

**MINUTES OF STOW LONGA ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD AT ST. BOTOLPH'S CHURCH, STOW LONGA ON 11 MAY 2009 AT 8 PM**

Councillors Hayes (Chairman), Allen, Millington, the Clerk (Mr D Stowell), and 15 members of the public were present.

1. **The minutes of the previous meeting held 8 May 2008** were read, approved and signed.
2. **Parish Council Chairman's Report 2008 / 2009**
The chairman gave a report as appended hereto.
3. **Financial Report for 2008/2009**
The Parish Clerk, Mr D Stowell, presented the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009
4. **Town Lands Charity**
The Chairman reported that there are currently 4 trustees, Mrs Wakefield, Mr Woodham, Mr Murdoch and Mr Keal. He said that Mrs Wakefield and Mr Woodham wish to stand down hence there are two vacancies for which he invited nominations. Mr Martin Allen accepted nomination and was elected to fill one vacancy, the other being left unfilled. Although the trustees normally meet in the first week of December, Mr Allen agreed to convene a meeting shortly to arrange a smooth takeover from Mrs Wakefield.
5. **Open Forum**
Reinstatement of verges etc. following completion of sewerage scheme
The Chairman reported that, following a visit by the Anglian Water project manager on 17 March and his subsequent meeting with Barhale, a report on the outcome had just been received. This will be considered at the Parish Council later this evening.
Several comments on the state of the reinstatements were made by those present:-
 - The resultant ruts are dangerous
 - Could sandbags be used to reinforce the damaged embankments
 - The land on the Green adjacent to the well appears to be sinking. Was this caused by materials and equipment stored there during the work?**Neighbourhood Watch**
Mrs Schorer-Nixon reported that she was starting a self help scheme.
6. **Report by Mr Max Turner regarding the Village Cross developments**
Mr Turner gave a comprehensive summary of the progress he had made during the past year on the project to remove the current ball finial and replace it with a more acceptable alternative. He and Vivian Schorer-Nixon and Jo-Ann Millington, who have now joined him on the project, have made contact with English Heritage at national and local level, and the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Management Team.
On March 12 they had a site meeting with the local Field Monument Warden for English Heritage and two experts from the County Council. They examined the cross followed by a visit to see the stone fragments stored in the Vicarage Room and Martin Whitlock's barn. The main outcomes were:
 - EH and CCC support proposals to remove the ball finial but oppose putting any additional strain on the medieval shaft or adding any modern addition to the structure.
 - EH and CCC are very interested in the stone fragments and support the idea of an exhibition
 - A local expert will need to be employed to identify the fragments
 - M Whitlock is happy to store ALL the fragments
 - CCC will assist in making an application for funding to the National Lottery. EH will also support.
 - A Conservation Architect will need to be employed to plan and oversee the work on the cross.

- We would aim to erect a high quality display board adjacent to the cross detailing its history and showing how it has changed.
- CCC have been in contact with the National Lottery who broadly support our aims, but the bid will need to be carefully made so that we meet their conditions that Heritage Learning results from the project. Local schools and community will need to be involved.
- The involvement of a leading local Conservation Architect is being sought. She is to visit the site shortly and will assess the costs (including her professional fees).

7. Report by Dr John Rawlinson on cost of maintaining St Botolph's Church

Dr Rawlinson said that he spoke as Assistant Minister in the local group of parishes, who had lived in Stow Longa for 7 years in the past and whose two daughters had married in St. Botolph's Church.

He said that the annual meeting of the PCC considered it was important that the historic Church remain as a functioning building and a functioning worshipping church. The problem is that the running costs are £300 per month and the income only £185, leaving a shortfall of £115 per month i.e. approx £2 per household per month.

He said that the PCC proposed to run a Church Stewardship campaign involving the whole parish community in order to meet the shortfall and avoid closure of the building. He invited comments from those present. These indicated a consensus in favour of such a scheme.

Dr Rawlinson said that, in order to make the services more attractive, changes are being considered. The present pattern of 1 Holy Communion and 1 Morning Prayer per month is to be changed for a trial period to 1 Holy Communion and 1 Family Service.

At the conclusion of Dr Rawlinson's statement, Mr Ray Convine pointed out that the income of £185 included £100 per month from the Kart Club. Dr Rawlinson acknowledged this to be so and said that the PCC is very grateful for this contribution.

Post Meeting note: The Church treasurer wishes to acknowledge that the income also includes £27 per month contributed by the Parish Council towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard.

