

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27th June 2012 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. A. Harp, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, Cllr. I. Parry, 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. The Parish Council was asked to remember Helen Whittingham who had passed away recently. Helen had contributed a great deal to Hilderstone Village through her involvement as a parish councillor in the past and as a member of the Village Hall Committee and Women's Institute. She will be sadly missed.

2. Apologies. These were received from Cllr. Crump, Cllr. Davies, Cllr. Shelley.

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

4. Matters arising. The jubilee celebrations and scarecrow weekend had been very successful and enjoyed by all. 60 residents had attended the jubilee church service and 90 came to the tea party in the village hall. Thanks were extended to Cllr. Jean Jones who had organised and made the food for the party with the help of Cllr. Hazel Timmis. The wonderful jubilee cake made by Anna Davies had been cut by the oldest and the youngest resident in the village using the sabre kindly lent by Steven Bains. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. Little to report from the Borough Council except that work still continues on the Local Development Framework which will now be called The New Plan for Stafford Borough. Parish Councils are being urged to develop Neighbourhood Plans. It was noted that Cllr. Clark and the Parish Clerk had attended a meeting at Stafford Borough Council about Neighbourhood Plans which is reported under item 7.

The enforcement officer has recently visited the caravan on Cotwalton Road and had contact with the occupant. Alternative accommodation has to be found for the occupant and he has to accept this before he can be forced to leave the caravan. There is currently no firm deadline for the occupant to leave the caravan. The Parish Council's view on this approach is that it sets a poor precedent and makes a mockery of the planning regulations which exist to prevent people placing caravans on unauthorised sites and taking up long term residence. The clerk was asked to write to the Enforcement office to state this view and ask for further clarification on the matter. It was noted that the Parish Council has been informed that there is a possibility of another, larger caravan being moved onto this site.

The development of the Bird in Hand does not appear to be following the approved plans with apparently more of the building being demolished than should have been. The site is also currently very untidy. The enforcement officer has visited the site recently but Cllr. Harp has not yet received clarification on what is happening with the build. It was agreed that the clerk would write to Enforcement to ask for clarification.

No plans have been received for Horseshoe Cottage.

6. County Councillor's Report. Cllr. Parry said that he appreciated that some of the recent top dressing that had taken place around the County had not been successful. This was due to the very wet weather conditions in recent months. There is an annual programme of top dressing which takes place between late April and late September when usually there is sufficient dry and warm weather. The top dressing is carried out by an external contractor, Enterprise who are charged with ensuring that the work is carried out in suitable weather conditions. If it is not and the top dressing does not adhere, it must be re-done at the contractor's cost. There will therefore be no additional cost to council tax payers for the re-work. With regards to the B5066 on Cotwalton Road corner in Hilderstone, work has taken place today to 'key' the surface so that the new layer of tarmac will stick to it. The work

cannot be completed until the weather conditions are favourable however. The County Council has put a huge amount of resources into repairing potholes over recent years and now has half the number of calls relating to potholes than it used to get. Top dressing is carried out to protect and prolong the life of a road surface and reduces the number of roads that have to be completely rebuilt (which is extremely costly). The Conservative administration has also re-negotiated the contract with Enterprise and has saved several millions of pounds in recent years and received better value for money.

With regards to the traffic calming measures discussed with the Parish Council a couple of months ago, orders have now been placed for most of what was suggested. The road paint on Roebuck corner will be renewed, there will be more warning signage and repeater 30mph signs, Briar Cottage will be given some additional wall protection and a reflective post. This work should be carried out within the next 12 weeks. It may not be possible to put a ridge of tarmac in the middle of the road on Roebuck Corner to keep cars on the right side of the white line however. This is because there have been some failures with this technique in other areas of the county. There also is not room for a protective barrier in front of Briar Cottage.

