

# Hilderstone Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at 7.30p.m.

**Present:** Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. J. Crump, Cllr. P. Davies, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, Cllr. I. Parry, Cllr. M. Shelley (Vice Chairman), Cllr. A. Stringer and Cllr. H. Woodward. A member of the public had viewed the plans for the development of 1 & 2 Horseshoe Farm Cottages prior to the start of the meeting.

1. **Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
2. **Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. Harp.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.
4. **Matters arising.** Concern was expressed that work on the Bird in Hand appears to have slowed down. The scaffolding has been taken down and currently only ground-works are being carried out. It was noted that the car park is in a poor state and looks unsightly. The clerk was asked to email Cllr. Harp to ask if he knows what is happening with the build. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.
5. **Borough Councillor's Report.** None received.
6. **County Councillor's Report.**

**Road Surface Issues** - Half of the surface dressing carried out in the Stone Rural Area has failed, compared with around 5% in previous years. The high failure rate has been due to the exceptionally wet weather. Cllr Parry is not happy however, that much of the work was started when the conditions were not suitable. He has made this view known to Highways. The contractors have been back to Hilderstone but the weather conditions have not been good enough to top-dress the road. The road surface has been jetted and etched and has been tested for road safety. This is a temporary surface and the contractor will probably have to return next spring to put the top dressing on. It is hope that temporary white lines will be applied in the next few weeks, but this will also be dependant on dry weather conditions. The contractor will bear the cost of the re-work not the County Council.

Cllr Clark pointed out that the road surface is rutting on the corner near the Cotwalton Road junction and that there are two bad potholes after the bend in the wheel line of vehicles. The rutting is causing drivers to take the bend wide and it is of concern that a collision may occur on the corner. The potholes are likely to worsen over the winter months and these need filling as soon as possible.

Cllr. Woodward and Cllr. Jones reported that Cotwalton Lane, Cotwalton Road and Dingle Lane are currently in a very poor state and virtually impassable in places, especially in a standard car. The recent ditching work does not appear to be alleviating flooding on Cotwalton Road. The clerk confirmed that the poor state of these roads has been reported to Highways for action after the last meeting. Cllr. Parry was asked if he could chase these issues up with Highways.

**Vehicle Speed Issues** - Cllr Parry reported that several new fixed camera and small 30mph signs have been installed through the village. Hilderstone is now back on the schedule for regular visits by the road safety camera van. The Police have also been out with the hand held speed gun. Several fines have been issued.

The week long speed monitoring survey was carried out in September near to the Roebuck corner as planned. The results showed that a relatively high number of vehicles were travelling in excess of the 30mph speed limit and an alarming number were approaching the bend in excess of 40mph. In light of the results, Cllr. Parry has asked for Hilderstone to made a priority by the County Highways for traffic calming schemes in the Stone Rural Area. The

Highways engineers are currently assessing the feasibility of a lane priority system on Roebuck Hill to slow traffic approaching the bend. They are also considering a change of priority and/or mini roundabout at the B5066 Hilderstone Road junction, to slow traffic in that area. Both schemes must be deemed safe and will be subject to public consultation before proceeding. A reflective post is to be placed on the corner near to Briar Cottage, to try to prevent vehicles hitting the property wall. There is not enough room in front of the property to put a concrete protective wall.

It was noted that there was a five vehicle collision at Hardiwick crossroads a fortnight ago. This again raises concerns about safety issues at the crossroads. Cllr Parry pointed out that the crossroads has been assessed and has proven to be classed as safe. Most of the accidents have been due to driver error. Cllr. Clark again requested that the Give Way sign approached from the Sandon direction be replaced with a Stop sign, as this might help to reduce the number of accidents.

