he can get a representative from Abellio to come to a CC meeting. Owing to inconsistencies in the personnel at both BAM/Network Rail and Abellio, it is even more difficult to pin down anyone who knows what is going on!

Wendy Ball is working on an app to promote the Stow/Fountainhall area for tourism. She will come to the May CC meeting to talk about this.

Nothing can happen til we know what is happening about the station building - the process of its ownership being transferred from Network Rail to Abellio has not even taken place yet!

Re the cemetery: SBC will continue to cut the grass here.

Planning:

Muircleugh windfarm has been refused.

On the same site as the proposed windfarm that had been called Rowantree a new application has been made, slightly further over, fewer turbines & renamed as 'Longmuir Rigg'. John Williams is continuing to act on our behalf and will object on behalf of Stow CC.

Correspondence:

Mr Brian Jeffers of Earlston Road had emailed the Chair with his thoughts on, & objection towards, building any new houses in Stow; this was acknowledged.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm

Next meeting: Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30 pm in Stow Town Hall