Several residents have volunteered to become involved in Speedwatch and Cllr Parry is to have an initial meeting with them on 26th July 2012. Cllr. Clark and the Parish Clerk will attend this meeting but residents will then be expected to run Speedwatch on their own. Milwich residents are also interested in setting up a Speedwatch group and it may be that the two groups can run together and perhaps carry out monitoring in each others villages. It was noted that ultimately, speeding is a police matter and that the B5066 through Hilderstone is always likely to have a large volume of traffic on it at peak times as it is a main commuter route from North Staffordshire to Stafford. The aim of Speedwatch groups, highways departments and parish councils should be to encourage safe and considerate driving within the speed limit.

7. Planning. Cllr Clark and the Parish Clerk had attended at meeting held by Stafford Borough Forward Planning Department about the New Local Plan for Stafford Borough and Neighbourhood Planning. In addition to The New Local Plan, parish councils can develop a Neighbourhood Plan which would give them greater power in law to say how they want their communities to develop over the next 20 years. Developing a Neighbourhood plan is very time consuming and costly however. The Forward Planning Team said that on average, it would take parish councils up to 2 years to develop a neighbourhood plan at a cost of between £17,000 and £63,000. It was concluded that Neighbourhood Plans were really only worthwhile for larger parishes where a significant amount of new building was being proposed. As Hilderstone Parish is not likely to be subject to large scale development, it will not be cost effective to do one. Forward Planning had advised however that it is important that parishes respond to the Strategic Choices Document to ensure that the New Local Plan contains a policy stating that development in rural villages will be very small scale and in keeping with the local area. Smaller parish councils could also consider doing a 'Site Specific Allocations and Policy Document' which would be less time-consuming and costly than a Neighbourhood Plan. This might be appropriate for Hilderstone Parish if the Residential Development Boundary is to be changed and/or the parish wishes to consider the building of affordable housing on 'Exception Sites'.

Consideration of the most relevant sections of the Strategic Choices Document took place at the parish council meeting and responses discussed. It was agreed that the clerk would respond to the Borough Council using the online system available by the deadline. It was also agreed that the Parish Council would consider doing a full housing needs survey, a Parish Plan and possibly a Site Specific Allocations and Policy Document at a later date.

New Planning Applications June 2012:

12/17158/HOU Bank Cottage, Dingle Lane. Renovation and alterations including demolition and re-building of structurally unsound side and rear single storey areas. Additional rear two storey extension. Demolition and replacement of flat roof garage with oak framed timber garage.

12/17095/FUL New Beech Tree Farm, Moss Lane. Construction of general purpose agricultural building.

Status of Earlier Applications:

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.**

8. Traffic and Highways. Discussed under item 6.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Nothing to report on footpaths. The hedge at Heather Cottage still has not been cut and is now halfway across the footpath and causing a road visibility problem for residents leaving Bourne Court. The clerk will write to the estate agent again. The jubilee trees are to be planted shortly in the infant play area. It was agreed that the tree planting ceremony will take place before the next parish council meeting at 7.00pm on 25th July. All available parish councillors should meet at the infant play area at 7.00pm. The Best Kept Village Competition posters will be taken down by the end of July in case the village gets through to the next round. The posters will be judged at the August meeting and the prizes presented at Green Lea School in the autumn term.

10. Correspondence June 2012 :

- Request from Age Concern Stone for Donation
- Confirmation of Grant for Christmas Event – subject to match funding.
- Electoral Role Update
- Bus & Rail Timetable
- Members Digest 171

11. Finance. The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chair. The current account is £4088.05 in credit and the deposit account £3113.28 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 W Holmes. Village Maintenance June 2012 - £90.00
2. Mount Nurseries. Jubilee Commemorative Trees - £100.00
3. Mrs H. Howie. Overtime & Clerk's expenses - £142.28
4. Cllr. J Jones. Additional costs of jubilee party food - £17.63
5. Age Concern Stone & District. Donation towards services - £20.00

12. Any Other Business.

Member's Digest 170 – Since losing the sporting facilities at GEC, the Riverside development is to be extended and a figure of £66, 875 is to be approved for additional costs.

The provision of affordable housing will be a priority in the New Plan for Stafford Borough (formally known as The Local Development Plan).

A change of use of 100 Newcastle Road, Stone has been approved for a shop selling carpets, flooring and beds.

13. Date of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th July at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 25.07.12