8. Report by Mrs Jo-Ann Millington regarding the Speedwatch Scheme

Mrs Millington explained the details of the scheme which involves a team of volunteers from participating villages manning speed monitoring equipment and reporting excessive speeds to the police who will issue warning notices to the offending drivers. The volunteers will be required to operate in villages other than their own.

She asked that anyone wishing for more information or to volunteer to join a team should get in touch with her.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.58 pm

Stow Longa Parish Council Chairman's report 2008/09

Meetings

The Parish Council met on 11 separate occasions since the last Annual Parish Meeting.

There was a 90% attendance record by Councillors at those meetings.

There were no Extraordinary Parish Meetings in the year.

The Clerk continues to publish the minutes of the Parish Council meetings on the village website.

During the period since the last Annual Parish Meeting the Parish Council has dealt with the following issues:

Changes to the membership of the Council

Towards the early part of the year, Ray Convine stood down as a Councillor. Jon Young was co-opted in his place as an election was not requested by the village.

John Dickins has recently decided to stand down from the Council. Again the matter has been advertised and this will be moved forward once the time limit for requesting an election has expired.

Planning applications

There were 7 routine planning matters that the Council were asked to consider this year. There was nothing remarkable regarding any of these issues. There have been no enforcement issues.

Finance

During the year the Parish Council dealt with its financial obligations including both an internal and an external audit. The results of both of these audits were satisfactory.

The precept was once more set at £3,000 for the 2009/10 fiscal year. This amount was set after considering the budgeted expenditure for the forthcoming year both in respect of overheads but also in respect of possible contributions to improvements to the infrastructure.

Peacocks

After much effort and some unsuccessful searching for a solution to the problem, the peacocks were eventually safely removed to another location.

Without going through all the detail, thanks are due to:

- Mr & Mrs Pitt for finding someone (Ian Seabrook) who would catch them.
- Mr & Mrs Townson, whose property they were caught on.
- Other villagers who were involved in previous attempts to capture the birds.

A payment of £125 was made to Ian Seabrook for his work.

Repairs and maintenance

There have been ongoing discussions regarding re-siting the drains in the roads.

Relocating the post box to the Green is being considered for safety reasons and also to reduce damage to the verges around the pull-in next to the existing post box. A site has been selected on the telegraph pole outside Fox Earth. Royal Mail agreement is awaited.

The picnic table on the play area is beyond repair and is being replaced by a table made of a rot proof material.

Health and Safety

Martin Allen regularly inspects of Parish Council assets to ensure that there are no health and safety issues. Where necessary, appropriate action has been taken to ensure that any potentially dangerous matters are dealt with.

The play area equipment is regularly inspected by Wicksteed.

Mains Sewage

The issues concerning the damage to the village verges and related issues caused by the sewerage works have been monitored.

A meeting has taken place with AWA and CCC Highways to discuss the damage. AWA are starting to prove difficult and we are relying on CCC, who have a final meeting with AWA and Barhale, not to accept the restoration works. The Parish Council will make sure that it is in attendance at that meeting.

The plant hire company who damaged the sign on the green and the end of the Green nearest the old vicarage have admitted responsibility and have agreed to repair the damage.

As for the damage on the chapel side of the green, the damage has been caused by a mixture of commercial vehicles delivering to that site, the sewerage works and, it has to be said, some traffic from within the village.

The builder has undertaken to repair some of the damage when the work is completed and further discussions are to be had with him.

Given the ongoing problems with that side of the Green, the Council have investigated the cost of kerbing that side of the green with conservation kerbing to define the boundary. Last year the cost was estimated at £2,800 plus VAT. The matter was not pursued in view of the cost, but given the persistent and increasing damage, we will re-visit this soon.

Village boundaries

It would appear that the extension of the Parish boundary to include the three houses near the old station has been agreed and a draft order to be laid before Parliament has been published. The revised boundary map is available for inspection tonight.

Reducing the speed limits

The issue of speed limits and traffic has been pursued by the Council during the year.

The timescales for reducing the speed limits is still 2011/12.

Given the current financial limits on County Council spending on highways, some doubt has to be expressed as to whether this timescale will be met.

A recent traffic survey, a copy of which you can see tonight, has indicated that speeding is not a significant issue.

Additionally, the police have monitored speeding in the village. We will ask for this to be repeated.

There is frustration as to how the issues of speed and volumes of traffic, particularly large lorries, can be successfully addressed. Any suggestion will be welcome.

Finally

I would like to express my thanks to all the Councillors and the Clerk for their support and work over the last year.