

Dr Cath Cormie is retiring!



After many years of invaluable work for Stow and Lauder Health Centre Dr Cormie has decided it is time for a well deserved retirement. She will be missed hugely by us all.

Dr Cath Cormie started her career in the Borders as a GP registrar with Earlston Health Centre in August 1990. After completing her training she also worked in Community Child health and as the Family Planning Coordinator for NHS Borders before joining the practice here as a partner in 2006.

Cath and her husband Paul have committed their lives to the practice constantly going above and beyond their duty. Paul retired in October

2020 so Cath will now be able to join him in his retirement. They are planning lots of holidays in their caravan with their dog Poppy. They shall be sorely missed by colleagues and the community which they have served unstintingly. I think it would be difficult to find someone in the area who hasn't benefited in some way from their dedication.

At the health centre we will miss Cath being around, and particularly the aroma of burnt toast in the kitchen from her coffee break!

We wish her all the very best on a happy retirement and we look forward to seeing her and Dr Paul Cormie cycling around the local roads over the coming summer months!



Gala Water Singers are still singing!

Anyone wishing to join in with singing sessions please contact John Wilkinson on 01578 730289 to register interest/ for details.

Calling all explorers!

The old castles and forts that lie across the Gala Water valley are under investigation! We've been looking at the map and think there might be as many as a baker's dozen. So, we were wondering....

When was Ewes castle built? How big is the old fort at Watherston? How were they built? Why are there so many? What were they for? Why were they built in those locations?

We want to discover, explore and pull everything together in one place to illustrate the exciting and interesting world of castles and forts in the Gala valley.

The project is being coordinated by our community archivist Mary W Craig. Mary's will make sure that she unearths every scrap of information from the archives for people to analyse, and to liaise between volunteers and



landowners to ensure that any site visits are carried out safely for all involved. So, if you'd like to get involved please contact Mary at galawaterhistoryandheritage@gmail.com

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

- Analyse material from the historical archives and see what you can uncover.
- Rummage through your family photos to see what you've got.
- Write down any anecdotes you can remember about playing at the castles and forts when you were wee.
- Visit the sites.

STOWED OUT ONLINE

★ ★ 14 AUGUST! ★ ★

We are online again this year due to ongoing uncertainties. Last year's online event, 'Stowed Out-Locked In', was an enormous success. There were incredible performances and we raised a sizeable sum for the Tiny Changes Mental Health Charity.

This year, we are aiming for a blended event with at least two acts streaming live, and others recorded in a 'live' stage setup. We are looking for an eclectic mix of music and spoken word, local and further afield including videos from outside sources. We are interested in hearing from local performers, creators and community groups who would like to be included. It may JUST be possible to have a small audience for the live streams... more later.

Details will be posted on our Facebook page – www.facebook.com/stowedoutfestival



The Stowed Out Team



The Tailors for Dignity Project is part of the Scotland-Malawi Parish Partnerships, working with Lauderdale Rotary, to keep girls in education through small business enterprise support.

Luwatala is a village in Malawi partnered with Stow-Heriot Parish in the Scottish Borders <http://luwatala.link/>. The parish has a faith link with Stow-Heriot Church and a business enterprise link with Lauderdale Rotary. The connection aims to encourage a small business enterprise for young people using their tailoring skills locally. The tailoring group earned two sewing machines (sponsored by Lauderdale Rotary) by making 35 menstrual hygiene kits for local schoolgirls. They have also made over



◀ Each sponsor receives the gift of an A5 notebook covered with Java print from Malawi.

SPONSOR A TAILOR FOR TEN POUNDS



500 masks for the community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

If you are interested in sponsoring a tailor, please follow the link below:
<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/tailorsfordignity>



◀▲ Young tailors making reusable hygiene kits for school girls.

Rotary  Club of Lauderdale

The Little Book Shed

We are delighted to inform everyone in the village that 'The Little Book Shed' is now to be found at the Community Garden on Mill Road. The idea behind The Little Book Shed is that anyone can come along and borrow a book to read in the garden, or at home and then either return it or replace it with another book. There will be several boxes inside, which will hold all books to keep them safe from the elements, all we ask is that books are left in good clean condition.

