

AGM OF PARISH OF STOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD IN STOW PARISH CHURCH ON SEPTEMBER 5th 2016 at 7.20 pm:

Present: D Muir (Chair), J Mackenzie (Deputy Chair), C Hendry, S Jeffrey, A McNeilly (Treasurer), A Riddell, T Miller, Cllr Aitchison, N Hodgson,

Apologies: J Mushlin, I Peacock, Cllrs Mitchell & White, R Murphy

Chairman's report:

The CC welcomed the addition to their ranks of Ross Murphy & Neil Hodgson;

The reopening of the Borders railway has been a great success and the CC would like to reiterate their thanks to Gemma for organising the celebrations a year ago, to mark the opening of the railway; congratulations and thanks to Alan & Jack for their ongoing perseverance and hard work regarding the station building; thanks to Fiona Jeffrey & Jack for their efforts and hard work organising the planting at the station & the purchasing, filling and maintaining of the village planters.

Fountainhall – many congratulations to Charlotte & team for the fantastic new hall & their persistence & hard work getting the project started in the first place, and finished so wonderfully.

Thanks & congratulations to Alistair for his determination & hard work regarding the old kirk, together with the fantastic work carried out Robin Macmillan.

Excellent work regarding the Safer Stow campaign – thanks to Ross & Neil for spearheading this initiative.

Thank you Alan: the time-consuming job that being a Treasurer entails is an unenviable one!

And thank you Sandy for endless lobbying on our behalf with the various departments at SBC. Ditto to the other councillors

Treasurer's report

Alan presented the CC accounts in his usual clear, succinct and meticulous fashion. To date he has heard nothing from the department at SBC who pay us our annual grant, despite repeated efforts to get in touch with them. He has submitted the a/c's as required but has received no acknowledgment from them.....maybe the money will be paid in automatically but at this moment he does not know for sure if this will be the case!. He is adamant that the payments, communications and submissions of accounts remain on paper rather than electronically to make absolutely sure that there is total traceability & transparency.

The Grant is due this month from the windfarm for the microgrant fund.

Election of office bearers:

J Mackenzie proposed DM as Chair, seconded CH

J Mackenzie proposed CH as Deputy Chair, seconded AM

CH proposed J Mushlin Secretary, seconded SJ

SJ proposed AM Treasurer, seconded SJ.

All present agreed to abide by Community Councils' code of conduct

The CC thanked the Chair, Secretary & Treasurer for their work over the year

The AGM concluded at 7.41 pm

MINUTES OF THE PARISH OF STOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT STOW PARISH CHURCH ON 5TH SEPTEMBER 2016 FOLLOWING THE AGM

Present: D Muir (Chair), C Hendry (Deputy), J Mackenzie, S Jeffrey, T Miller, A Riddell, Cllr S Aitchison, N Hodgson

PC Anne McNair, Mrs W Lofthouse

Apologies: J Mushlin, I Peacock, Cllr B White

The July Minutes were approved (proposed CH, seconded AM)

Police report

PC McNair submitted her report (see attached).

Not on her report – a theft from an unsecured vehicle in Stow last week; perpetrators were detained

PC McNair praised the Local community who have been excellent being prompt to ring police on hearing suspicious noises etc. A spate of thefts occurred the last weekend in August

The Crookston road end accident spot was brought up..... Cllr Aitchison updated the CC on the ongoing efforts to improve the situation here and elsewhere along the stretch of the A7 from Heriot to the Bow..... see below.

Matters arising:

Sandy reported favourable progress on the A7 safety matters.....there is support from SBC for our 'voluntary' push to reduce the number of accidents on the stretch Gala-Heriot. Jim Frater will drive the road with Sandy to advise on best position for the signs that a group of residents are seeking funding to erect. We must leaflet the valley to get universal support for slower speeds from local people. The windfarm fund is being applied for this funding (for the signs.) The Speed camera partnership are supportive, as is Inspector Latto. However, Inspector Latto is potentially going to be prescriptive as to what wording will go on the signs... We the residents would prefer to choose our own slogan. We feel that 'Unmarked police cars operating in this area' is not a particularly effective speeding deterrent.

Stow Safety. Neil has met Andy Jones (SBC) who will come and do some traffic surveys in Stow at areas of the group's choosing; eg half way between Craigend Rd end and the top of the village. Russell Cramb, pavement engineer from SBC has been to visit the village to advise on places where pavements can be improved/widened etc.

The Flashing Signs advising of individuals' speed are no longer there: these were put up after the safer route to school discussions...they were always temporary, apparently. So now they have been removed. The CC felt that this was detrimental to the efforts to push for increased road safety in

Stow – the hump in the road in Station Rd is an excellent addition, but it should not be necessary to remove a safety device merely because another one has been supplied. Chair will email Brian Young at SBC Roads Dept to query logic of this.

Neil went to the A7 Action Gp meeting on our behalf; he reported that he heard Gordon Edgar saying he would report direct to Transport Scotland on behalf of THE AREA SOUTH OF GALASHIELS. Neil reminded him it was an A7 action group – not A7 south of Gala – but this was brushed aside; Despite having the mandate to oversee road improvements throughout the Borders, Cllr Edgar’s main concern is a Selkirk by pass.... He intimated that IF funds were released by Transport Scotland for roads in the Borders, this would be top priority.....! The rest of the A7 Action Group were all from the area south of Selkirk and as usual at these meetings, the focus was on the part of the A7 from here to the border, which is a trunked road and maintained by Amey. Had it not been for Neil’s presence at the meeting, there would have been no one fighting our corner! Thank you Neil! Chair will email Cllr Edgar.

