

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23rd January 2013 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. J. Crump, Cllr. P. Davies, Cllr. A. Harp, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. M. Shelley (Vice Chairman), Cllr. A. Stringer and Cllr. H. Woodward. There were no members of the public present.

- 1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. Jones and Cllr. Parry.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.
- 4. Matters arising.** Dealt with under the agenda headings.
- 5. Borough Councillor's Report.** The planning application for 3, Barns Croft has been 'called-in' and will be considered at the Development Control Committee on 30th January 2013. The officers have recommended it for approval, as it does not contravene the space about dwelling regulations. Also, the neighbouring property has a similar extension, so the application is not considered to be too out of scale. It was noted that the Parish Council still has concerns about too many residents building large extensions and 'in-filling' garden land. The Parish Council feels that too many large extensions may harm the character of a rural village and could create a potential flooding problem due to a lack of open space to absorb heavy rain fall.

The Borough Council has set the budget for 2013-2014, but apart from this and the New Plan for Stafford Borough being released for public consultation there is little to report at the current time.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications January 2013:

No applications received.

Status of Earlier Applications:

12/17920/FUL 1 & 2 Horseshoe Cottages, Sandon Road Hilderstone – revised application. Reinstatement to two dwellings, refurbishment, rear two storey extensions to both properties and new access across village hall car park. **PERMITTED.**

12/17516/HOU Home Lea, Sharpley Heath Road, Hilderstone – proposed conservatory, lounge extension and four small dormer windows to the roof space. **PERMITTED.**

12/17930/HOU 3 Barnes Croft, Hilderstone – proposed kitchen and playroom extension. **Pending Decision.**

12/01056/FUL (Staffordshire Moorlands DC) New Buildings Farm, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. 40m **Wind Turbine** & associated infrastructure. **REFUSED.**

The clerk has received notification that the final version of the New Plan for Stafford Borough has been released for public consultation until noon on Thursday 28th February 2013. The clerk will circulate the website link to all councillors. The Plan is still proposing that most of the housing and employment development will take place in Stafford, Stone and the larger villages such as Eccleshall, Gnosall and the Haywoods. There is little development planned for small rural villages and it is expected that most of this development will be affordable housing requested by parish councils on exception sites. The clerk drew attention to the renewable

energy proposals within The Plan, which includes 3 wind turbines on farm land in Cotwalton. This is only a proposal at this stage and a planning application may not ever be made. It was agreed that Hilderstone Parish Council would oppose any future applications for large wind turbines within or near to the parish. The clerk was asked to write to Bill Cash MP, County Cllr. Ian Parry and Borough Cllr Andy Harp to bring the Borough wide proposals for renewable energy to their attention and ask for their support in opposing any future applications for large wind turbines near Hilderstone.

8. Traffic and Highways. Cresswell road is still flooded near to High Elms. There is a blocked gully at this point and much of the excess water is also flooding a nearby field as well as the road. The flood signs have been up since November but no action appears to have been taken. The clerk will contact Highways to ask for urgent action, as this is causing a major road safety hazard. The clerk has been in recent contact with the Highways Community Liaison Officer about the state of the lanes around Hilderstone. Highways have done some work to fill the worst potholes, but there are still many areas of broken surfaces, edges and deep mud/gravel. The clerk has asked for the reactive inspector to have a look at the lanes and say what can be done to improve them. Despite reporting that the whole of a lane is in a poor state, it appears that once Highways have been out and filled one or two potholes the job is 'closed down' and the clerk needs to keep re-reporting any further work required. It was noted that the school taxi is refusing to go down some of the lanes as they are too dangerous and parents are having to bring their children to the taxi at safe point. A large area of tarmac on Dingle Lane has been completely washed away. Cllr. Parry may need to be involved on this matter.

The Speedwatch Group continues to be active when the weather permits. The road safety camera van has been in the village more frequently in recent months and was at Little Stoke today. There has been no update from Cllr. Ian Parry on when the assessment for traffic calming measures in the village is going to go ahead.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. The application form for the Best Kept Village Competition 2013 has been received. The closing date for entries is 28th March 2013. There are changes to the judging criteria this year with more marks being awarded to the tidiness of churches, communal buildings (village hall) and public houses (Roebuck). The marks awarded for general cleanliness and evidence of community effort will also be increased from 10 to 13 marks. This requires 'the village to be free of litter, free of weeds in significant areas of the village, no dog fouling (credit may be given for special posters and signs, well-sited dog bins, special dog walks etc)'. The judges will also be looking for clear signs of community effort, and the involvement of residents and groups in achieving the overall cleanliness of the village and its facilities.

