

Annual Parish Meeting, May 2024.

Brief resume of activities of the parish council from May 2023 to May 2024, by Chris Turner.

The year began with a new council in place. Paula Justham, John Martinson, Ann Taylor and Pam Duncan retired and were replaced by Rebecca Arden, Graham Worthington, Phil Sharp and Karen Howes. Our thanks go to the retired councillors for all their help over the last few years. Given the many new faces on the council, plus the relative inexperience of Mandy, our new Clerk, I agreed at last years AGM to become chair of the council for a second time, but stipulated it would only be for a 12 month period, which would enable new faces to familiarise themselves with the duties and functions of a parish council.

Pam Duncan, however, happily agree to continue to compile the Bugle and this she has done exceedingly well, thank you. She also continues to deliver Welcome packs to all known new village residents.

The new flag pole was erected in time for Charles III's Coronation, and the flag flew proudly on that day.

A second new bench was installed on the village green, donated by John and Margaret Martinson. Thank you.

Solar Farms continue to dominate the thoughts of many. Stow Parish Council formally objected to the Cottam Project (which has solar panels within our parish) and we try to keep a close eye on all the various developments arising from all the other proposed projects around our parish.

Northern Power finally came to start work on removing the power lines that run right up to the boundary of our Play Park. They then came to a rather abrupt halt as another problem emerged. Northern Power have promised to return to complete the work in the autumn.

The three flashing speed signs stopped working during the year, after Andrew Fenn injured his leg and could not change the batteries. He subsequently asked to be relieved of this duty. Thank you Andrew for your efforts over the years. I agreed to oversee things for a while. My initial costs for upgrading the three signs to solar power were far too high for the parish council to accept. Robin Howes then took an interest – well rather more than just taking an interest he has rejuvenated the idea of slowly converting the signs to solar power at a very, very much reduced cost. We moved the sign on Willingham Road to the new 40mph limit on Ingham Road and it is now functioning and powered by solar. The other two signs are also now working but require far too frequent battery changes, so we hope to convert them to solar power this coming year. Basically all the batteries bought a few years ago are now knackered.

The christmas tree lights were damaged beyond repair by the gales over the New Year. We are in the process of replacing these using a grant from Councillor Mullaly. Thank you Lynda.

South Drive has been in a terrible state with pot holes and continuous flooding for months. Norman Read has been instrumental in getting WLDC to act and he has had some success. A temporary repair has been undertaken with a full repair promised later in the year.

The last of the four trees on the village green, behind Post House, have been felled, due to disease.

We increased some of the cemetery fees, so as to be more in line with other neighbouring council run cemeteries. Even with these increased costs, Stow cemetery fees are still relatively low.

The Sturton and Stow Neighbourhood Plan has been reviewed and updated in line with recent government and county council policies. This has been a tedious, but necessary, job and our thanks are due to the many people who spent hours trudging through the plan. I would have given up after a couple of pages, so how they managed to get through over 100 pages is beyond me. Well done and thank you.

Notices have been received by a number of parishioners, telling them that historical footpaths cross their land – or even go through their kitchens! This is a part of a nationwide campaign to try to resurrect all old defunct footpaths. The advice from Lincolnshire CC is do not worry, it almost certainly will not happen. However, we will continue to monitor the situation.

As is normal, the council have reviewed many planning applications throughout the year. One such application, at the end of South Drive, has resulted in acrimony, which briefly spilled into a parish council meeting. I hope things are satisfactorily resolved soon.

Finally, as the year ended, Graham Worthington resigned from Stow Parish Council, after just 9 months in post. A replacement councillor will need to be co-opted asap.

Chris Turner, Chair Stow Parish Council May 2023 to May 2024.