Cllr Aitchison asked Has Neil got a list of priorities re poor pavements in Stow? The places where the pavements are dangerously narrow are:-

1. By the Zebra crossing corner at Station roadpavement narrows considerably
2. Footpath past old kirk going towards kirk
3. Opposite the garage in Mill Rd
4. In Craigend Rd
5. North of Old Springbank going north, pavement disappears

Sandy will ask Small Schemes... there are limited funds for this, but sufficient to maybe sort out the priority-location. He will report back to Neil.

Alan brought up the lack of white lines in the middle of the road going through the village. Sandy will address this too.

The old BT Phone box in Fountainhall is being removed owing to its lack of use. The residents of Fountainhall had hoped to ‘adopt’ it as a place where the village defibrillator could be housed, but the land on which the box is placed & the box itself are BT property so this is not an option....

The surplus funds allocated to Fountainhall for their defibrillator & its housing, and held in the CC account, will therefore be used for First Aid training.

Councillor’s Report

Sandy stated categorically that contrary to rumours, Fountainhall & Heriot schools are NOT going to be closed. There are a couple of small rural schools elsewhere in the Borders which are to be, and this is only because the parents have voluntarily moved their children to other schools with more pupils, thereby effectively emptying the schools which will now be closed.

There is a Major concern about lack of police operating in the Borders. Resources are directed away from the South East of Scotland towards the West, to the detriment of this area where actual police personnel are very thin on the ground.

In 2018 it will be 1000 yrs since the Battle of Carham; Stow played a large part in this (the boundary moved from the Tyne to the Tweed as a result of the outcome of this) so there may be some celebrations afoot.

Any other business:

Robin Macmillan will be moving scaffolding to the Old Bishops' Palace next week. A Riddell had a Meeting with Scottish Heritage at the Old Bridge, which proved sadly unsatisfactory: not much progress there.

A Riddell asked Sandy if someone from SBC come to a meeting about the layby...? Sandy will do his best.

The three tiered planters in the village are deemed a great success and have enhanced the village greatly. Jack asked, Can we have two more planters, one at the end of Craigend Rd, one at the bus stop. And maybe a couple of others for elsewhere.... Jack will apply to the Windfarm fund on behalf of the CC for funding for this.

The Hedge at the Old School needs cutting back. The laird of Stow should be responsible for this, can he be made to cut it back? It should not be SBC's responsibility.

Network Rail asked would we like a noticeboard at the station? Yes we would. Alison at the PO will keep the key.

Fiona J will apply for a grant for £500 for planting at the station (funded by Network Rail)

Microgrant application was made by Wendy Ball for funding an online interactive information map of Stow and the surrounding area (official cycling routes , walks etc) s plus 2 yr maintenance cost: £250 . Granted

Microgrant application was made for funding refreshments for the community resilience meeting on 25th Sept, at Fountainhall village hall: £50. Granted

Microgrant application was made for funding a personal licence for Fountainhall village hall, to enable individuals hiring the hall to have a bar.: £220. Granted

Stuart will be putting together a list of walks etc & has invited people to come forward with suggestions to add to this.

The meeting was held in Stow church owing to the fact that our booking at the Town Hall was cancelled at short notice by Live Borders who manage the town hall. The town hall caretaker being on holiday apparently renders the town hall unavailable. Chair to email Live Borders to query this situation.

Fountainhall village hall: needs wifi. This is realisable in that the wiring is in etc so should not take too long. The Fountainhall village hall committee will approach wifi providers about this.

The Village Hall also needs a projector screen – suggestion that microgrant application is made for one of these.

Station building update:

Things have stalled slightly: David Maxwell needs to write the business case/plan - But this is difficult, without knowing what would Scotrail charge as rental.....Also, the fact that the community have a Leasehold on the building rather than owing it means that some grant giving bodies won't give money. We need £60 k before even any building starts (QS, quotes, surveys etc).

The Gala water is dangerously close to flooding at the Quoiting Green. SEPA are impossible to deal with, in that they refuse to address the situation themselves yet the community are not allowed to take the matter into their own hands by dredging the river in order to improve the levels. Another stalemate situation.

Alan has been questioned by a few people as to the exact purpose of the CC..... he thinks we should have a noticeboard exclusively designated for CC information, meeting minutes etc. It was suggested that we put together a statement of exactly who we are & what we do.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Next meeting will be 7.30 pm on first Monday in October, Stow town hall. All welcome.

PARISH OF STOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL: WHO WE ARE& WHAT WE DO!

Elected body of volunteers from within the community of Stow & Fountainhall who meet monthly to discuss matters pertaining to the villages & communities of Stow & Fountainhall, and to try to act as a conduit between Scottish Borders Council, Police Scotland, Transport Scotland, the Scottish Executive etc etc.

We:-

- Administer the small grant afforded to the community council by SBC to cover such local costs as the Parish Newsletter, the Christmas lights, Christmas trees, Christmas parties etc
- Administer the Microgrants afforded to the community by Foundation Scotland & SSE (as community benefit the windfarms in our locality): on receipt of a written application from any organisation/group within the community requiring assistance for their organisation's activity, & on the approval of the CC, the Treasurer of the CC can issue a cheque of up to £250 . Examples include: Fountainhall Christmas party; Stow kids' club; planters in Stow; refreshments

