

STOW ON THE WOLD ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL 2026 at 7.00 pm

at STOW SOCIAL CLUB, WELL LANE

MEETING NOTES

Attendees

103 including speakers

Apologies / Not Present

- Police representative – not present.
- Bob Fisher (Chair, Stow Community Land Trust) – apologies.
- Rob Brown (President, Stow Motor Club) – apologies.

1. Welcome

CLlr Alison Tighe opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

2. GCC Review of On-Street Parking – Introduction (John Hindley)

- GCC is proposing introducing **pay-and-display** (P&D) in Stow and on approach routes; GCC requested early feedback from residents and businesses to help shape proposals.
- Initial “starter” proposal is for 2 hours in the Square and 4 hours on Sheep Street / Park Street (not final; duration/coverage could be adjusted).
- Town Council has suggested options such as 10:00–16:00 charging to allow residents free access outside core visitor hours.
- Revenue would be allocated to additional enforcement officers to improve compliance (noted current enforcement capacity across Gloucestershire is limited).
- Indicative rollout mentioned: Bibury first (summer), then Stow, then Bourton, Moreton, Cirencester.
- John Hindley offered to remain available after the meeting for questions and to capture feedback.
- Process outlined: informal consultation over the summer, followed by a more formal public consultation before any legal process to introduce changes.
- Indicative timing (subject to consultation): potential implementation after Christmas.

3. Approval of minutes of 2025 Annual Town Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 7 May 2025 were noted as available on the Town Council website.

4. Stow Primary School (Mrs Rebecca Scutt, Head Teacher)

- Mrs Scutt Teacher thanked the meeting for the invitation and noted a separate photo/handout was shared due to time limits.
- **Key challenges:** lack of affordable housing, fewer families able to live locally, declining pupil numbers (noted as a wider issue across the Cotswolds).

- Increasing number of children with additional needs and mental health needs in mainstream education. School has expanded capacity to support this.
- A sensory room has been created and the library converted to help children self-regulate (community support acknowledged; visits welcomed).
- Nursery is now separate from school trustees, moved next door into the former hub. Numbers increasing and will hopefully support the school's future intake.
- School highlighted proactive work to secure mental health provision and recognition achieved.
- Community engagement: dementia awareness work with care homes (including Edwardstow) to help children understand dementia.
- Strong events programme supported by the Town Council and PTFA fundraising; swimming pool provision restored for Year 2 with help from individuals and local businesses.

5. Police Report

No police representative was present due to unforeseen circumstances – apologies received.

6. County Councillor Report (Cllr Daryl Corps)

- Noted roadworks impacts over the past year; hoped for a clearer summer, including on the Fosseyway.
- Reported approximately £800k spent on major A-roads, including resurfacing works between Stow and Moreton (areas referenced).
- County Council finances described as remaining solvent.
- First year of the new Liberal Democrat administration: council continuity noted; children's and adult social care rating reported as improved to Good from previous Inadequate.
- Funding programme renamed (previously "Build Back Better", now "Grassroots" funds) with a health, social and mental health focus.
- Examples supported: transport costs for mentors via Headspace (youth mental health charity) and Men in Sheds.
- Invited local health/wellbeing-linked project ideas; stated desire to allocate remaining funding within Stow.
- Traffic speed/safety on Oddington Road (referencing development impacts) had been raised with him and he had asked the Highways team to do a site visit.
- Noted that North Cotswolds locations were not included in phases 1–3 of the new 20mph programme, described as disappointing.

Q&A

- Back Walls: request to review noted. Cllr Corps confirmed it had already been requested.
- Traffic lights near Tesco: work was done by National Highways not GCC. Issue was described as a new LED type not working properly; phasing to be re-checked. Comment made that lights may not change at night when a vehicle approaches a red signal.
- Request made to clarify whether a road is adopted by National Highways (to be checked).

7. District Councillor Report (Cllr Dilys Neill)

- Outlined district council responsibilities: planning, licensing, housing, refuse collections, council tax and business rates, council tax support, off-street parking, and environmental regulatory services.

