

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20th May 2014 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. J. Crump, Cllr. A. Harp, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, Cllr. M. Shelley (Vice Chairman), Cllr. A. Stringer and Cllr. H. Woodward. Kerry Ashdown, a journalist from the Staffordshire Newsletter was present throughout the meeting. There were no other 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.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting.** Cllr. Crump's comment at the last meeting, that it was good that a local person (Bill Holmes) had been awarded the contract for the replacement parish council notice board, was added to the minutes. A point of grammar was also corrected. The minutes were then approved and signed.
4. **Matters arising.** Dealt with under the agenda headings.
5. **Borough Councillor's Report.** The Borough Council is currently looking at the ward boundaries again. The proposed new boundary for the Milwich Ward is likely to stay the same, despite being a very large ward. Milwich will be a two member ward, but it is going to be difficult to cover. The boundary for the Stone Town Ward is being re-considered.
6. **County Councillor's Report.** No report.
7. **Planning.**

New Planning Applications May 2014:

14/20384/FUL Hilderstone Garage, Hall Lane, Hilderstone. Variation of condition two, to allow a revised siting of the vehicle storage building. **Resolved: the Parish Council has no objections to this variation.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

14/20157/FUL Bearstakes, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. Minor material amendment to approved plans to widen bed sitting area, wet room and first floor bedroom by 55cm. **PERMITTED.**

13/19733/HOU Beech Tree Byre, Moss Lane, Hilderstone. Retention of timber framed parking/store building. Retrospective Application. **PENDING CONSIDERATION.**

13/19630/FUL Wind Turbine near Drumble Woods , Cotwalton. **REFUSED.**

Blythe Business Park – no application as at 18.05.14

The Borough Council is consulting on a tree preservation order for the trees in the fields on Cresswell Road near to High Elms Farm. This will need to go through a planning committee for final approval. The Parish Council has no objections to this proposal.

The Forestry Commission has become involved with the tree coppicing being carried out in the woodland to the rear of the open space at the bottom of The Meadows. The coppicing has currently stopped.

The Church will need to obtain approval from the Diocese as well as the Borough Council Tree Officer, before it can arrange for the damaged branch to be removed from the oak tree in the churchyard.

The draft County Council Mineral Plan for Staffordshire has been released for public consultation. There is nothing in the plan that would appear to have a significant impact on Hilderstone. The area north of Stone and surrounding Hilderstone is marked as having potential for methane gas extraction, such as the site which was approved at Spot Grange Farm a few years ago. The Spot Gate Farm project has yet to go ahead and the owners would need to re-apply for planning permission as the initial approval has now expired. This site is now owned by a company called DART.

8. Traffic and Highways. Speedwatch continues to carry out regular traffic monitoring sessions and the monthly statistics are posted on the village website. The build-outs are having a positive effect on slowing and reducing traffic during the peak times. At quieter periods such as in the evenings, some drivers are still going through the village at very high speeds, especially when they are able to get a clear run through the build-outs. Speedwatch has been asked if it can carry out some evening time monitoring sessions. It was again noted that there are also a significant number of pedal cyclists who travel through the village at high speed with little regard for the local community, road and personal safety.

A local resident has been in contact with the clerk to enquire about the possibility of having a zebra crossing in the village. It was noted that the Parish Council has considered this before but a suitable and safe location in the village could not be identified. Vehicles would need to be able to see the crossing from a suitable distance for it to be safe for pedestrians and there are no points in the village which meet this criteria.

A large amount of mud has been dropped on Hall Lane by a local farmer after a recent muck spreading session in nearby fields. It is an offence for any vehicle to drop mud and other debris on a public highway and not clear it up. It was noted that it is possible to obtain brushes for muck spreading trailers which clean the mud off wheels.

Improvements to the visibility of the build-outs and associated signage have yet to be made. Cllr. Parry had reported several weeks ago that an engineer would be looking at the build-outs but since then no feedback has been given. There is still a need for a bollard to stop vehicles mounting the pavement on Cresswell Road. It was also noted that the Speed Indicator Device on Cresswell Road just after the Church is not in the most effective position now that the build-out has been installed (as most vehicles are slowing down at this point). The clerk will enquire with Chris Mitchell in Highways if it can be re-located.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Cllr. Davies had reported prior to the meeting that there are currently no issues with the public footpaths. There are a couple of damaged fence panels in the infant play area which need reporting to the Borough Council parks department. It has been reported by a resident that the Best Kept Village judges were in Hilderstone last week to carry out the first round of judging. Apart from the grass in the play area being in need of a cut, the village looked good on the whole. It is hoped that villagers and the volunteers will keep up the momentum throughout the summer. Cllr. Crump reported that she is cutting the grass at the front of the village hall on a weekly basis.