The Little Book Shed, is for all ages to enjoy and we hope it will bring more readers in the village together. What better place to do this than in our beautiful community garden where you can take a seat and read or chat with fellow book enthusiasts.

Many thanks to all who have helped in making this happen, without which, The Little Book Shed would not have been possible. In particular "The Community Council" for funding and suggesting the "The Community Garden", and for those within this group who helped with the build. Also, for you, the community, who have given such overwhelming support since the idea was planted, thank you muchly. Wendy Ross



After a second period of lockdown when the churches of Stow and Heriot were obliged to close their doors to the local congregations, the much-awaited chance to open up again came in late March. In the meantime Sunday services had been continuing online (and still do), but there is no doubt that the two periods of lockdown have deeply affected us. Certain protocols are in place again – wearing masks, spacing and no singing – but our kirk session is trying hard to get things back onto an even keel, including tackling an outbreak of dry rot in Stow church. It is difficult to remember a more challenging time but we have some committed people whose efforts go well beyond "helping out on Sunday mornings". Anyone wishing to come on a Sunday will be welcome - Heriot church at 9.45, Stow church at 11.15.

FOUNTAINHALL SWI



For those who are not familiar with SWI, this is a national organisation (formerly known as "The Rural") and in Fountainhall there has been an Institute for more than 30 years. Members meet on the third Wednesday of the month in Fountainhall Village Hall at 7.30pm to hear a talk, watch a demonstration or try a hands-on craft, followed by tea, chat and small raffle. We are part of the Selkirkshire Federation and we join with the other institutes in Selkirkshire for larger events such as shows and demonstrations and to celebrate special events. Obviously we have been unable to meet in person for some time due to Covid restrictions, but hopefully members have enjoyed the opportunity provided by all the online events staged by the SWI. These include Facebook Page <https://m.facebook.com/Womankind-by-SWI-100497718261983/> and the Scottish Women's Institutes TV on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/c/ScottishWomensInstitutesTV/videos>

Recently there have been opportunities to join in skill sharing sessions on a variety of crafts including: flowers from plastic bottles; fabric brooches; fabric yoyos; origami flowers; gift boxes and Sanquhar knitting. There have also been talks on horses, gardening and Beirhope Alpacas which are still available to watch on Youtube.

We look forward to welcoming members old and new to Fountainhall SWI, hopefully in September. Look out for posters and notices in the local press. Please feel free to get in touch with President, Dianne Wilson on wilsond31@live.co.uk or telephone 01896 668381.

STOW BOWLING CLUB: Sunny start to 2021 season



The sun came out for our 'Opening of the Green' on Sat 24 April 2021, unfortunately we were not able to hold our usual celebrations.

However, the traditional 'throwing of the first jack' went ahead performed by President Jane Ellis, and the raising of the flag by Anne Swan. We are so looking forward to this year, to get out on the green and meet all our bowling friends again. After such a tough winter it felt so good to be out in the sunshine, playing bowls.

The clubhouse has been given a deep clean and a real freshen up ready to welcome all members back into a safe environment. Under guidance from Bowls Scotland we have had to prepare risk assessments, and guidance for members pre and post play. For example all the mats and jacks have to be disinfected before and after going onto the green and a booking system in place - to reserve your slot on the green. This is to assist us with

track and trace should anyone become ill and to also ensure we have no more than 30 people on the green, we should be so lucky!

Knowing that many people living in Stow will not be venturing abroad this year and maybe staying in the village why not come along and give bowling a go. It is a relaxing sport, but it can be very competitive if that is what you like, it's also a great way to meet new people. We practice on a Monday night from 6.30 onwards so if you would like to come along we have bowls you can borrow and there is always someone around to show you the ropes!

If you don't fancy playing you can always join the club as a social member, we have a bar on the premises and what better to sit with a beer or gin and tonic watching other people playing bowls on a Sunday afternoon.

So all welcome: just pop your head in the door – you never know what opportunities lie ahead!



PLAY BORDERS

...is a small charity based in Galashiels focused on supporting families through play. The toy Library has more than 300 resources for hire from baby toys, lego and PlayMobil to larger outdoor toys. The variety is huge. There are also toys no longer in use looking for new homes.

