

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th July 2013 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. J. Crump, Cllr. P. Davies, Cllr. A. Harp, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, 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. Davies and Cllr. Stringer.

3. Minutes of the last meeting. These were read, approved and signed.

4. Matters arising. A site visit by Cllr. Clark, Cllr. Crump, Cllr. Jones and Borough Cllr. Harp took place at Bank Cottage to view the proposed garden extension into part of the infant play area. The area into which the owners wish to extend their garden is a very dense thicket which cannot be accessed from the infant play area. It was felt that the loss of a few metres of land in this area would not have an adverse impact on the play area. It was agreed at the site meeting that the Parish Council would be happy with the owners of Bank Cottage purchasing four metres of land, but that any trees or shrubs beyond this point must not be cleared. It was also agreed that the original boundary fence which forms part of the historical village boundary, would be retained and maintained. Stafford and Rural Homes have consulted all the residents in the neighbouring bungalows and any previous objections appear to have been resolved. Since the site meeting, the owners of Bank Cottage had submitted some rough plans to Cllr. Clark showing a seven metre extension of land from the boundary. **Resolved: The Parish Council is happy for four metres of land to be acquired for the garden extension but not seven metres. The original village boundary fence must be retained and maintained. No trees or shrubs beyond the four metre extension are to be removed or pruned. Full and proper plans must be submitted to the Borough Council Development Control when change of use is applied for. Cllr. Harp will notify the Legal Department at the Borough Council of this decision.**

The tenancy held by Phil and Julie Dale at The Roebuck ceased at the end of June. Admiral have allowed the current pub manager to take out a new tenancy providing that he can pay rent. The pub is currently making just enough profit to keep Admiral happy. It was noted however that the current rent and rates are at a reduced rate until the new year. After that point the Landlord may struggle to meet the increased rent and rates. Business at the pub has improved in recent weeks, possibly due to the good weather which has made more people go out. The Parish Council has yet to receive any information from the County Council accountant about the long term viability of the pub. The door to door collection of the questionnaires circulated to local households has not yet taken place by the pub support group. This is still seen as essential information in determining how much local support there will be for a community purchase of The Roebuck. The Roebuck is currently being considered by the Borough Council for inclusion on the Community Asset Register. This process takes longer than originally expected. It was noted again that being placed on the Asset Register only gives the pub a few months protection from sale if a private buyer is found.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. The finances at Stafford Borough Council are very sound. This is because the Borough Council has exercised great caution in recent years and has ensured that departmental expenditure has been closely monitored. It has achieved many savings through increasing efficiency rather than making severe cuts.

A new sign has been installed at Stone Heath which reads Milwich Heath. Local residents are not happy about this and it is causing problems for delivery drivers who think they are in the wrong place. The clerk will attempt to find out if the sign can be changed back to read Stone Heath.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report

7. Planning.

No new applications in July 2013.

Status of Earlier Applications:

13/18732/HOU Arnfield Cottage, Sandon Road – proposed two-storey rear and side extension. **Pending Consideration.**

13/18833/HOU Bearstakes, Sandon Road – proposed two-storey rear and side extension to provide accommodation for disabled person and her carers. **Pending Consideration.**

Paddy Stanley – at this point in the meeting Cllr Clark asked for a minute's silence to be observed in memory of Paddy Stanley who had recently passed away. Paddy had served on the Parish Council and had shown great dedication to Hilderstone village by making many contributions, including a bench in the play area and the wild flower area on Dingle Lane. Paddy had a long military career during which he served all over the world and carried out his duties to the highest of standards.

