

Draft Minutes of Parish of Stow Community Council held in Fountainhall Village Hall on Monday July 2nd 2018 at 7.30pm.

Those present: J.MacKenzie, A.McNeilly, S.Jeffrey, J.Mushlin, C.Hendry, A.Riddell, Cllr Anderson, Sgt Duncan Marker

Apologies: R.Murphy, T.Millar, I.Peacock, Cllr Scott, Cllr Jardine, Cllr Aitchison

The following amendment to the previous minutes was agreed: ' It was agreed that there will be 2 Christmas trees in Stow this year' should read as ' we should explore the possibility of two trees'.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Proposed: S .Jeffrey. Seconded: A. McNeilly

Sergeant Duncan Marker introduced himself. He is the Community Sergeant for Peebles, Galashiels, Selkirk, Lauder, Stow, Earlston, Newtown St Boswells.

Roger Chang Leng is the Community officer for Stow.

There are many changes of procedure happening and restructuring of Police Scotland. The priorities of the job are changing, where the police will only attend an accident which has injury or is a serious incident.

It was commented that the A7 Action Group are logging all accidents on the A7 north of Galashiels but police records do not put down all accidents. How do we get a true picture of accidents?

Sgt Marker replied that if an accident is damage only and considered minor, there is no police record. The UNIFY system only has recordable accidents.

The response was that the biggest problem is that there is no official record so nothing can be done politically. It is noticeable how no accidents have happened at Gilston since measures were taken there.

Sgt Marker highlighted the level of internet scams that there are at the moment. Two particular scams to beware of state they are from HMRC. One threatens legal action over an unpaid bill and the other says they owe you money and to please give details so that they can repay you. HMRC will never contact anyone by phone in these situations

There was a discussion about the level of speeding which is still happening in spite of all our efforts. Sgt Marker will get the Road Policing section to come up to Stow. He also said there is currently the idea that civilians could get trained in using a speed gun and communities could buy a speed gun and zap speeding motorists. Obviously there would be no police powers but people on a mobile phone and people speeding could be reported to the police who would send a letter. This idea is going through Police Scotland Protocol at present and, if approved, Stow Community Council would be very interested.

Road markings are another area that has concerned the Community Council for a long time, with a distinct lack of progress. The roads have been redone in Stow but lack markings. The Police can put in suggestions to the Council through the Road Policing Dept.

Sergeant Marker left the meeting at this point.

General Matters: The Secretary has received an email from Gareth Shields, SSE, agreeing that the upper limit for microgrants can be increased to £300 as from 31st July. It has already been agreed that microgrants from EDF can be increased to £300. It was felt that in future the community council would like all requests to be fully costed and itemised.

The footpath linking Fountainhall with the new road is overgrown, with tall nettles and branches of a tree overhanging the path. There is also a tree at the junction of Old Stage Road and Fleming Place blocking the pavement completely. Cllr Anderson will look into this.

Grasscutting in the cemetery is a disgrace. There was a discussion of the community getting a budget to do it. Meanwhile, the community council decided to purchase a grasscutter. There is £120 left in the fund donated by the community. A microgrant of £300 was agreed for this purchase and the balance will be made up from Community Council funds.

Work on the culvert at Symington has been delayed.

Cllr Aitchison in his report outlined the new arrangements for voting in the Locality Bid Fund. There will not be ballot boxes. People will need to register to vote but will only have to do this once. There will be an Area Event in each area where voting will take place and there will be online voting only. It was felt that many people will not go to the Area Event and that, if there is no postal voting, many people will be disenfranchised. A significant number of people, especially older people, are not online.

Concern was expressed regarding Fountainhall School. The original teacher was on secondment for a year but is not returning to the post. The teacher who was employed for the year (who the children love) is looking elsewhere and no one knows what is happening. There has been no forward planning and the post has not yet been advertised.

The subject of Stow Toilets and their dreadful state was raised again. They are essential. Cllr Aitchison in his report mentioned that the Council will be going to a third party to provide toilets. Cllr Anderson stated that he understands that privatisation is not a foregone conclusion. There are going to be further discussions. It was felt that public toilets are essential. It is very expensive for a whole family to use them at 30p a head. It was noted yet again that there is no access for disabled people to the disabled toilet in Stow Town Hall. The outside door to the Town Hall is kept locked.

Cllr Anderson would like to have one parking space in Townfoot converted into a cycle rack for parking bikes.

The Hunter Foundation would like to hire the Town Hall for awareness raising regarding ecoplastics. A microgrant for this was approved.

The Secretary has been approached by the new Chair of Stow Community Trust regarding a representative from the Community Council being on the Community Trust. No one present felt they would be able to undertake this. However not all members were present. A Trustee would like to come to our August meeting to update us on the Old Station House. However the AGM is in August and it was felt that it makes the meeting too long for a speaker. The Treasurer will have the accounts audited for the AGM.

It was felt that the tree by the toilet would make a nice artwork. Cllr Anderson will progress this.

Philippa Gilhooley, Safer Routes to School, has refused to put a road narrows sign as there are still two carriageways at the new works. One Bollard has already gone. There should be a speed restriction.

It was noted that the junction coming into Galashiels from the A7 is really dangerous.

There is no timing on the traffic lights opposite the Interchange to the Station in Galashiels. It can take so long for the lights to change that trains can be missed. There is also no timing on the traffic lights in Stow.

Councillors Reports

Cllr Aitchison submitted a report to the meeting. He congratulated the “Flower Team” on a wonderful display along the A7 and the Railway.

The New Park opening was a great occasion and a great facility. The tree falling down in the winds in mid June avoided damage to equipment or a child. The tree surgeon has decreed that it must come down. Cllr Aitchison is discussing the state of the other trees around the Park and the possibility of a replant. These trees were pollarded a number of years ago and are getting on in years.

The new slide at Stow Primary School has been opened by the Braw Lad and Lass and is a tangible sign of the success of the First stage of the Locality Bid Fund.

He has noticed an increased frequency of the speed camera van in Stow.

There have been enquiries about any extensions to the nursery in Stow Primary School as a result of the increased child care provision. His understanding is that plans will come forward in 2019 if they are required.

Correspondence

Local Community Path Maintenance Grant – The application form for this has been received. It covers the purchase of tools for path maintenance, as well as paying contractors for work done. The grant is up to £450, with a closing date of with February 2019. It was decided to purchase a strimmer which volunteers can use to clear the path to St Mary’s Well.

Scottish HART. A letter was received that, as the defibrillator at Stow Town Hall is a reconditioned one, it needs to be replaced. An application has been submitted to the Windfarm for this, and also for a second defibrillator at Craigend Road.

Developing Digital Skills – This is being passed on to Stow School who have been awarded funds for a digital project in Stow.

Area Partnership Review- This requested the Community Council to participate in a survey. The Stow representative had wished to go to the review meeting which was cancelled due to lack of support. Members of the community council agreed that a face to face meeting would be far better than a survey. The Secretary is to write to Jenni Craig,SBC, inviting her to a community council meeting.

The next meeting of the Community Council will be the AGM and will take place at 7pm on Monday 6th August in Stow Town Hall. This will be followed by the meeting of Stow Community Council at 7.30pm. All are welcome at both meetings