

**MINUTES OF STOW LONGA ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT
ST. BOTOLPH'S CHURCH, ON MONDAY 21 MAY 2012 AT 8 PM**

Present: Councillors Hayes (Chairman), Allen, Butcher and Humfryes, the Parish Clerk (Mr D Stowell), and 7 members of the public.

1. **The minutes of the previous meeting held 16 May 2011**, having being circulated to those present, were taken as read, approved and then signed by the Chairman.
2. **Parish Council Chairman's Report 2011 / 2012**
The Chairman gave a report as appended hereto. In response to his request for any comments there was a brief discussion on the question of reducing the speed limit, the consensus being that the Parish Council should fund the alteration to the speed limit in the event that the bid for funding failed.
3. **Financial Report for 2011/2012**
The Parish Clerk, Mr D Stowell, presented the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012.
4. **Town Lands Charity** – The Chairman reported that as Mr John Keal had reached the end of his current 4 year term there were two vacancies for which he invited nominations. In the absence of any other nominations Mr Keal, who had intended to stand down after 42 years in office, agreed to accept nomination for a further term but pointed out that he would stand down when a replacement is found. Mr Keal was formally nominated to fill one of the vacancies.
Jim Humfryes, Chairman of the trustees, gave a brief report on the past year
5. **Reports from other organisations** -none
6. **Open Forum**
Water leak in Spaldwick Road . John Keal expressed concern about the water running down the road from this leak and bypassing the gullies which appear to be blocked. Martin Allen stated that investigations are in hand to determine the source of the water. When that is established Anglian Water and/or CCC will take whatever action is necessary.
Village Green hollows . Richard Whidborne asked that these be filled when the verges etc are repaired.
Bright lights at Gas pumping station . Martin Whitlock reported that the external lights which were erected whilst works were being carried out on the site are still lit at nights. They shine directly into some rooms at his house. He would welcome the support of the Parish Council in trying to remove this nuisance. The Chairman said he believed there had been complaints from other residents also.
Speed Limit . Martin Whitlock spoke about the need to get the limit reduced to 30 mph as soon as possible and suggested that in the event that the bid for funding failed the Parish Council should fund the whole cost. He expressed the view that most villagers would support this.

The Chairman stated that the Parish Council would note these matters and take action as appropriate.

In the absence of any further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.37 pm

APPENDIX

Chairman's report for the year 2011/2012

Meetings

The Parish Council met on 8 separate occasions since the last Annual Parish Meeting. There was an 82% attendance record by Councillors at those meetings.

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

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

Planning applications

There were 4 routine planning matters that the Council were asked to consider this year plus the Bicton Wind Farm. There was nothing remarkable regarding the 4 routine issues. There have been no enforcement issues.

Proposed Bicton Wind Farm

As parishioners will be aware, at the date of last year's meeting the Parish Council had recommended refusal of the application. Further the matter was considered at the HDC Development Management Panel in January 2011 where the Panel unanimously rejected the application.

Broadview appealed to the Secretary of State and there was a Public Inquiry which commenced in late summer and was subject to two adjournments. The Chairman of the Parish Council spoke at the Inquiry opposing the wind farm.

Broadview lost their appeal and I now understand that the time limit for appealing to the Court has expired. This means the matter is now closed.

The Parish Council approved a modest donation to the funds of the Stop Bicton Wind Farm Group in the year.

I think it is appropriate to record a note of thanks to the Stop Bicton Wind Farm Group who put in a substantial amount of time and effort to achieve this result. There are a number of notable contributors to the Group in the Parish and I hope they will convey our thanks to the rest.

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 has been set at £3,300 for the 2012/13 fiscal year, an increase of 10% and the first increase for seven years. 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.

It was thought appropriate to have an increase in view of potential capital expenditure and also the fact that there are now three more houses in the village following the boundary change, which means that the average increase per household is less than 10%.

We also reviewed our standing orders and financial regulations during the year.

Repairs and maintenance

Relocating the **post box** to a site next to the telegraph pole outside the Chapel is still an on-going issue.

The **village cross** work is progressing very slowly and I will ask David Stowell to give a brief update on this later.

We need to have working parties on the near future for:

- Repainting the **phone box**.
- Maintaining some of the **verges**. As far as this is concerned we are aware of the more recent damage from works and Councillor Sue Humphryes is pursuing this with Anglian Water.

Health and Safety

Martin Allen regularly inspects the 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.

Speed limits

At the last meeting I reported that the police have objected to a reduction to 30 mph unless speed reduction measures are put in place. They also said that any traffic calming measures would only be acceptable if there was adequate street lighting, which itself is not acceptable in terms of cost, the environment and as a matter of principle.

The Council made a bid under the Local Highway Minor Improvements Scheme for a reduction to 30 mph. The cost of reducing the speed limit is just under £1,400 and we agreed to make a contribution of at least 10% of the cost.

The Chairman attended a panel at Cambridgeshire Highways to put our case on 25 April 2012. There was particular support from one member of the panel who lives in Kimbolton. Whilst we have not heard the outcome of this as yet, it seems likely that with the police objection the only way in which we can have a speed limit reduction in the short term is if we pay for the whole cost ourselves. The Council will consider the options when we hear the outcome.

Finally

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

I would also like to thank those members of the village who regularly contribute to the matters we have discussed such as Max Turner with the Cross, and also Anne Beszant with flowers around the village sign. There are other who help with grass cutting and also helping with their, shall I say, more aged neighbours and often do so without making a fuss about it.