- Stated commitment to supporting town/parish councils and individuals, and representing residents' views in council meetings and debates.
- Current roles mentioned: Chair of Planning Committee; also sits on a health overview and scrutiny committee at GCC.
- Noted discussion around a potential unitary authority model and possible advantages e.g. a single elected member covering wider issues.
- Local Plan update: encouraged participation in consultation, expressed disappointment that a Neighbourhood Plan strategic site was refused, and highlighted ongoing challenges (affordable housing, declining number of young families, ageing population, limited employment, parking, and desire for more leisure facilities). Cllr Neill said she and the Town Council are pushing for Stow's priorities to be included in the Local Plan.
- Oddington Road development: access awaiting final approval from GCC Highways, footings being installed. Hopes families will move into the 37 affordable homes and. Expecting to know completion date in coming weeks.
- Unsung Heroes Awards Nominations welcomed for residents doing significant unrecognised work. Please contact CDC or Cllr Neill with nominations.

Q&A

- Oddington Road roundabout: response indicated a roundabout was not expected.
- Question about source of further housing pressure: noted demand from people who work locally (e.g., care home staff) who cannot afford to live in the area and therefore commute long distances.

8. Town Council Report (Cllr Alison Tighe, Chair)

The Chair's report is attached.

9. Centre 67 – Stow on the Wold Youth Club

- Updates shared by Gemma and printed newsletters were made available.
- Noted school roll shrinking, but the Youth Club catchment extends to Northleach and includes surrounding villages.
- Runs three sessions on Friday evenings.
- Has its own building and a partnership with the Town Council (office space rental). Other funding relies on grants and fundraising. Thanks recorded to supporters, including Cathy for supporting trips.
- Fundraising and a grant application underway for a 12-month programme of activities, aiming to offer experiences young people may not otherwise access.
- Planning plant and cake stall on Stocks Green, Saturday 6th June.
- Affordable daytime holiday sessions have been held and more are planned.

10. Stow Social Club

Update from Dave Cunliffe (Secretary). New Chair is Steve Harris. Linda Harris is Manager.

- Member-run club aiming to strengthen links with the local community.
- Activities/facilities highlighted: Tai Chi, table tennis, skittles alley, darts, Aunt Sally, snooker and pool tables, live bands, hall hire; family events.
- Refurbishment ongoing, funded by reinvesting proceeds.
- Open to everyone (not members-only) Day-membership available at £2.

- Membership growth has been about 30% over 3 months, and beer sales are up.
- Invited suggestions and noted support for local charities.

11. Community Land Trust (David Germaney)

David Germaney (Secretary & Treasurer) shared update; Roger White named as newly elected Deputy Chair; apologies from Chair Bob Fisher who was unable to attend.

- Progress noted on a promised strip of land between Griffin Close and the new development. Heads of Terms prepared, subject to planning and other permissions.
- Intent: provide genuinely affordable homes for local people and retain them in perpetuity (freehold ownership discussed to avoid right-to-buy).
- Likely need to partner with a housing association due to funding constraints. Noted this could affect affordability thresholds and eligibility criteria, but may enable access to grants.
- Timing: indicated need to wait for the Platform development to finish before progressing on site.
- Next public meeting: rescheduled to 19 May at 19:00 at the Youth Club.

Leaflets were available.

12. Stow Almshouses

- Update from Colin Langford (Trustee)
- There are 6 almshouses located on Church Walk.
- Grants acknowledged for improved security lighting.
- Doorway upgrades under way to improve weatherproofing.

13. WI

WI report was read to the meeting by the Clerk – see attached.

14. St Edward's Church (Rev Karen Wellman)

- Rev Karen Wellman introduced her role as vicar of St Edward's and three other churches – Upper Swell, Lower Swell, and Condicote. Her contract has been extended to September 2028.
- Key challenge: congregation is too small to sustainably support the church (winter attendance mentioned as 25 in Stow; villages 10 each). If sustainability cannot be improved, St Edward's may be absorbed into a wider benefice. It would mean only one or perhaps two services per month. She might be the last vicar of St Edward's if a turnaround is not achieved by 2028.
- Operational pressures: managing a Grade I listed building without churchwardens; employing support for tasks where volunteers are not available. An employee is due to start in June, focusing on building compliance and visitor engagement.
- Income challenge: high visitor numbers contrasted with low donations via QR code.
- Requested ideas/support to increase visitor donations (e.g., contactless "tap & go" suggested outside the North Door; noted inability to charge admission due to being a public right of way).
- Noted that Church of England funding model relies heavily on local congregation giving which is only 50 people.

