

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 28th November 2012 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. I. Parry, Cllr. M. Shelley (Vice Chairman), Cllr. A. Stringer. Parish resident Mr D. Smith of Home Farm was present throughout the meeting to observe proceedings.

1. **Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors and Mr Smith to the meeting.
2. **Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. H. Woodward.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting.** It was noted that the owner of the property at Leigh that has large amounts of scrap metal in the garden, is not deceased and that he has recently been contacted by the Borough Enforcement Officer with regards to this matter. The minutes were then approved and signed.
4. **Matters arising.** The clerk has been notified that in line with the new Code of Conduct, Parish Councillors living within the Parish must be granted dispensation to discuss and vote on the setting of budgets and precepts. ***Resolved: All Hilderstone Parish Councillors are hereby granted a dispensation to discuss and vote on the setting of the budget and precept request for 2013-2014.*** Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.
5. **Borough Councillor's Report.** With regards to the property at Leigh, the Borough Council Enforcement Officer is also going to contact Staffordshire County Council as the waste disposal authority, to check if the waste being held at the property is legal.

There has been some confusion locally over the development of Westbridge Park in Stone. The current Borough Council plan is to build a new larger sports centre to replace the current one. The swimming pool at Alleyne's School is also reaching the end of its life and the School has indicated that it does not wish to take responsibility for it when it becomes an academy. It is hoped that with sufficient funding a new swimming pool can be built at Westbridge Park. The Borough Council also hopes to build a new G.P. surgery and children's play area. Contrary to popular belief, there are no plans to build housing on the park. As Borough Council funds for the development are limited (2 to 3 million pounds), there will need to be some form of private investment. It is hoped that this can be provided by attracting a major supermarket chain to the site. Currently a number of supermarket chains have shown interest. There will be full public consultation on the plans in early January 2013 and all Parish Councils surrounding Stone will be sent details and invited to comment. If agreement on the development of the site cannot be reached; the Borough Council funding will go elsewhere in the Borough.

Cllr. Parry commented that the County Council may take over ownership of the Alleyne's swimming pool and refurbish it, but this has not yet been confirmed. Many local residents are opposed to development of the green space at the park as they feel that this is the last remaining open space in Stone for people to enjoy. Cllr. Parry said that there is still a large space at the rear of the park that will remain as green space and which can be used for public events. Although this area of land currently becomes water-logged at times, it would be possible for drainage to be put in to make the land useable all year round.

6. **County Councillor's Report.** Flooding is a major problem at the moment and Highways are doing their best to keep the gullies clear. Areas with the worst flooding are being given priority. The persistent heavy rain is causing a lot of difficulty and even when the gullies are kept clear, there is only so much water that the drains can cope with. With regards to ditches it is the land-owners responsibility to clear these, the County Council is **not** responsible for ditches. The County Council will intervene and write to land-owners where flooding from a

ditch is causing a safety hazard on the highway. It was noted that modern agricultural machinery which is getting larger and wider is causing a lot of damage to ditches and verges.

The village Speedwatch Group is working very effectively at slowing traffic and recording traffic speeds. Cllr. Parry said that he is disappointed that the County Council has not progressed as quickly as he would like with the traffic calming measures study and he will continue to ask for this to be made a priority. It was noted that the white 'Slow' road markings have not yet been re-painted, as requested several months ago. Cllr Parry said that he would chase this.

The Roebuck Public House was in danger of being closed permanently, but a couple living in the village have taken on a temporary lease at their own cost and at some considerable risk. The couple are hoping to get the full support of the village and to develop a number of initiatives to increase patronage and keep this valuable village asset open in the long term. Their intention is not to make large amounts of profit from the business, but to keep it open. Hilderstone Parish Council gives its full support to their plans and whilst it cannot offer financial assistance, it will write any letters of support that are necessary and assist with publicity where it can. It is hoped that this matter will be raised at the village consultation meeting on January 30th 2013 and be given full support by all village residents.

The funding source for the Parish Magazine may soon be withdrawn and it is getting more difficult to attract advertisers in the current climate. The magazine costs £195.00 per month to produce and the church is not in a position to fund this. Previous attempts to get residents to make a donation towards it have been met with a poor response. This is the main mechanism for the church and the Parish Council to communicate with residents and is therefore an important tool in fostering a community spirit.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications November 2012:

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. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to this application.**

12/17516/HOU Home Lea, Sharpley Heath Road, Hilderstone – proposed conservatory, lounge extension and four small dormer windows to the roof space. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to this application.**

12/17930/HOU 3 Barnes Croft, Hilderstone – proposed kitchen and playroom extension. **Resolved: The Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds of its size which will result in an over-intensification of the site and may cause a detrimental impact on a neighbouring property.**