The clerk has received two quotations for the cleaning of the war memorial but was unable to find a third company that offers this service locally. The quotations received were for £478.80 from Midlands Building and Construction Ltd and £534.00 from Midland Masonry. **Resolved: that the work should go to Midlands Building and Construction Ltd as this service offered stone sealing as well as cleaning.** The clerk was asked to send an order to the company asking for the work to be carried out in February if possible.

10. Village Consultation Meeting. As discussed previously, there will be a village consultation meeting on Wednesday 30th January 2013 at 7.30pm in the village hall. The main aim of this first meeting is to gauge how people feel about the village and whether they are keen to see village assets being supported and more community events etc. Each household will now have received three pamphlets highlighting the difficulties that village assets and groups are facing due a lack of support and volunteers. The third pamphlet invites all residents to attend the meeting. All parish councillors are asked to be present at the meeting.

Cllr. Clark will open the meeting with a presentation about the village and the current situation. There will then be a refreshment break for residents to discuss issues amongst themselves and with parish councillors if required. After the break the clerk will give a short presentation on village plans and it is hoped that Phil Dale will talk about the Roebuck. There will then be a question and answer session at the end. All attendees will be asked to complete a

questionnaire. After the meeting there will be fourth pamphlet giving feedback from the meeting. It is hoped that the meeting will be well attended and that residents will be forthcoming with ideas, enthusiasm and offers of voluntary help. One resident has recently shown an interest in running a children's activity club.

Letters have been received from Bill Cash with information and advice on what action can be taken to try to save the Roebuck Pub from closure. These have been passed on to Phil and Julie Dale. It is hoped that an action group can be formed to save the pub and that new ideas for it will be forthcoming at the consultation meeting. Under the new Localism Act, Borough Councils are required to set up Community Asset Registers for facilities that are in danger of being closed and deemed to be important to the social well-being of a community. This does not give complete protection from sale but invokes a 6 month moratorium on the sale giving the community time to raise the funds to buy it. The Stafford Borough register is not up and running yet, but it was agreed that as soon as it is, Hilderstone Parish Council will ask for the Roebuck to be placed on it.

11. Correspondence Received January 2013 :

- Consultation letter re: Post Office services
- Response Letters from Bill Cash MP
- Electoral Register Changes
- Letter from Highways re Community Gritting Programme.
- Members' Digest 177
- Members' Digest 178

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chair. The current account is £4788.64 in credit and the deposit account £3114.85 in credit. Although most of these funds are allocated as indicated by the monthly accounts which are circulated to all Councillors prior to each meeting. The following payments were approved:

1. Cllr. R. Clark, Member's Allowance for 2012-2013 and printer ink expenses - £329.96.
2. Mrs H Howie, Clerk's expenses - £33.16.
3. Mr W Holmes, Village Maintenance (January) - £70.00

The precept request for 2013-2014 has been submitted to the Borough Council. The clerk has received notification of the new tax base. Although the number of band D properties is being reduced from 270 in 2012-13 to 265 2013-14, the average band D charge will fall from £26.01 to £25.30 respectively. This is due to a government grant that has been provided to ease the impact on parishes of changes in the calculation of the tax base. The concurrent functions allowance is not being reduced this year.

13. Any Other Business.

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p2.15-2.19 Information on Grants given under the Jubilee Grants Scheme. The Council has distributed £81,225 out of its funds of £110,000 available to it. Staffordshire Environmental Fund claiming £11,209 for its services. Balance of £17,566.

p.2.20-2.31 Public Consultation on Stone Leisure Strategy - looking at provision at Westbridge Park.

p.2.39-2.51 Committee Cycle for 2013/14

p5.2 Application No 10/14498/FUL Retention of Stables and Feed Store at Hollywood Barn, Cotwalton. Permitted subject to the conditions set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration

p.5.12 Third Enforcement Progress Report . Considered the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration. The Committee raised a number of issues relating to the sites set out below which included Land at Spot Acre, Hilderstone Road, Spot Acre.

12/17301/FUL Alterations to 1 and 2 Horseshoe Cottages refused.
12/17302/FUL Alterations to 1 and 2 Horseshoe Cottages permitted.

p.6.17 The Federation of Small Businesses has awarded its Best All Round Small Business Friendliness" prize to the Borough Council for its work with the successful Stafford Town Partnership.

p.6.18 Dog Owners handed penalty for foul play. Two women were fined £75 for not clearing up after their dogs. The incidents happened in Tilcon Avenue and Meadow Road playing fields.

It was noted that despite the severe winter weather in recent weeks, postal deliveries have been maintained at a good level in Hilderstone. The clerk was asked to write to the Post Office to compliment them on this.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th February at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 27.02.13