Due to Covid restrictions, hiring is by appointment only. To find out more about membership and to book a slot go to the Facebook page or email info@playborders.co.uk.



Play Borders will also be running some outdoor nature play sessions for families with children aged 0-5 in Stow, and locations across the borders. The sessions will be free

and facilitated by qualified and trained Early Years workers. Due to restrictions only one adult can attend with children

Dates and times are still to be confirmed but booking a place will be essential. For more information please see the Play Borders website <http://www.playborders.co.uk/>, Facebook page <https://en-gb.facebook.com/playborderstoylibrary/> or email info@playborders.co.uk.

Count me in!

Stow Highland Dance School is hoping to resume after the school summer holidays, restrictions allowing. I would love to hold a get together for all my pupils during the summer break as it's been more than fifteen months since we have been together. I shall be in touch about this event.

AMANDA RUNCIMAN



Stow Baby and Toddlers group needs a new committee to come forward for it to re-open. It has been a challenging time for families with young children in the community and we are seeking additional support to fill board positions and help with the re-launch of this important service. If anyone is interested or perhaps has a background in early years and would like to contribute, please email: stowparentgroup@gmail.com.



Also, if you have pre-school age babies or children and would like to be added to our active WhatsApp group where we can connect with each other, please get in touch.

In the meantime, we have made links with Playborders who plan to run sessions within Stow soon. Please take a look at the Playborders article in this magazine to find out what's going on.



EDF Longpark Wind Farm Community Fund

The Parish of Stow area benefits from community funds from local wind farms. One of these is the Longpark wind farm, owned by EDF. It's been operating since 2010, and provides £45,000 a year into the Longpark Wind Farm Community Fund. All decisions about how the money is spent are made by a Panel of local residents (which is looking for new members – see advert below!)



What impact has the Fund had?

Seventy eight grants have been awarded by the fund since its creation. Nearly £538,000 has supported 22 different community groups and local charities. Each pound contributed by the Fund has helped attract another three pounds from other sources into local projects.

Recent beneficiaries have been Bird Gardens Scotland, The Pump Track Group and ebikes, speed awareness, Stowed Out, Galawater History and Heritage Association and The Station House redevelopment project. You can see the full list of grants awarded on the Foundation Scotland website.

Investing for the long-term

Whilst the EDF Longpark should last for at least another 10-15 years, the Panel want to ensure some funding remains available long into the future. Working with Foundation Scotland, they have set up the Parish of Stow Community Endowment Fund – a long-term ethical investment, building up funds for community projects in years to come. This Fund now stands at over £100,000. For more information, contact Tommy Miller on the Community Council.

Micro-grants

If you're a small, informal community group looking for a smaller grant, or maybe an individual with a new idea that benefits the community, you can apply for a micro-grant.

Apply for a grant

The Fund runs four application Rounds each year – keep up to date at <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/funding-available/longpark>. The next application is 5th of July 2021.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish of Stow Community Council covers both Stow and Fountainhall. We have been meeting every two months on zoom due to covid.

- We have been campaigning about the future of the X95 bus service through the valley, which is very uncertain. We would like to hear from anyone who is affected by this.
- There is a significant problem with dog fouling in Stow and we would urge people to pick it up. Dog poo left in fields can be extremely dangerous to livestock. We shall be taking further action
- Ten loaded timber lorries a day will be passing through Fountainhall. Jenny Mushlin is the contact should anyone have any concerns.
- Stow Community Council has many projects, with more than thirty two thousand pounds in funds. It is all allocated to 11 projects. Two walks leaflets have been produced and are in Stow Post Office. Another three are planned for the Summer. The Bishop's Palace is being restored. Gravestones have been lifted in the Old Graveyard. We have commissioned a book on the History of Stow by local archivist and writer, Mary Craig, the Launch is due in the Autumn. This newsletter is another Community Council project. We are very grateful to new volunteers coming forward to continue it and would like to thank Heather and Wendy for all their incredible work and inspiration and wish them all the best.
- If you would like to come to one of our meetings on zoom, please contact Jenny Mushlin for details of the next meeting. You are very welcome to raise issues and can speak at the beginning of the meeting with no obligation to stay for the duration.