Q&A

- Could parking revenues could support the church? Rev Wellman expressed support for a percentage contribution if that was possible and reiterated the desire not to be the last vicar of Stow.

15. St Edward's Hall Trustees (Joyce Norris)

- Hall reported as financially stable; trustees' role described as maintaining the building on behalf of the community.
- Regular users/clubs noted (e.g., Tai Chi, ballet, pilates), plus weekend craft fairs and Civic Society.
- Highlighted a collection of approximately 60 paintings (dating back to the 1700s) and efforts to raise profile via social media.
- Venue hire availability: Often busy but Fridays usually good availability and Thursdays also potentially available.
- Invitation extended to visit and view the paintings.

16. Stow Motor Club

- Ben Eddolls spoke and passed on apologies from Club president Pete Brown for not being able to attend.
- He gave a reminder that politics should not be part of the Annual Town Meeting, with a comment about an earlier dispute potentially affecting the evening.
- Stow Motor Show is scheduled for 11 July. Volunteers and attendees encouraged. Rotary will be assisting with parking.
- Club supports charities including Cotswold Friends and Kate's Home Nursing and a number of others.
- Club activities include trips to motoring events (including recent/previous trips to Flanders and Normandy), lunches, and support for other local shows.
- Other events/notes: "Square Wheels" event in the Square on 5 May (outside The Queen's). Club merchandise supplied via Super Lemon (Bourton) and sponsors thanked including Stow News.

17. North Cotswolds Rotary

- Update from Brian Massen (President until end of June): Rotary described as approx 50 members from Bourton, the Rissingtons, Stow, Moreton and surrounding villages, contributing skills to support projects.
- Fundraising activities including Bourton Duck Race) are held to enable Rotary's charitable work.
- International and local support examples: assistance to Ukraine (including ambulances and Christmas gifts), local donations including £35,000 towards a Cotswold School minibus and "Helping Hands" grants up to £750 for local charities.
- Non-fundraising volunteering noted: support for Young Chef and Writer of the Year initiatives, successful clothing banks/collection points, food bank support careers evenings, sending unwanted tools to Africa, establishing Rotakids clubs including one in Stow.
- Invitation extended for membership enquiries and event information.

18. Other Local Organisation Updates

18.1 Friends of Stow Surgery (Tim Churchward)

- Group supports the surgery by donating funds and purchasing equipment.
- Recent/ongoing purchases: bladder scanner and doppler scanner.
- Newsletter available at the Post Office, library and surgery; can be emailed or posted on request.
- AGM: Thursday 14 May, 19:00 at the Surgery.

18.2 Stow Cotswold Festival (Julia Stanbridge)

- Festival started in 2009 and previously ran every two years, alternating with the Motor Show.
- Post-covid, a new committee did not deliver a festival. Volunteer capacity has now ended and the festival has folded. Remaining funds are being distributed to six local charities.

18.3 Local Fire Station (Jason Davey)

- Emphasised recruitment need – there are only six operational staff in Stow. Call for local people to consider joining.
- Eligibility/expectations described: retained/on-call role (paid a retainer), not full-time. Must be able to reach the station within 5 minutes; over 18 with no upper age limit.
- Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) noted as keeping Stow as a station for the next few years. Concern that future reviews could affect station status and response times in the town.
- Role scope described as broader than firefighting (supporting ambulance crews, assisting with incidents/animals in distress, etc.).
- Noted reduced staffing compared with previous years. Lack of housing growth/ availability affects local recruitment pipeline.

