

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22nd January 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. Members of the Public: Robin Scott, journalist from the Newsletter was present to observe the meeting .

1. Chairman's Welcome. Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors and Robin Scott to the meeting. Cllr Clark reminded all the Parish Councillors that they should not miss more than three meetings per year (unless ill), otherwise they can be asked to stand down.

2. Apologies. These were received from Cllr. Davies and Cllr. Parry.

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

4. Matters arising. Mr Thursfield of Bank Cottage, Dingle Lane has submitted an application to prune the protected oak trees on his property. This application has been refused. Cllr. Harp said that a certain amount of trimming is allowed to protected trees, but this is very limited. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. The proposed new ward boundaries have been submitted to the Local Government Boundaries Commission. The draft recommendations should be published for public consultation in March 2014.

The Borough Council tax for 2014-2015 is being set and it is hoped that there will be no increase. This will be the fifth year that there has been no increase in the Borough Council tax despite severe cuts in the grant from central Government. The Borough Council has been very prudent in managing the budget and have maintained most services at about the same level.

Several new major planning applications have been submitted by developers to Development Control, but the number of new domestic applications has been low in recent weeks. There is to be a special Parish Planning Forum on Wednesday 5th February at the Borough Council, this will provide an update on the new local plan, give details of major current planning applications for Stafford Borough and provide information on Neighbourhood Plans. Cllr. Clark and the Parish Clerk will attend this.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications January 2014:

13/19774/FUL High Forest Farm, Sharpley Heath Road, Hilderstone – Conversion of existing agricultural building (barn) to a three bedroom residential dwelling.

Status of Earlier Applications:

13/19677/HOU East View, Sandon Road, Hilderstone – proposed garden room extension.

13/19080/FUL Ivy Cottage, Sharpley Heath Road, Hilderstone – change of use of land north of the cottage to extend the residential curtilage. Demolition of part of the cottage and construction of two storey extension in lieu. **PERMITTED.**

13/19526/HOU Old Post Office Cottage, Sandon Road Hilderstone - external solid wall insulation using Weber Therm XM System in white render finish. **REFUSED** on conservation grounds.

13/19412/FUL Bearstakes, Sandon Road – proposed two-storey rear and side extension to provide accommodation for disabled person and her carers. **Modification of Plans – addition**

of request for change of use of small area of agricultural land adjoining the application site. The application has been considered at committee who asked for garden to be used for extension instead of adjoining field. Plans re-submitted. **PENDING DECISION**

A recent public consultation event was held by Deloitte at Blythe Business Park, Cresswell on proposals for an extension to the existing business park to the rear of the site and a new housing development on fields adjacent to Cresswell Road containing 200 houses. A planning application has not yet been submitted for this proposal. It was agreed that such a development could increase traffic volume through Hilderstone village due to new employees and residents commuting either way between Stafford and Cresswell. It was a reasonable assumption that not all employees and new residents will live and work in Cresswell or Draycott. Some of the new residents may work in Stone or Stafford and some of the new employees may commute to work from south of Hilderstone. The clerk was asked to write to County Cllr. Ian Parry to ask if the County Highways Department can consider the likelihood of increased traffic volumes through Hilderstone and submit a comment to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council accordingly (should a formal planning application be submitted).

Cllr. Woodward commented that currently, most of the traffic that leaves Blythe Business Park turns towards the A50 at Draycott. Cllr Harp said that all planning authorities face great pressure to provide more housing nationally and therefore it might be difficult for them to refuse such an application.

8. Traffic and Highways. Speedwatch has reported that the new traffic calming 'build-outs' appear to be having a positive effect on traffic speeds and volumes. It was agreed however that the reflective materials used on the 'build-outs' and the nearby lighting are poor. On Christmas morning a driver ran over the 'build-out' on Roebuck Hill demolishing the posts and it was agreed that the temporary cones placed on it are more visible than the posts. It was also felt that the warning signage does not give drivers sufficient prior warning of the new layout and priority system. Several people have also witnessed drivers mounting the low pavement on Cresswell Road to drive round the 'build-out' and avoid queuing. As the school children wait for the morning bus just beyond this 'build-out', this presents a serious safety issue. Cllr Woodward has contacted Highways about these issues and was told that the Health and Safety Officers were involved in the design of the 'build-outs' and that they were fully assessed for safety. Cllr. Clark said that he has notified Cllr Parry of all of these issues but has been told that there must be a least a three month monitoring period before the build-outs can be reviewed. The clerk was asked to contact Chris Mitchell in Highways to see if any additional reflective materials can be added to the 'build-outs' to make them more visible especially at night. The Parish Council is not against the 'build-outs' as they are proving effective to-date, but it would like the issues discussed above, addressed by the Highways Authority.

Some of the new top dressing applied in areas of the village in the summer is starting to come loose. There are some deep areas of loose chippings. In addition to this, the team who installed the new 'build-outs' did not tidy up very well before they left the village. Highways have been out and cleared away the debris at the request of Cllr. Clark. Cllr. Parry has been asked to address the quality of the top dressing with the relevant highways team. The road gulleys through the village have been emptied recently.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Cllr. Davies has reported that the overgrown hedge on the footpath 10 exit onto Cotwalton Lane as reported last year has been trimmed. The finger post on footpath 4 at the Church is missing and the finger post on footpath 16 from Cotwalton Lane is broken, both these problems have been reported to the Rights of Way Officer at Staffordshire County Council.