Jenny Mushlin, Secretary
e: jjmushlin@gmail.com • t: 01578 76029

The Parish of Stow Community Benefit Fund Advisory Panel



Could YOU be a Panel member?



The Advisory Panel is a voluntary group of local people who meet 4 times a year to make decisions on applications to the community funds linked to the SSE Toddleburn and EDF Longpark wind farms. **The Panel would like to hear from anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the Panel. You must be a resident in the Community Council area of the Parish of Stow.**

Please complete a nomination form which can be obtained from the Panel Secretary at: e: maggie.bws@btinternet.com or t: 01835 822049. The completed form should be returned by: **30th June 2021**. There will be a selection process for any new appointments to the Panel. You will be able to attend a Panel meeting on 8th June 2021 as an observer.

Providers of administration for EDF Longpark



The feasibility study for the Pump Track is well underway with initial flood risk modelling, water table levels and percolation tests completed. Bikescape will use the information from these assessments to inform the pump track design which we hope to have very soon.

Thank you to all those who completed our recent survey. We had a great response with 150 replies. The survey demonstrated continued strong support for a pump track in Stow (91% of respondents aged under 18 said they would definitely use it). Safe cycle routes in the community and traffic free spaces to cycle were the most commonly selected factors that would

encourage people to cycle more. The information gathered will help support our future funding applications.

We are working in collaboration with the other cycling projects within Stow to contribute to Stow developing as a cycling community and destination. The pump track will provide a safe traffic-free space for people of all ages to develop skills, confidence, and have fun whilst being active.

For further details please see <https://stowhub.co.uk/pumptrack/>. Please like our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/stowpumptrack) to see updates, or request to join the mailing list at stowpumptrack@gmail.com.

STATION HOUSE PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION

After many years of hard work, we're beginning to see the results. The station house Bistro is nearing completion and the search has begun for a tenant/operator. The cycle hub is up and running (see below), the ebikes have arrived and we are getting a Community Development Worker.

At the cycle hub we will be recruiting volunteers and providing training in bike maintenance, supporting the ebike project, providing bike repairs, refurbishing bikes for resale, and organising local cycling events! Addressing the climate challenge will be at the heart of all of our activities. Before the pandemic many of us had already replaced our daily commute with the train journey. Our challenge now is to explore how we can use e-bikes to embrace active travel and reduce our car use for everyday journeys in the area. Four ebikes will be available on loans of up to 4 weeks for those who want to take up the



challenge. Another three will be with us in late May and that will let us start offering opportunities for day hire.

We have been mapping local cycle routes. There will be a leaflet available soon, the routes will be on our website ([Stowhub.co.uk](https://stowhub.co.uk)), enabling you to take advantage of our lovely countryside. We will also keep working with Scottish Borders Council and other partners to promote better infrastructure for cycling around the community.

Before the fantastic facilities can open, we need to recruit a Tenant/Operator,

it will take some weeks. A very robust process is being followed, to find the ideal team to deliver great food, create the right atmosphere and become a key member of our community. We aim to open towards the end of the summer when hopefully many of the current Covid restrictions have been lifted.

We shall be running a number of open sessions in June in the Station House for a sneak preview. Check out our website <https://stowhub.co.uk/> and the Stow Community Trust Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/StowCommunityTrust/>.



We are also, in partnership with the Community Council, recruiting a part time, fixed term Community Development Worker. The successful applicant will be reaching out to develop a Community Action Plan for the benefit of everyone. There will be a number of group meetings you can get involved with – hopefully face to face, and in the Engine Room in the Station House!

◀ Mural by Stow artist Andrew Mackenzie

GET ON YOUR BIKE ...!

Stow Cycle Hub is up and running and looking for applicants for our ebike trials, aimed at helping people in our area to make the most of the benefits of cycling.

If you, or someone you know, think that an ebike could help you overcome a barrier to cycling such as an underlying health condition or simply a lack of practice, and/or think that it could help reduce your carbon emissions from commuting, then we'd love to hear from you.

Find out more on our website, <https://stowhub.co.uk/ebikes/> or search 'Stow Cycle Hub' on Facebook to keep up to date with the latest news from this exciting community project.