19. GCC Review of On-Street Parking – Discussion, Feedback & Questions

- Review includes improvements to the bus stop outside St Edward's Hall, and provision of EV charging points (location discussed: outside St Edward's Hall, with a possible move to outside Stow Lodge).
- GCC reiterated this stage as an announcement/start of process and invited initial comments to help shape a more detailed proposal for consultation.

Key feedback themes

- **Problem definition:** residents queried what issue P&D would solve; GCC response focused on improving compliance through enforceable controls and funding enforcement.
- **Parking capacity:** multiple attendees stated the core problem is **insufficient parking spaces** and that charging does not create more spaces; concerns raised about revenue-raising vs. solving shortages.
- **Impact on residents:** concerns that measures (including additional restrictions/yellow lines) reduce ability to park near homes; objections to paying to park outside one's house.

- **Residents' parking options:** GCC stated there is no automatic right to park on the highway; future options could include residents' permits for primary occupiers, and also business permits in line with current policy available on the GCC website at: [Parking | Highways](#) .
- **Clarity needed:** request for clearer communications, visuals, and a mechanism to submit feedback (e.g., portal/poll/email/phone). GCC reiterated this is the start of the process and that consultation will follow.
- **Commercial details:** question asked about net profit and costs (e.g., machines); GCC did not have net profit figures available and noted machines are one option, with some areas moving away from them.
Post meeting note: Due to commercial sensitivities, GCC cannot supply any cost / profit analysis because the enforcement operations are procured through an external competitive contract award. Relevant information is available on GCC's website here: [What happens to surplus income generated by parking services? | Highways](#)
- **Planning/new development:** concerns that new developments have not provided sufficient parking and assumptions are made about on-street parking; GCC noted limited control over developments and that comments on planning are provided when requested by CDC.
- **Need for strategy:** calls made for a strategic town-wide parking overview (on- and off-street) and suggestions to pause until potential unitary arrangements; noted off-street car parks fill early (e.g., by ~10:30) and overflow affects roads.
- **District Councillor comment:** parking issues have been discussed for years; situation described as worsening with tourism and loss of spaces due to developments/visibility splays; aspiration for additional parking provision raised in the Local Plan context.
- **Next steps (GCC):** officers to use feedback to adapt proposals and then hold public information/consultation sessions (3–4 hour drop-in sessions) to develop solutions (including potential adjustments such as loading bays and residents' arrangements).
- **Feedback email:** parking@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Action Log

- **John Hindley (GCC):** Collate feedback received (including via councillors and email) and develop an adapted proposal for public consultation; consider residents' parking options, bus stop safety improvements, and EV charging location.
- **Attendees / residents / businesses:** Submit feedback and local information (e.g., resident parking pressures, holiday-let concentrations, preferred charging hours) to parking@gloucestershire.gov.uk
- **Cllr Daryl Corps:** Follow up with GCC Highways regarding a site visit for Oddington Road and check query on National Highways road adoption as raised.
- **Cllr Dilys Neill / Town Council:** Continue pushing for Stow priorities (including parking aspirations and affordable housing) within the Local Plan process.

Meeting closed at 20:58

Mayor's Report – Annual Town Meeting

Over the last 12 months Stow Town Council have made improvements across our green spaces, community facilities, and historic landmarks. Much of this work reflects the ideas, concerns, and enthusiasm shared by residents, and I'm pleased to report on the progress we have made together.

Amongst other things the council now has a regular table in Stow library (every 3 months) where residents and businesses can come and meet 2 councillors, helping you to keep up to date with local initiatives, answer questions and listen to your concerns.

Investing in Play, Sport, and Outdoor Spaces

- The town's playgrounds have undergone a full resurfacing programme, improving presentation and safety for users of the facilities, which includes a new roundabout installation at King George's play area.
- Following feedback from a questionnaire undertaken with Stow Primary School pupils, a new bike track has been built at King George's Field.
- 2 x new picnic benches have been installed on the QEII Field, creating another recreational space for families, walkers, and community groups.
 - The 2 x Town Notice Boards were replaced.
 - 2 x Benches have been installed enroute from King George's to Stow Square, offering some respite, if required, along the way.
- Stocks Green has been re-turfed, and extra paving will be added to the front edge at the start of May, to improve access.
 - The annual town clean up took place on 8th April where volunteers cleaned bins and various signs. I would like to thank everyone who offered their valued time to help.

