

**MINUTES OF STOW LONGA ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT
ST. BOTOLPH'S CHURCH, ON MONDAY 19 MAY 2014 AT 8 PM**

Present: Councillors Hayes (Chairman), Allen, Butcher and Young, the Parish Clerk (Mr D Stowell), and 22 members of the public.

1. **The minutes of the previous meeting held 22 May 2012**, having being displayed on the village notice board and website were taken as read, approved and then signed by the Chairman.

2. **Parish Council Chairman's Report 2012 / 2013**

Meetings

The Parish Council met on 9 separate occasions since the last Annual Parish Meeting. There was an 80% 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 three planning applications in the year as follows:

Bicton Wind Farm

New house at the Vicarage

Solar panel installation at the Old Wayre

Proposed Bicton Wind Farm

I spoke at the HDC Development Management Panel Meeting on 13 September 2013. The application by Broadview was refused at that meeting.

The Developer has appealed to the Secretary of State and there will now at an inquiry which will be held on 17-20 and 24-27 June 2014. It is intended that I will again speak against the proposals at that inquiry.

The Parish Council made a contribution of £500 to the Stop Bicton Wind Farm Fund in the last year to support their appointment of a barrister to represent them at the inquiry.

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 2014/15 fiscal year, the same as last year.

Repairs and maintenance

We requested that the main road through the village be resurfaced given that the road to Spaldwick was during the year. Although CCC Highways declined, we have spoken to our county councillor who advised on how should approach this.

The potholes on the village have recently been filled in following a request from us.

The drains in Spaldwick Road remain an issue and they have been unblocked at our request when there was flooding in February and March. The matter will remain a problem until the roads in the village are cleaned regularly and the drains are re-sited nearer the side of the road.

The repainting of the phone box and the letter box was completed in the year – thanks to Steve Butcher and Andy Griffiths.

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 Wickstead.

Speed limits

Following the reduction of the speed limit a number of villagers have conducted Speed Watch monitoring sessions and more are planned. We have asked our local community police officer if she will do some enforcement.

Finally

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

3. Parish Council Financial Report for 2013/14

The Parish Clerk, Mr D Stowell, presented and explained the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014.

4. Town Lands Charity

Trustees Report – As Jim Humfryes, Chair of the Trustees, was unable to be present his full report was read to the meeting. In summary it stated that;

Edward Brothers (who had been tenants of the Charity field for many years) gave notice to terminate the tenancy. As a result of engaging letting Agents a tenancy agreement was entered into with the new farmers of the adjacent land - Martin & Jane Eayrs. The new tenants agreed to pay the 'going' rate for the land, which meant an increase from £100 to £1,375 per year.

Income for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 was £801.76, and expenditure £780.00. A total of £300 was distributed at Christmas to a number of deserving residents. Due to the substantial increase in income it is intended to meet in the near future to decide on future spending

Trustee Vacancy – Due to the retirement of Martin Allen on reaching the end of his 4 year term, nominations were invited. There being no other nomination Martin Allen was nominated to serve a further 4 year term, alongside Amy Howard, Jim Humfryes and Jacqui Young.

5. Future of the Church Building

The Revd Dr John Rawlinson spoke about the problem of maintaining the historic and beautiful building in view of the small congregation, which may result in closure. He said that the Vicar and Parochial Church Council are faced with big decisions about how to move forward, and are asking the present-day residents of the village for ideas on its future use.

He said that a leaflet distributed to all households is asking:

Would Stow Longa benefit from having a well-appointed public building?

What sort of activities might we 'host' that would attract you?

What would it take to make the church suitable for what you have in mind?

Should we set up a 'Friends' group to raise funds, and keep the church as it is?

Do you think redundancy is probably the best option?

Have you got any other ideas?

He said that the Vicar and/or a member of the PCC would visit every home in the coming weeks to discuss the matter and answer any questions.

A social evening with a barbecue and drinks is being held at the church on Friday 20th June to which all are invited. There will be a short presentation on the options. Visitors with firsthand experience of similar situations and projects elsewhere have been invited.

6. Open Forum

The following matters were raised:

Speed reduction measures – It was suggested that traffic calming and /or flashing speed indicators should be considered

30 mph speed limit repeater – could this be removed near the Children's play area as it suggests that 30 mph is a save speed there?

Car Parking around the Green and on adjacent footways is still causing a problem.

Damaged kerb of children's play area – a portion of kerbing opposite 5 Church Walk, which has been damaged for a long time, is a safety hazard – could this be replaced.
Damage to Green near the Willow Tree – who is responsible, who will repair it?
The Chairman stated that the Parish Council would note these matters and take action as appropriate.

7. AOB

Bicton Wind Farm Public Inquiry

Geoff Beszant stated that SBWF is employing all the people required to support their case at the Inquiry, but they still have a funding gap of £6000 and would welcome further contributions from members of the public. He also mentioned that the final decision in this case would be made by the Secretary of State and Kris Hopkins, Housing Minister, and not by the Inspector.

In the absence of any further business the meeting closed at 9.07 pm.