Galawater Horticultural Society

If you have spent the last fourteen months worrying about the firmness of your plums, the length of your cucumbers and the droop in your dahlias ... fear not the Galawater Horticultural Society is on hand to ease your anxieties. We are cautiously optimistic about holding a show this autumn and hope to meet before then. New members always welcome. Contact Ray Chaplin (raymond.chaplin@btinternet.com)

Green Stow is a new addition to the community groups in the Galawater valley.

We are open to everyone interested in local environmental projects and concerned about the impact of the climate emergency, we are NOT aligned to any political party. Before lockdown, we met in the Cloudhouse Cafe once a month and have since met online.

Recent activity has seen volunteers removing litter from the paths and road sides around Stow. Over thirty bin bags of litter have been collected, improving the environment and removing items harmful to wildlife. We are delighted that Stow now has 4 litter picking tools, HiVis vests and a supply of bin bags for volunteers to do small scale litter picks in safe locations. Many thanks to the Community Council for funding this project. Stow Primary School has very kindly agreed that the litter picking equipment may be stored in their Recycling Shed at the school car park. Covid guidelines must be followed with access to the site allowed only outside school hours (incl. weekends).



If you would like to help out, please follow adequate safety precautions, including wearing robust gloves and avoiding busy roads like the A7!

For further information, or to find out more about this friendly, active group,

please look out for Green Stow on Facebook or leave a message through the community website page: stow-borders.co.uk/clubs-societies/green-stow. Catherine Bissett & Gordon Stewart



STOW COMMUNITY GARDEN

Our community garden is alive and well and Spring-ing into action. A small group of volunteers keep the garden tidy, remove the weeds and have recently put staples into the stepping logs to make them safe for children. It is great fun to jump from log to log for children and adults alike! Gillian has built some creepy crawlies friendly structures just behind the rockery.

Wendy has created a sculpture from recycled roof slates: we call it The Wishing Well, yes very original, and it was inspired by the donation of roof slates, another flash of originality.

After the successful completion of the

project for compost bins we now have another great plan in the pipeline : three planters to be positioned to the right of the rockery. For this project we have asked for financial assistance, again, from the Stow and Fountainhall Community Council. The Council has supported the community garden from the very beginning and we are incredibly grateful for that.

The garden now homes the brilliant Little Book Shed (article in this issue) , thanks to Wendy Ross. Our group of volunteers often meet on Sunday mornings, with social distancing. We have a whatsapp group to coordinate our efforts, which you are very welcome

to join. Just speak to Andrea, andrea.carlino@yahoo.co.uk or 01578730763

A note about safety: everybody is welcome to use the garden safely and respectfully, using the paths provided and avoiding climbing on the rockery. The volunteers do their best to make the garden a safe place for everyone to enjoy but that is not a substitute for personal responsibility and common sense.



Stow Kids Club is open to all youngsters aged between 4 and 11 years old. We offer children a safe and fun environment where they can chill out after a hard day's work at the school.

Operating Monday-Thursday, 3.15–5.30pm, the club is based inside Stow Primary school so your child/ren can come to us at the end of school giving you the freedom of a full day for your needs. We are very flexible so you can book with us at the very last moment if an emergency occurs (like a sudden urge to go for a run, a bike ride or some retail therapy) just email us or leave a message with the school.

The cost is £8.50 per child per afternoon, including two snacks. There is a yearly registration fee payable in August of £15 per family.



Members of staff are Andrea Carlino and Janice Currie, both very experienced in working with children. The Committee chairperson is Angela Wells; the treasurer is Claire Hendry and the secretary is Jennifer Boyle.

As you can see from the photos we try to spend as much time as possible outdoors, enjoying the fresh air. We also have many resources.

If you have any questions or you wish to come and see us please contact us at stowkidsclub@outlook.com or on 07709234413. We are unable to take voice messages.

Andrea and Janice



We're all aboard...

It's been a busy term at Stow Primary School. Lockdown learning hit again in January with children coming back in February and March. Despite stricter COVID measures meaning that class bubbles cannot mix, and parents are not allowed onto school grounds, it has been a busy and successful time. The nursery area is undergoing a major refit and update.

