

APPENDIX A

Approximately 60 residents attended the public exhibition held at the Methodist Church Hall on 10th September 2013 from 14:00 to 19:00. Most residents generally supported the conservation area objectives; however, the most controversial topic raised was the proposal to move the Stoke Golding War Memorial from the village cemetery to the centre of the village; in the grounds of Park House.

The War Memorial was moved in the 1950's from its original location sited at the Station Road/High Street/Main Street road junction. The memorial performed as a traffic island and the County Highway Authority moved it to help large vehicles negotiate the intersection. At the exhibition, it was pointed out that at the time, the moving of the memorial into the grounds of Park House was suggested but the owner was against the idea. As a result, the memorial was moved to its current location to the rear of the old cemetery on Hinckley Road.

The current suggestion to move the memorial is to give it a more prominent location and help provide a focal point in the centre of Stoke Golding. The memorial is difficult to see from the public highway in its current position at the back of the old cemetery, particularly in the summer when trees are in leaf. The present owner of Park House was approached and is amenable in principle to the memorial being sited on his land. As a result, two alternative designs were prepared and displayed at the exhibition for comment. ***Most war memorials in Leicestershire villages and indeed over the whole of the country are sited in prominent locations in their communities, quite often on main roads. On checking with other parish councils in the Borough, there are not usually any traffic issues on Remembrance Sundays as vehicles are controlled by the police when services are being held and traffic is usually light.***

The following comments have been made objecting to the proposal to move the war memorial:

- The current location in the old cemetery is considered the ideal place for the war memorial standing in an area of peace and tranquillity alongside the graves of fellow family members, friends and neighbours from the same generation.
- The memorial is ideally sited to accommodate large gatherings on Remembrance Sundays. It is felt that the proposed location at Park House is on a dangerous bend and will give rise to road safety problems.
- The memorial could become a focal point for youngsters to congregate who could vandalise and deface the memorial with graffiti.
- The money needed to move the memorial could be better spent elsewhere in these difficult economic times.
- The war memorial could be damaged if it is relocated. Steps should be taken to have it listed.
- Provide directional signage to raise awareness of the memorial's location.

One resident felt that it would have been courteous to have consulted residents who have names of relatives on the memorial before going public with the proposal. Another believed that a good way of commemorating the two wars is to install wrought iron gates at the entrance to the old cemetery financed with the money needed to move the memorial.

Several residents however, supported the proposal stating that the memorial in its current location is difficult to see from the highway and would be better sited in a more public location.

The Stoke Golding Heritage Group also took the opportunity to consult its members on several proposals put forward on the Management Plan. The majority were broadly in favour of the proposals, including moving the war memorial. One suggested that a qualified arboriculturalist should be appointed to survey the trees at Park House as their health and retention is important to the village.

The proposal on the Conservation Management Plan to move the war memorial was only one of a number of suggestions put forward for comment at the exhibition. Any decision on whether to move the war memorial will need to be taken by Stoke Golding Parish Council who will no doubt consult its parishioners.

Another topical matter raised was the use of plastic windows and concrete roof tiles, these being cheaper to provide than traditional materials and easier to maintain. Exception was also taken by one resident to what were perceived to be negative comments on several private dwellings in the photographic record concerning their presumed heritage/conservation merits. It was felt they should have not been openly criticised which could possibly affect their future value. It was also considered that there seems to be a desire to return Stoke Golding to its historical past. Heritage is also 'lived and evolving'. Not enough emphasis is being given the viability of the community with the loss of shops. A more comprehensive, thoughtful, sensitive and dynamic plan is required. Another resident felt that there was too much focus on old properties and the desire to be locked in a time capsule. Owners had to improve them to make them fit to live in and conform to government policy on energy conservation. It was suggested that if local and parish councils wished to retain their conservation areas they should have regard to:

- All properties and surrounding land relating to conservation areas should be included.
- A framework is provided for financial assistance on key elements relating to conservation guidelines.
- There should be an open minded attitude towards modern design and materials.

It was also considered that Stoke Golding does not have enough distinctive character and building to warrant its designation and that it should be declassified as a Conservation Area.

Areas are designated Conservation Areas because of their 'special character'. It is the responsibility of local authorities to help preserve and enhance their character. This usually come from their traditional attributes arising from such elements as medieval road pattern, jittys, public spaces, design and the use of traditional materials. The Conservation Review highlights those features that are considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area and those that don't. It is unfortunate that many modern dwellings built before the conservation area was designated, don't have regard to conservation area values. A photographic record, including a roof material and window survey area used as a tool to monitor change in conservation areas. If too much negative change takes place over time, conservation areas cease to be areas of 'special character' and become at risk.

Other topics raised centred the plea for no more road humps, concern over further development in Blacksmiths Yard and the village in general. An appeal was also made for Leicestershire County Council to undertake more grass /hedge trimming in the village. It is understood that Leicestershire County Council is in the process of replacing the road direction signs with modern signs. One resident felt the old type of direction signs should be retained in the conservation area. ***These responses will be forwarded to the County Highway Authority.***

Several inaccuracies in the photographic record were highlighted;

Photographic Record 1

Page 6: 26-28 Station Road is a completely new building. ***This is not the case; the property received planning permission in 2004 for the conversion of an existing hosiery factory into a dwelling.***

Page 27: the Stoke Golding Methodist Church was built in 1933.

Photographic Record 2

Page 27: the block wall is actually built with sandstone taken from the demolished dwelling that was on site.

Page 28: reference to Woodyard Cottage should read Laburnum Cottage.

Changes, where applicable will be made to update the Photographic Record.