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Stow Parish Council – Report of the Chairman 2021/22

Over the last year, the Parish Council has been fortunate to have a full complement of seven volunteers from the local community supported by a part time professional clerk endeavouring to maintain and, where possible, improve the facilities of the area within a limited budget. There have, however, been changes: after a total of eight years as Chairman, Paula Justham stepped down in May 2021; her contribution to the life of the community has been significant and since I took on the role last May I have appreciated the benefit of her support and advice. In March of this year, Norman Read, who became a councillor in 2019, decided for personal reasons to step down. We thank Norman for the tremendous energy he brought to the task and in particular his work with Highways, with ACIS and on the Neighbourhood Planning Group. We aim co-opt a local resident to fill the vacancy for the next year until the elections in 2023. As a new Chairman I have had a steep learning curve and would like to express my appreciation to our Parish Clerk, Louise Gibbs, and to my fellow councillors, in particular to my Vice Chairman, Chris Turner, for their support and advice.

In August a public meeting was held in St Mary's Drive for residents and those of South Drive. A number of local residents attended as well as our local District Councillor, Tracey Coulson, Adele Moore from ACIS and Parish councillors. There were lots of ideas of how to improve the area and a follow up Clean Up day was held in September when ACIS provided skips and a lorry to take away rubbish. In the meantime Highways have also done work to rectify the verges.

Three councillors have actively participated in the joint Sturton and Stow Neighbourhood Planning Group. Work on the Neighbourhood Plan has continued with the submission of the draft Plan under Regulation 16 and subsequent scrutiny by the independent Examiner, who determined that, subject to some modifications, Sturton by Stow and Stow Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum. The referendum will take place on 26th May, prior to which on 21st May at Sturton Village Hall there will be an opportunity for residents to learn more about the Plan and ask questions. Voting will be at St Mary's or by postal vote if applied for in advance.

Planning Applications have continued to require the Council's consideration throughout the year.

The long awaited new piece of equipment for the play park was finally installed in September and has proved very popular. Prior to its installation John Martinson cleared the logs and brash in the far right hand corner and landscaped the top left hand side creating a much more open and pleasant area. At the present time we are in negotiation with Northern Power regarding the electricity cabling and a new substation.

Charles Hewitt, with assistance from Paula Justham, continues to have oversight of the cemetery. The gates have been cleaned down and painted by a volunteer and look very good. We have an ongoing contract for grass cutting there, in the play park and the Village Green. The Parish Field on Fleets Lane is rented out and maintained by the tenant for wildlife. Looking to the future, the Parish Council, has recently planted 100 saplings there.

We are grateful to the Trustees of Stow Recreation Fund for the work they have done and the schemes from which we can all benefit including the speed reduction signs, the village clock winding mechanism, the defibrillator, the additional benches and the village signs. We are very appreciative of the work put in by numerous local residents to maintain and improve the area. The herbaceous borders on Church Road have been maintained by volunteers and the bulbs planted by Stow Fun Raisers on the grassed areas at the crossroads continue to be admired by visitors and villagers in Spring. West Lindsey green waste bins continue to be well used. There are twice yearly Community Litter Picks organised by Clare Ella and Stow Fun Raisers and many local residents also regularly collect litter while out walking; a resident supplies emergency dog poo bags; volunteers also keep the various benches clean; local residents refurbished the seats at the crossroads and the end of South Drive and added

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planters which they maintain. All of which keeps the village and surrounding area more attractive.

I would also like to thank those who have organised events in the village for people's entertainment such as the carol singing, the Living Advent windows, Sturton and Stow walking Christmas Market and the Macmillan Coffee morning and Craft Fair at the Cross Keys, both of which events also provided an outlet for local crafts people. This year Limestone Farming donated a Christmas tree, which was put up and decorated by Doug Garner with the help of Charlie Marshall and was an excellent display as usual.

The Parish Council responded to the consultation on the solar farm proposals regarding Cottam 1 which will have a major impact on many residents of Stow Parish given the intention to site solar panels and their infrastructure at Normanby, Coates and off Ingham Road. The report on the first round of consultation has been published and we await the second round of consultation in summer.