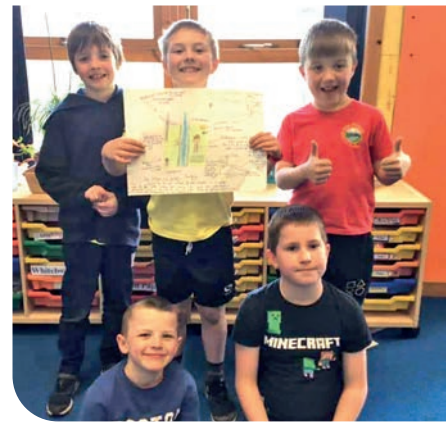
■ In March, the School asked friends and supporters to buy books linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Climate Action matched by the Parent Council. An incredible 100 books poured in from all over the world, gifts of knowledge to help pupils to understand the SDGs and the importance of a socially just and sustainable world.

▼ The Disrupters, past and present, always hot on current trends produced a Lockdown Disrupters Sea Shanty. Check out the School Facebook or Twitter pages. An incredible effort by all, done by volunteers, working, and singing alone during Lockdown.



the learning curve

► A group of P4s won a Keep Scotland Beautiful competition for their One Planet Picnic Pocket Garden design 'Our Village in a Garden'. Look out for it coming to life very soon!



■ Kate Bisset, from the community, very kindly gave each class Emperor moth cocoons, which we have been nurturing in anticipation for the moths to emerge. There was great excitement when the first one did so, on Earth Day. Earth Day was celebrated by all classes and an outdoor assembly. This included a live author event with Hannah Gold and Jess French, authors who wrote two of the SDGs books. Each class, child and staff member has been given sunflowers to plant, and a competition is on for the tallest – watch this space!

■ As always, bamboo toothbrushes and shampoo bars are available for sale from stowpsdisrupters@gmail.com

■ We also have a new pain free fundraising initiative if you are online shopping. If you sign up, the companies will donate to the school. It's incredible how it adds up and it would be great to get members of the community to sign up. Simply use this link – www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stowparentcouncil/ Once you register, all you have to do is click through the easyfundraising site to get to the retailer, and easyfundraising do the rest.

■ The School was recently successful in obtaining an incredible £2300 grant from the Scottish Government Climate Asset Fund. This will fund the Stow Community Food Growing Project. It will include a poly tunnel,

planters and tools to enable children, staff, families and community members to grow food on School grounds. A very exciting new project which will enable old and young to grow their own food together.



Message from the new headteacher

With the imminent merger of Stow, Heriot and Fountainhall primary schools later this year, we asked Susan Anderson, the Head Teacher of Heriot and Fountainhall, for her thoughts on the partnership of the three Galawater schools:

"I am very much looking forward to getting to know the children, parents and staff of Stow Primary School and to working together in the best ways possible for all the children. I am sure they will all have lots to tell me about what happens in Stow and what they want to achieve over the coming years.

We will all be working as a team to help the children achieve the best they can and to give them as many shared opportunities as possible. All three schools have their own unique qualities which we will utilise to the best effect. We will use technology, in the form of our iPads, for the children to communicate and work together at a distance as well as working on ways they can get together to work in person.

The staff across the three schools will be able to work together to share their knowledge and skills and help each other in their professional development. There is a great pool of knowledge and expertise there and I am sure we will be able to tap into all these skills for the benefit of the children.

I can't wait to meet everyone and get started on this new venture."

Susan Anderson

YOUR VILLAGE NEEDS YOU

Calling all Grave and green fingered volunteers. At some time between the middle and end of May we will receive plants from Philiphaugh Estates for the village displays. We need volunteers to help plant and water during the summer months. Our motorised bowser will be in action which Millburn Garage has kindly converted.

On a graver note, we are also looking for volunteers with a couple of hours to spare a week to cut the grass in the Old Kirk Graveyard. We have a mower and a strimmer. All you need to do is turn up. If you would like to help in anyway with this or the village planters please contact

Jack MacKenzie at mackenziejwf@gmail.com or on 07711021219

For the past six years Heather Johnston has edited the local newsletter. In that time it has doubled in size reflecting the growing vibrancy of our community. Fiona Nisbet caught up with this busy lady as she hands on the baton to a new team.....

How did you become involved in the newsletter?