12/01056/FUL (Staffordshire Moorlands DC) New Buildings Farm, Cresswell Road, Hilderstone. 40m Wind Turbine & associated infrastructure. **Resolved: The Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds of its detrimental visual impact on the rural community and the potential noise pollution to properties in the vicinity. The parish clerk will notify Staffordshire Moorlands District Council accordingly. Two Parish Councillors abstained from voting on this matter due to non-pecuniary interests.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

12/17681/HOU Rose Cottage, Cresswell Road – Retention of Pitched Roof Garage.
PERMITTED

Several Hilderstone residents have expressed concern to the Parish Council about the wind turbine application at New Buildings Farm off Cresswell Road. Although this is in Draycott Parish and falls within the Staffordshire Moorlands District area, it is on the Hilderstone Parish boundary and as such is likely to be very visible and audible from Hilderstone village. Cllr.

Parry confirmed that Staffordshire County Council is against large wind turbines such as these and does not want a proliferation of them across the County. It was noted that many of these large wind turbines are being erected on farmland due to the subsidies currently available. It was agreed that the clerk will write to Bill Cash MP to ask for his support in this matter, as he has also indicated that he is against large wind turbines.

Cllr. Clark and Cllr. Crump have been asked to do some additional work on the conservation area review. This will require local businesses, trees and hedges of significant importance to the character of the village to be identified.

A village consultation meeting to discuss the parish plan/long term future of Hilderstone will be held on Wednesday 30th January 2013 at 7.30pm in the village hall. It is hoped this will be well attended by residents. Leaflets relating to the need for more support for the church and other village assets/events have recently been circulated by church members. It is hoped that these will draw attention for the need for residents to get fully involved with village life in order to protect assets and maintain a sense of 'community'.

8. Traffic and Highways. Cllr. Clark attended a recent meeting of the Speedwatch group. The group is running very effectively and efficiently and recording a lot of useful data relating to average speed and numbers of vehicles travelling through the village at peak times. The details of drivers recorded as driving in excess of the speed parameters are still being passed on to the Safer Roads Partnership and the Police. The police speed monitoring team have been in the village today. The Speedwatch group feel that their presence and the more frequent visits by the police is starting to have the effect of slowing drivers down.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. The holly trees overhanging footpath 14 in the infant play area are in need of a severe cut back, preferably in line with the boundary fence. The clerk will write to the property owners. Some of the hedges to the rear of properties in Farm Lea still have not been cut. The clerk will write to the property owners again. Dog fouling on footpath 14 between Dingle Lane and The Meadows is still a problem. A reminder to dog owners about their responsibilities will be placed in the next edition of the Parish Newsletter.

Hilderstone will enter the Best Kept Village competition again next year and this will also be discussed at the village meeting on 30th January.

10. Correspondence.

- Letter from Bill Cash MP
- Letter re: Mortgage Rescue Scheme
- Members Digest 176

11. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chair. The current account is £5901.13 in credit and the deposit account £3114.45 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 November - £115.50.
2. Cllr H. Woodward, Village Party grant and PC donation - £350
3. Ven Agri Services, Daffodil Bank Cutting Services - £210.
4. Mr R. Pilcher, Speedwatch Equipment - £105.17.

The final budget and precept request for 2013-2014 was circulated and considered by the Parish Council. **Resolved: the proposed budget and precept request for 2013-2014 is accepted and approved.** It was noted that Government grants to local authorities may be reduced and the calculation of the tax base is being changed. Despite a zero increase in the budget and precept request, the above changes may result in an increase in the Parish

Precept payable by Hilderstone residents. The clerk will not be able to confirm this until full details of the changes have been announced by Stafford Borough Council.

It was agreed that the clerk can claim overtime for any extra hours worked in preparing a draft parish plan for the meeting on 30th January. Cllr. Clark will monitor and authorise these hours as necessary.

12. Any Other Business. In the Boundary Commission review it is proposed that Hilderstone be split off from Stone and assigned to the Stafford constituency. **Resolved: Hilderstone Parish Council will object to this proposal and request that Hilderstone is placed in the same constituency as Stone, as Stone is the main service town for Hilderstone.**

Members' Digest 175 – The Borough Council is extremely disappointed by the decision not to re-open the Accident and Emergency Department of Stafford Hospital on a 24 hour basis as promised and asks the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State to express the Borough's concerns.

A planning application at the traveller site, Hilderstone Road, Meir Heath for change of use of land for the stationing of three mobile homes, a children's play room and area and hard-standing for parking and turning of vehicles has been refused.

13. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 23rd January 2013 at 7.30 p.m. There is no meeting in December. The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 23.01.13.