We have been encouraged, as mentioned above, by the active role played by volunteers in the Parish, but want to promote even greater participation. To this end and to keep people informed, we have maintained the publication of the online Bugle on a regular basis including a special edition about the Cottam 1 proposals. Between Bugles there are periodic village emails to keep people informed. My thanks to Clare Ella for maintaining the circulation list.

We have delivered over 20 Welcome Packs to newcomers, mainly in the village, since delivering our first packs to Post Office Court in March 2021. We are dependent upon residents letting us know someone new has moved in, so apologies if we missed you – do get in touch and we can make a pack available.

Pam Duncan

6.5.2022

Information for Stow Parish residents from Stow Recreation Fund

Further to the public meeting on 6th August 2019, when all Stow Parish residents were invited to attend and discuss possible projects for the benefit of the village that could be funded by the Stow Recreation Fund, we have the following update:-

The projects that were approved at the public meeting, and have been researched by the committee are:-

1. Defibrillator – we are working on this being located outside the Cross Keys.

We hope to obtain the defibrillator under the WLDC scheme which provides community defibs at a subsidised cost.

Draft budget for purchase/ fitting and related costs £1,200

2. Flashing Speed signs on entering the village on Ingham Road and Sturton Road

Discussions are taking place with Lincolnshire Highways and the Lincoln Road Safety Partnership, together with potential suppliers, as to the possible locations and specifications of the signs themselves.

Draft budget for purchase of signs/erection of poles/ fitting etc £6,000

3. Electronic winding system for the village clock in the Church tower

Following extensive research and discussions, the lengthy process of obtaining the necessary quotes, permissions, reports and preparatory work is now under way, and it is hoped that the work will be commissioned early next year and the mechanical winding system will be replaced by an accurate electronic system by the summer.

Draft budget for the provision and testing of the electronic winding system, together with related electrical work £7,000

4. New signs on the entrance to the village on Ingham Road, Normanby Road, Stow Park Road and Sturton Road

We have obtained quotes for potential village signs in a variety of materials and designs. There may be 4 signs all the same, or some of different designs, depending on the costs, any restrictions from Highways on siting certain designs, and public feedback. **If you are receiving an electronic version of this letter, photographs of the designs and quotes should be attached, but hard copies can be viewed in the Church, on noticeboards in the Becket Chapel in St Mary’s Church.** Any comments about any of the designs can be sent by email to StowRecreationFund@outlook.com, or posted through the letterbox of Exchange House, 6 Ingham Road Stow, **by Saturday 18th Jan 2020.**

Draft budget £4,000 - £6,000

Information for Stow Parish residents from Stow Recreation Fund

5. New bench seats – one at the Fleets Road/Ingham Road junction, one on Stow Park Road going out of the village past the cemetery and a picnic bench in the playpark

Quotations have been considered for traditional benches made from metal and oak, and also ones made from recycled plastic materials (there is an example of the latter in the playpark already). Due to the outlying locations that have been suggested for the placement of the benches (and their relative comfort for sitting on) the recycled benches are felt to be more resistant to weather and vandalism, and less attractive to anyone looking for scrap metal opportunities. Provision of benches in those locations is also fulfilling requests made during the walkabout sessions in connection with the Village Plan. The picnic table will also be made of recycled plastic materials, and hopefully prove to be popular.

Draft budget for the provision and fixing of 2 benches and a picnic table £3,000

6. Play park equipment

The piece of climbing/slide equipment currently in the playpark will need replacing soon, and we are looking at helping the Parish Council to replace it with a better quality piece of equipment – ideally one that is inclusive – ie. accessible to every ability.

Draft budget to donate to the Parish Council for this project £5,000

7. Perimeter fencing for play park

Three sides of the perimeter of the play park are poorly fenced, resulting in safety concerns for the users. Depending on what monies remain in the fund after the above projects are completed, we hope to make a donation towards the fencing (which the Parish Council are currently researching).

The current draft budget costs for the approved projects amount to £28,200 leaving £4,200 of the c£32,400 in the fund for contingencies. There are of course maintenance costs to be covered for some of the projects and some may incur costs higher than those currently anticipated. The use of any surplus, especially for the playpark fencing, will be considered once projects 1-6 have been completed.

We hope that you appreciate all the hard work that is going into trying to improve the village's facilities. If you would like to be involved more, then please contact us via email at StowRecreationFund@outlook.com, or on 07805 057583

12th December 2019