

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20th May 2015 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. J. Crump (who left at 8.20pm for a meeting at Green Lea School), Cllr. P. Davies, 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 or press present.

1. Chairman's Welcome. Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors and thanked them for taking office once again.

2. Apologies. These were received from Cllr. Harp.

3. Minutes of the last meeting. The first sentence of Item 7, Planning was amended to read as follows: It was noted that the plot of land on the South side of Bearstakes along Sandon Road, which has not been fully maintained for sometime, has been formally claimed. The minutes were then approved and signed.

4. Matters arising. Cllr. Crump reported that there had been some complaints that the Parish Council had not agreed to the Green Lea School banner being placed on the railings opposite the Hilderstone Road junction. The Parish Council again agreed that because of the amount of information on the banner and the size of the font, that it might cause a road safety hazard at the junction.

Cllr. Crump asked if it would be possible to display biographical information and photographs about the soldiers which are to be represented by the ceramic poppies in the Church. Cllr. Stringer confirmed that this is planned where the information and photographs can be obtained.

Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. No report.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report. Highways matters reported under Item 8.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications May 2015:

15/22176/HOU Hillcrest, Sandon Road. Conversion of space over existing detached garage to form dependant relative accommodation. The Parish Council felt that the plans submitted did not provide accommodation that was of sufficient size for a comfortable standard of living.

Resolved: the Parish Council objects to this application as it is within the conservation area boundary and the Parish Council has concerns that the whole garage may be converted into a two-storey residence at a later date to provide larger accommodation.

15/22275/LBC The Bower, Sandon Road. Installation of four additional conservation roof-lights to provide natural light to upstairs room. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to this application as it does not alter the current configuration of the property. The roof-lights which are to the rear of the property, are of conservation standard and cannot be seen from the main road.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

APP/Y3425/A/14/2222107 (13/19630/FUL) Appeal lodged against refusal of wind turbine at Drumble Woods, Cotwalton. **PENDING DECISION. APPEALS INSPECTOR VISITED SITE ON 17.03.2015.**

8. Traffic and Highways. The work to improve safety measures at the Hardiwick crossroads has yet to start but it was noted that two rubber strips have been placed on the B5027 Uttoxeter Road on either side of the crossroads. These are probably to measure the speed and volume of traffic so that the engineers can ensure that the most effective safety measures are installed. Cllr. Clark will contact Cllr. Parry to establish when the Hilderstone Speed Indicator Device near the Church will be moved and the road markings re-painted through the village.

It is with regret that Cllr. Clark had to report that the Hilderstone Speedwatch team will hold its last deployment in the next few days. The current Co-ordinator has stepped down and nobody had come forward to take his place. The Speedwatch team had become very despondent with the lack of support and feedback from the Safer Roads Partnership and the Police Road Safety team. Cllr. Clark has written to both the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable for Staffordshire about this issue. The Police and Crime Commissioner has responded to say that he will forward the content of Cllr. Clark's letter to the Safer Roads Partnership and the Local Policing team for their attention. A response from the Chief Constable has yet to be received. It would appear that despite meetings between the various agencies responsible for road safety, an agreement has yet to be made about which agency will be responsible for particular issues. Cllr. Clark thanked the Hilderstone Speedwatch volunteers and particularly the Co-ordinator Richard Pilcher for the excellent work which they have carried out over that last two years. Their regular deployments in the village had slowed vehicles at peak times and the information on speed and traffic volumes which they have gathered has been invaluable in getting further speed control measures installed in the village. It is hoped that another resident will volunteer to be the Co-ordinator and that the Speedwatch deployments will resume soon.

It was agreed that one of each of the five children's Speedwatch posters will be reproduced and placed on the bus shelters, the fence near to the Church and possibly a resident's fence.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. A tree on the boundary to footpath 9 next to Cresswell Road had recently fallen over and was caught in the telecoms wires over the main road. This presented a significant danger to road-users. A local resident had contacted the Borough Council who said it was not their responsibility to remove it. As the land-owner could not be established at the time, the Parish Council arranged for a tree surgeon to come out immediately to remove the fallen section and make the tree safe. If the land-owner can be identified the Parish Council will re-charge the cost of the work to them. It was agreed that Cllr. Davies would liaise with the footpaths officer at the County Council to determine who has responsibility for this section of the footpath.