The clerk has received the entry forms for the Best Kept Village Competition; the closing date is 31st March. A meeting for the Best Kept Village Team will be organised for early March with a view to work starting by the first week of April at the latest. Consideration may be given to excluding The Roebuck from the competition if a new tenant is not in place soon; although it might be possible for volunteers to maintain the car parks and garden if it is vacant so that it

does not become an eyesore. U3A appear to have stopped using the boules piste and perhaps this area should be excluded from judging.

Cllr. Jones reported that there had been a major fly-tip containing mattresses on Cotwalton Lane. This has been reported to Streetscene.

10. Correspondence January 2014.

- Best Kept Village Competition 2014 Entry Forms
- Community Council of Staffordshire request for Event Dates
- Members' Digest 190
- Members' Digest 191

Members' Digest 189

Pp2.1-2.17 -**Financial Plan 2014/15-2016/17**. Outlined revenue/spending pressures/savings and sources of additional income etc. The council's treasury advisers Capita Asset Services do not expect interest rates to rise over the period (their forecast is 0.50%). Options to reduce the budget gap are for instance, to raise Council Tax by 1% which will generate an additional £65,000 per annum.

Planning decisions affecting properties within the bounds of Hilderstone:

13/19200/TCA Works to oak trees within Hilderstone Conservation Area – removal of branches – Bank Cottage, Dingle Lane, Hilderstone. **Rejected**

13/19270/TCA Felling of poplar tree within Hilderstone Conservation Area – Heather Cottage. **Granted**

13/19366/TCA Tree work in conservation area, cut back silver birch, birch trees and hedgerow on boundary, Gateway Cottage, Bourne Court. **Granted**

13/19390/TCA Tree work in conservation area, 2 silver birch, 1 birch and 1 acer, reduce length of branches and lower canopy – Gateway Cottage, Bourne Court. **Granted**

13/19110/FUL Barn conversion (retrospective) – Annscroft, Sandon Road. **Permit**

p6.19 **Assets of Community Value** - Roebuck Inn, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. Date listed 2 September 2013. End of trial moratorium 15 October 2013. End of full moratorium 3 March 2014. End of protected period 3 March 2015.

Dog owner fined a second time for allowing her dog to foul in a car park. She was given a second £75 fine.

P6.23-6.24 Meadow Road Community Allotment was a winner under the Public Sector Health and Well Being initiative. Coverage of the Borough Walking Festival 2,969 people participated in events and activities and 2,638 children took part in school based events such as orienteering and short walks.

p6.25 Huge turnout for healthy eating week 2013. Over 600 people attended healthy eating demonstrations at the Stone Food and Drink Festival in October 2013.

The Members' Digest now carries pictures on its information pages.

11. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £5362.96 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 following payments were approved:

1. Mrs Kate Murray. Children's Club Christmas Party Costs - £153.53.
2. Mrs H Howie. Clerk's Expenses - £28.51.
3. Cllr. H Woodward. Balance of Village Christmas Party Costs - £81.29.

Cllr. Woodward provided the Parish Council with a statement of the expenditure and income received for the village Christmas party. It was agreed that the Christmas party tickets should rise by £1.50 per person next year due to rising costs.

Stafford Borough Council has notified the clerk that the tax base for Hilderstone in 2014-2015 will be 268.65 households. This increase in the tax base over last year from 265.49 means that the rise in the parish precept will equate to a 3% increase to households rather than a 4% rise as previously predicted.

12. Any Other Business.

Roebuck – A 'To Let' sign has been placed on the Roebuck. Cllr. Clark has spoken to the landlord Pete Condliffe, who has confirmed that he will be leaving the pub on 30th January 2014 mainly due to a lack of public support and business. Pete indicated to Cllr. Clark that the Roebuck is not currently on Admiral's list of pub to be closed. This may be because the pub is currently listed on the Borough Asset Register. Pete also stated that he felt that the pub needed a lot of money spending on it to bring it up to a suitable standard. The issue of the Roebuck will be raised at the next village consultation meeting that will take place on Wednesday 19th March at 7.30pm in the village hall.

Cllr. Clark summarised the main progress made in the village since the last consultation meeting in March 2013. These achievements will be presented at the next consultation meeting. A pamphlet inviting residents to the meeting and outlining the achievements made, will be delivered to all households in the last week of February.

Village Conservation Area Appraisal – the draft prepared by Cllr. Clark and Cllr. Crump is nearly complete. The next stage will be for the Borough Conservation Officer Penny McKnight, to write it up in a formal document and issue it for public consultation. The conservation area boundary currently stops at Whitesytc Lane. Cllr. Clark and Cllr Crump proposed that the boundary should be extended beyond this to include all the older cottages on Sandon Road. It is also proposed that the boundary is extended to the north of the village along Hall Lane and behind Lower Farm in order to protect the strip farming and the Hilderstone Hall moat and fish ponds. The conservation officer Penny McKnight is also proposing to move the boundary through The Meadows, bringing it further in to the village centre. **Resolved: there were no objections to these proposals.**

Once completed and approved the conservation area appraisal will form the back bone of the Hilderstone Village Plan.

The biennial scarecrow competition will take place the weekend of the 7th and 8th of June 2014. A jumble sale to raise funds for the village Christmas party will be held on Saturday 22nd March 2014 at 2.00pm. The village website events diary is looking a little empty at the moment. The clerk will email the main village groups to remind them to keep the website up-to-date with event details.

Cllr. Jones reported that she had been notified that an application for a large wind turbine at Cotwalton is to be submitted. This is likely to be visible from Hilderstone. Although the application will fall within the Stone Rural parish boundary, Hilderstone Parish Council can still comment on it.

Cllr. Crump reported that her position as a Governor at Green Lea School has been renewed and she will continue for another three years.

13. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th February 2014 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.10pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 26.02.14