## **7. Planning.**

### **New Planning Applications September 2012:**

12/17301/FUL 1&2 Horseshoe Cottages, Sandon Road – reinstatement to two dwellings, refurbishment, rear two storey extensions to both properties and new access across village hall car park. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to the plans, but it should be noted that the hedge at the rear of the garden forms part of the village boundary and as such is protected.**

12/17681/HOU Rose Cottage, Cresswell Road – Retention of Pitched Roof Garage.  
**Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to the plans.**

Consultation on Application to Designate Sandon & Burston a Neighbourhood Area.  
**Resolved: The Parish Council does not wish to comment on the proposal.**

### **Status of Earlier Applications:**

12/17404/FUL Hilderstone Garage, Hall Lane. Vehicle storage building. **Pending Consideration.**

Appeal lodged for barn conversion at Brook Hall Farm, Hall Lane. **Pending decision.**

Appeal lodged for Valet Building/Car Wash, New House Farm, Hall Lane. **Pending Decision.**

10/14498/FUL Hollywood Barn, Cotwalton. Retention of stables and feed store. **Pending Decision.**

It was noted that the Parish Council intends to draw up a Parish Plan with consultation being carried out in the New Year.

**8. Traffic and Highways.** Reported under Item 6 - County Councillor's Report.

**9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village.** There are many self-seeded ash saplings on the Roebuck hill grass bank. Bill Holmes will be asked to thin out and coppice some of the remaining ones. It was noted that the war memorial is in need of cleaning. This is normally the responsibility of the church. The Best Kept Village judges' report still has not been received. Cllr. Clark and Cllr. Crump are going to Green Lea school at the end of this week to present the certificates for the children's posters.

## **10. Correspondence Received September 2012 :**

- Audit Commission Letter re Appointment of External Auditor
- Parish Forum Agenda
- Email re Children's Holiday Activities
- Letter re Borough Remembrance Day Service & Parade in Stafford

- Information re Discount Oil via Community Council of Stafford
- Members Digest 174

## 11. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chair. The current account is £3042.08 in credit and the deposit account £3114.06 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. Royal British Legion, poppy wreath for Remembrance Day - £25.00.
2. Audit Commission, annual return inspection fee - £144.00.
3. Staffordshire County Council, Speedwatch equipment - £938.90.
4. Mrs H Howie, Clerk's expenses and mileage - £15.65.
5. U3A Stone & District, donation towards broadband costs - £50.00.
6. Bill Holmes, village maintenance in September - £125.00.

The second precept payment has been received. The draft budget for 2013-2014 will be compiled by the clerk for discussion at the November meeting.

## 12. Any Other Business.

Members' Digest 173 – There is a new code of conduct for all County, Borough and Parish members. This is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011. Extract from the Digest: "This code applies to you as a member of the Council when you act in your role as a member, and it is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this code. You are a representative of this Council and the public will view you as such, therefore your actions impact on how The Council as a whole is viewed. The basis of the Code of Conduct as a member of the Council is: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership and to treat others with respect".

Stafford Hospital is still not planning on opening the Accident and Emergency Department overnight in the near future.

It was noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections will take place on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012 (if contested). The village hall will be used as the polling station in Hilderstone.

The conservation area appraisal is progressing well and will hopefully be finished by Christmas. The Borough Council conservation officer will have the final say on it however.

The church committee has developed a leaflet to draw attention to the lack of community involvement and how this may threaten the viability of parish assets and activities in the village. The church funds are very low due to the low numbers attending. If the situation does not improve in the near future, the church may have to join the thousands of others throughout the country having to close. The leaflet will be circulated at the Harvest Supper and perhaps with the next parish newsletter. The plea for more community involvement can perhaps be combined with the consultation to be held on the development of a Parish Plan.

The Harvest Supper is to be held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

It was noted that landowners in the parish have been sent a letter from Planning Enforcement stating that all accesses to land from the main roads will be checked to ensure that no new ones have been installed without the required planning permissions.

The clerk circulated the New Code of Conduct drawn up by Stafford Borough Council as required by the Localism Act 2011. It is now a **criminal** offence not to disclose any relevant pecuniary interests. The New Code of Conduct and disclosure of all interests is a Government requirement and the Parish Council does not have the option of refusing to adopt it. Pecuniary

and Personal Interests Forms were circulated at the meeting and councillors were asked to return them completed in full at the next Parish Council meeting.

**13. Date of next meeting.**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.45pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 24.10.2012