10. Correspondence Received May 2014 :

- Email from SPCA re Area Committees confirming that these are currently 'suspended' due to a lack of interest from most of the parish councils.
- Letter from Stafford & Rural Homes re: a possible 'partnership' with Housing Plus.
- Electoral Role Monthly Updates
- Members' Digest 195
- SPCA Gazette
- Emails from Mr H. Watkin-Jones re: 'Friends of ' volunteers.

Mr Watkin-Jones has emailed all the Chairmen of the village assets and the parish clerk with a list of the volunteers who had indicated that they were willing to help with a particular assets/group. Most of these people already volunteer in the village to some extent, although a few were new. The email stated that there will be no co-ordinator of the Friends of group and that each asset/group

Chairman is responsible for contacting volunteers directly for help when it is required. Mr Watkin-Jones has offered to write an article for the Parish Magazine and village website to try to encourage more people to sign up for to the list. It was noted that the parish clerk's role is to administer the affairs of the parish council and not to act as an organiser of village groups and social events; although advice may be given to residents by the clerk on where to obtain funding etc. It was also noted that according to the competition rules, the Co-ordinator of the Best Kept Village Team should be a village volunteer and not the parish clerk.

Members Digest 194 – p1.3 Review of Burton Manor Conservation Area; also more on pp2.10-2.18. Pp2.1-2.9 Review of Eccleshall Conservation Area

Pp4.2-4.14 - Homelessness Presentation including slides on the council's approach and ways of preventing or overcoming it.

Pp4.19-4.30 - Presentation on Health and Wellbeing Strategy

11. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £7117.61 in credit and the deposit account £3116.40 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 Parish Clerk had obtained three quotations for the Parish Council insurance, which was due for renewal on 1st June 2014. Details of these and the cover each policy provided were compared. **Resolved: AON offers the best value for money as their premium is substantially lower than the other providers, but the policy provides adequate insurance cover for Hilderstone Parish Council.**

The following payments were approved:

1. Mr A. James, Annual Internal Audit Fee - £80.00
2. Mr R. Pilcher, Speedwatch Administration & Travel Expenses 2013-14 - £43.20
3. Mrs H. Howie, Clerk's Expenses & Mileage - £27.74
4. AON UK Limited, Parish Council Insurance Premium - £244.81.

12. Any Other Business.

The Roebuck appears to be doing well and it is encouraging to see that the new tenants are trying several different themed events to see which are the most popular. The recent quiz night was very successful with seventeen teams entering. Guest ales are being offered in the pub which should help to attract more customers. It is hoped that a large proportion of village residents will support the pub in order to secure its long term future.

The recent Vide Grenier event appeared to be successful despite the wet weather and some positive feedback has been given by a couple of village residents. The organiser has yet to provide a report for the Parish Magazine or village website and no indication has been given as to the amount raised for charity. Jenny Green is organising a monthly village market in the village hall and it is hoped that this will be popular with local residents. The biennial scarecrow competition will take place on the weekend of 7th/8th June.

The Church will be organising an event to mark the 100 Year Commemoration of World War One on the weekend of 2nd/3rd August. On Saturday there will be a sing along session in the village hall and hopefully some games for the children. On Sunday there will be a special church service and the Sunday School children will march into the church to an appropriate hymn. It is also hoped that a display of some World War One memorabilia/photographs and a 'poppy trail ' can be organised. A BBQ at the Roebuck may also be held as part of the commemorations. The Church would like to display a flag during the commemorations but does not have a flag pole. **Resolved: the Parish Council will pay for the flag pole which can be used by other village groups.**

Cllr. Clark reported that Mr Valluzzi has kindly agreed to allow the village summer fete to be held in the field next to Lower Farm on Sandon Road. It is hoped that this new location will encourage more people to come to the fete and also to get involved in organising it, running stalls etc. The fete will be held on the afternoon of Saturday 12th July.

13. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th June at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 25.06.14