I produced my first newsletter when I was at primary school and have always thought they are an absolutely great way to communicate with people and hear their ideas and stories, so when the then editor Wendy Ball asked for help for the summer 2015 edition, I thought.... 'I'll do that '! I offered to produce one edition while Wendy worked on a project linked to the return of the railway. Wendy then asked if I could do the following issue too and then, after six years of running the publication she had created in 2009 she felt ready to hand it on. I was happy to do so .

Why did you decide to step down?

My husband Bob has a progressive illness and it has become harder and harder for me to reach deadlines. He needs to be my absolute priority now. We have embarked on a groundbreaking programme of treatment which is more demanding and with a special diet and more precise timings it was obvious that I wouldn't be able to keep up with the newsletter. I've been editing since 2015. I have always enjoyed doing it so it's definitely the right time to move on.

What was your background?

I'm a qualified social worker, the bulk of my career has been in social work practise management ,education, and consultancy. I've always had an interest in education, latterly I was an academic skills coach and effective learning advisor to students. I've written throughout my career and I've always done lots of reading . Decades ago I was involved in social work bereavement care as it was emerging into hospices as a new service. Within a few months I was co-producing a newsletter for that too!

spotlight on



Heather Johnston

What brought you to Stow?

I'm a native of Leith and after living in England for years wanted to return to Scotland. Work initially took us to the west but I had a desire to return to the East. I've always liked the Borders. The Johnstons are a border clan so I suspect it's in my DNA .

After a long time searching we found South Cottage and moved here in December 1998. I think Stow is great . I love the community spirit , people have drive , they want to see things happen , they want to support each other. There are of course the tensions you get in any small community , but it's a lively place and it's a place where people look out for each other and want to make things work well. There are always new things on the go , people coming up with ideas, it's a vibrant community .

Will you miss running the newsletter?

Yes and no, I won't miss the pressure but I will miss the fact that it really washes your mind away. When you are focusing and putting it together you don't think of anything else and that is a very peaceful thing to do. I have great pleasure in getting these things to work and making the text fit and the columns line up precisely which perhaps most people wouldn't bother so much about, that's where family background comes in. My dad worked for a printer and my brother for the Scotsman, both were trained in hot metal print which seems like another world now in the digital age.

How important do you think a community newsletter is?

I think it's great. I think it's a big glue and for those who aren't in Stow it's more important. Fountainhall can often feel left out and it's important that the whole community has a voice. I think the newsletter is valued, from time to time people would stop me to say they enjoyed it, that's always a good thing.

Do you have any passions you might like to pursue?

WellI have always wanted to learn the saxophone. At school they only went for orchestral instruments so they suggested I learn clarinet which I did. I was promptly put in the orchestra but it was rather premature. I was still at the stage where I was really struggling with the music and ended up getting completely lost and got put offso the clarinet was put away. What I really wanted to learn was the saxophone. A few years ago I thought "I could learn the saxophone when I retire" so I started with lessons but it sort of faded with family commitments. I now have the idea that I will pick it up again and I'm going to be a jazz saxophonist before I die even if I do it at the pace of an elephant ! It's something I think you have to be absorbed in. You have to focus on that and that is a peaceful thing to do to have your mind completely absorbed in something else.



I'm sure everyone will wish to thank Heather for her amazing work with the newsletter over the past five years. I'm convinced with her zest for life and absolute focus it won't be too long before we see her performing at Stowed Out ! Watch this space !



Stow't and about...



Paths Around Stow – In addition to the two leaflets already published and on sale in the Post Office, the next three walks will be available in the coming months. The walks are around Stagehall, Watherston and along the river at Craigend farm. These routes will be off road on farmland, so please be aware of access rights before you go.

There will be signs and waymarkers appearing as we move forward. Also, with the help of grants from Scottish Borders Council we are installing some new gates on the walks to improve access and safety.

TREASURER SOUGHT FOR FOUNTAINHALL VILLAGE HALL

We are looking for a new treasurer to start in the Autumn when it's hoped the hall will reopen. Our current Treasurer plans to resign at the AGM in the autumn. If anyone in the Fountainhall area is interested in this vital role please contact me for more details: **Jenny Mushlin, Secretary Fountainhall Village Hall Committee**
email: jjmushlin@gmail.com
tel: 01578 760297