8. Traffic and Highways. County Highways are currently carrying out more top dressing in the locality. The clerk will check with the Highways Manager if the B5066 near Cotwalton Lane is still on the schedule to be done. Speedwatch continues to carry out regular monitoring of traffic volumes and speeds. The group will continue to campaign for a 20 mile per hour speed limit through the centre of the village as there continues to be a high number of drivers breaking the speed limit and incidences of dangerous driving. It was agreed that the safety camera van still needs to be in the village on a regular basis. The Parish Council still has not received a start date for the construction of the chicanes.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Some of the hedges bordering the footpath 14 from the play area to The Meadows are still in need of cutting. The clerk has recently written again to those householders concerned, but as yet there has been no response. Cllr. Harp has said that as footpath 14 is a recognised public footpath, the Rights of Way officer at the Borough Council should be able to assist in getting residents to cut their hedges on a regular basis. The Parish Council is still awaiting the results of the Best Kept Village Competition. These will be announced on Monday 5th August at the presentation evening. The judges' report usually follows in the early autumn.

The damaged oak tree in the churchyard has had a first cut, but needs a second cut to tidy up the remaining branches. The cost of this is likely to be double the original estimate and the Church is still looking for a contribution from the Parish Council towards this. The Parish Council was reminded that all trees above a certain trunk width that are within the conservation area must not be pruned or removed without consent from the Borough Tree Officer. This applies even if the tree does not have a preservation order placed on it. It was noted that whilst conservation area regulations may be strict and sometimes impractical, they do prevent people from destroying historical features for future generations.

10. The Roebuck. Discussed under matters arising.

11. Correspondence Received July 2013_:

- Community Council of Staffordshire Newsletter
- Electoral Review of Stafford Letter
- Members' Digest 185

Members' Digest 184 - P1.1 Colwich and Little Haywood Conservation Area Appraisal. Considered a report outlining proposals for public consultation for the draft appraisal.

P1.2 Shakespeare Partnership Opportunity, in respect of annual Shakespeare production.

A verbal update was provided by Cllr R M Smith

Pp2.1-2.8 HS2 information and the Borough Council's recommendations. E.g. "the business case for the new line has not been demonstrated".

P3.1 Election of Mayor – Cllr A M Loughran

pp.3.4-3.14 Committees membership set out.

P5.23 Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver – Unlawful possession of cannabis. Driver received a caution on 9 April from the police. Resolved driver not a fit person to hold a license etc.

P6.8 Still cases of dog fouling taking place and the resultant fine of £75.

P6.10 Combating food fraudsters. Event attended by 36 officers from councils across the regions. Particularly relevant after the horse meat scandal and other food scares.

P6.12 Sky Ride Local. Stafford Borough Council is encouraging people to cycle. The Sky Ride Local programme is on its way. For information telephone the Sports Development Team on 01785 619607 or email sportsdevelopment@staffordbc.gov.uk

Pp6.14-6.18 Information from Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association. Copy of Communities, Clerks and Councils available and included an interview with the CEO Andrew McRae.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £5387.05 in credit and the deposit account £3115.61 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. Mr A Turner, tree surgery work on the village green - £280.00.
2. Hilderstone Village Hall Management Committee, concurrent funding - £404.00.
3. Hilderstone PCC, concurrent funding - £404.00.
4. Mr Richard Pilcher, Speedwatch running costs - £98.33.

The clerk will contact Cllr. Parry to see if it is possible to apply to the County Councillor's fund on behalf of Hilderstone Speedwatch for monies to cover the group's annual running costs.

13. Any Other Business. Several wild flower areas have been planted around the county and it was agreed that it would be nice to have one in Hilderstone. It might be difficult to find a suitable area on the main road however. Roebuck bank would be the best place, but it might be difficult to manage due to all the daffodil bulbs. The clerk will speak to Mr Bailey in the Borough Council Streetscene Department to see if will be possible to have a small wild flower area in the infant park.

It was noted that there are some 'puppies for sale' signs at the Hardiwick crossroads again. The clerk will contact Highways and ask for these to be removed as they are distracting for drivers and look unsightly.

A Great Food Debate is to be held at Stafford Show Ground on 15th August at 7.30pm.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th August at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 26.08.13