Enhancing Safety and Infrastructure

- Last summer the bowed and dangerous section of the St Edward's Church Wall in Church Walk was repaired after a series of meetings, consultations and reports, enabling us to officially reopen Church Walk.

- Following several appeals from Stow Town Council, Gloucestershire County Council Highway Dept repainted the parking bays in the Square, completing them last autumn. We are aware that the faded yellow lines need repainting as well and we regularly follow up on progress of the original request.

Protecting and Celebrating Our Heritage

- After some years of perseverance, we finally managed to secure planning permission and source a suitable expert to restore The Stocks monument. The project has now been completed and is a significant step in preserving one of Stow's most recognisable historic features for future generations.

Strengthening Community Facilities

- Stow pavilion is nearing completion of its internal refurbishment, including a new kitchen and fresh decoration. A number of volunteers assisted in putting up plasterboard walls and painting an undercoat. A new floor, ceiling and heating system will be the next projects. In the meantime, the pavilion may be available for use as a sheltered area during some events.

Seasonal Events and Future Planning

- Last November's bonfire night was another great success. Lots of children made use of the funfair rides, despite the rain. We continue to receive positive feedback for this event.
- Unfortunately, last December's Christmas Lights switch on event was disrupted due to severe wind and rain, but we were extremely grateful to Stow Social Club for hosting the community at short notice. Going forward we intend to have an inclement weather contingency plan.

General

The Council Tax for Stow has not seen any increase and in fact has dropped marginally on last year.

Stow Town Council approved 7 x grant requests last year and the recipients were extremely grateful, those were:.....|

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you — residents, councillors, staff, and volunteers — for your continued commitment to our town. Whether you've organised an event, supported a neighbour, joined a consultation, or simply shown up this evening, you are part of what makes Stow such a strong and connected community.

Annual Town Meeting

22 April 2026

DRAFT

Stow WI: Annual Report 2025/2026

It has been a busy and rewarding year for Stow WI, filled with a wide variety of activities.

Our monthly meetings have provided a wealth of knowledge, with fascinating lectures ranging from the 'History of the Law' to the much-enjoyed 'Sweet Life of Bournville' and even an informative lesson in 'First Aid'.

Occasionally we step out of the meeting hall and this past summer, we gathered at Beechwood Park to join the National Federation's AGM via Zoom where we heard from inspiring speakers like Angela Strawbridge and Emma Bridgewater, and cast our vote for the winning 2025/2026 resolution: "Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers."

We do our best with Charity events too, from filling Christmas shoeboxes for underprivileged children to our ongoing support for the North Cotswolds Food Bank, our members have been tirelessly generous. We've baked for the local Youth Club and hosted cream teas for the Highworth Twinning Association and their German guests and sold tea and cake at St Mary's Church at Chastleton. And because of these efforts we've been able to provide some support to Kate's Nursing Home, the Dementia Cafe, and our local Primary School.

Last year was particularly special for Stow WI as we celebrated our 10th Anniversary. We marked a decade of friendship at St Edward's Hall with great food, music, and—as always—plenty of chatter! To capture those memories, our President, Esther, created a beautiful digital book of members photos from the last ten years. Esther also deserves a special mention for her stunning photo of a wisteria-covered building here in Stow that was selected for the Gloucestershire WI 2026 Calendar.

In September, we hosted a successful Group Rally for the Moreton and Rissington WIs, featuring a talk by Mark Cummings. In October, we enjoyed a private VIP shopping evening at Woolovers, and we rounded out the year by donating and decorating the Christmas tree for the Library and of course enjoying our own festive celebration meal.

As we move through 2026, our regular meetings continue, quizzes, walks, and skittles evenings are in full swing, and our two book clubs continue to thrive with lively discussions.

Our membership now stands at just over 50 ladies, which is our maximum capacity for insurance purposes. So once again we begin the New Year with a small waiting list of ladies eager to join us.