The Best Kept Village judges had been in the village on Monday which unfortunately had been a very wet day. There are still areas of the village which need more regular attention; it would help if more people would volunteer for the Best Kept Village team and there was a team co-ordinator. Some of the bollards and road signs in the village are in need of cleaning. The clerk will ask Bill Holmes to carry out this task under the County Highways agreement. A local tree surgeon has advised Cllr. Clark that most of the self-seeded trees on Roebuck bank are likely to grow very tall and will require regular maintenance in the longer term to keep them to a lower height. He recommended that these trees are removed and that they are replaced with some smaller growing, ornamental trees such as flowering cherries. It was agreed that the Parish Council will reconsider removing the trees later in the year if the budget allows. As there is currently space to plant a couple of trees on the bank, the clerk was asked to obtain the costs of two flowering cherries.

It was agreed that the bench in the infant play area could be replaced with a more robust, hard-wood seat. The clerk will investigate some suppliers and costs in-conjunction with Bill Holmes.

10. Village Events. Forthcoming events are:

- Coffee Morning at the Roebuck on Saturday 13th June, 10am – 12 noon. In aid of the Nepal earthquake victims.
- Village Hall Market on Saturday 27th June, 10am – 12.30pm.
- Village Fair, Lower Farm field, Saturday 11th July, from 2.00pm.

11. Correspondence May 2015

- Information re: Police & Crime Commissioners Fund
- Members' Digests 207

Report from Members' Digest 206 (Cllr. Jones) – A Special Health Scrutiny Committee was held at Stafford Borough Council in March. The importance of providing the best services for patients was recognised by all present at the meeting. The biggest challenge that lay ahead was transforming the local health system; with massive investment needed in Stafford Hospital to ensure that some services remain there. Other issues covered during the meeting were:

- The need for more screening and a quicker diagnosis of cancer.
- The need for more G.P. investment for end of life and cancer care.
- The need for greater use of technology such as Smart phones that can carry patient information.
- The ability to allow more patients to die in their own homes.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £8731.73 in credit and the deposit account £3118.34 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. Simon Down, Tree Surgeon, (work to tree on Cresswell Road) - £120.00
2. Creative Bee Printers, New Best Kept Village Boards - £90.00
3. Hilderstone Village Hall Committee, Office Space & Storage - £80.00
4. AON UK Limited, Parish Council Insurance 2015-16 - £233.14
5. Friends of Staffordshire Archives, Donation towards Digitisation of Hilderstone Tithe Map - £60.00
6. Mr A. James, Internal Financial Audit Fee - £80.00.

The Parish Clerk had obtained two quotations for the Parish Council insurance, which was due for renewal on 1st June 2015. Details of these and the cover each policy provided were compared. **Resolved: AON offers the best value for money as their premium is lower than the other provider and the policy provides much higher asset insurance cover for Hilderstone Parish Council including the War Memorial. The Parish Council will also enter into the three year agreement with AON due to lower premium offer.**

13. Any Other Business. Cllr. Clark reported that he had received a copy of the draft conservation area appraisal completed by Penny McKnight at Stafford Borough Council. Cllr. Clark briefly explained the content of the document to the Parish Council and commented that it read very well. The document has yet to receive final approval by the Head of Development Control before it can be released for public consultation. It is hoped that the public consultation meeting will be held week beginning 8th July 2015 and all households within the conservation area will receive a letter inviting them to this meeting. Cllr. Clark again thanked Cllr. Crump for all her help with this project.

Cllr. Clark informed the Parish Councillors that a notice about village affairs including the conservation area appraisal is to be placed on the notice boards and on the village website.

Other issues covered in the notice which need more support from residents, include the Best Kept Village competition and the Speedwatch Group.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th June at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.45pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 24.06.15