

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22nd July 2015 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. M. Shelley (Vice Chairman) and Cllr. H. Woodward. Kerry Ashdown, a journalist from the Staffordshire Newsletter was also present throughout the meeting.

1. Chairman's Welcome. Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

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

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

4. Matters arising. Matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. The need for more rural housing highlighted at a recent seminar is unlikely to affect small villages such as Hilderstone unless a demand for existing residents from within the village can be clearly demonstrated. There is little to report from the Borough Council currently as it is the main holiday period.

Other local parish councils have expressed their concern about the safety of the Hardiwick crossroads. It was noted that two new road safety signs have been installed on Sandon Road in the last couple of weeks. Cllr. Parry has notified Hilderstone Parish Council that the other safety measures which were proposed are programmed to be installed this year, but the timing is dependant on external contractor schedules. The County Council is keen to ensure that all the safety measures are installed at the same time in order to maximise their effectiveness and also the efficiency of delivery. The road markings in Hilderstone village should be refreshed at the same time.

The road name sign on Farm View which is on the wall of a house, is still scheduled to be moved to a more suitable location.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report.

7. Planning. No new planning applications in July.

The application for the additional roof-lights at The Bower on Sandon road had encountered some difficulties due to the house being in the curtilage of the listed Lower Farm and also the conservation area. The conservation officer is not keen on more roof-lights being installed near to the existing ones as this would be detrimental to the agricultural character and appearance of the original building. The applicant has been advised to withdraw the current application and submit a new one after liaising with the planning officers. Cllr. Harp has spoken with the planning officers and has advised the applicant on the issues accordingly.

There is still local concern that the stables on Cresswell Road are not being occupied by horses yet and that the building may be used for residential purposes. People with concerns that the building is being used as a domestic residence will need to obtain sufficient evidence and keep a log of any such activity for a period of at least two weeks before Enforcement will investigate further. Cllr. Harp said it was highly unlikely that the stable block would ever receive planning permission to be converted into a dwelling house.

There is still no progress with the Bird in Hand and due to current regulations the owner cannot be forced to complete it or demolish it. Cllr. Harp has recently asked Borough Officers to request that the builder's advertisement banner was removed from the construction site.

The date for the conservation area appraisal exhibition in September has yet to be finalised. It is still planned to hold a village consultation forum on the same evening where villagers will be able to raise any other village matters with the Parish Council.

Status of Earlier Applications:

15/22411/HOU Whitesytc House, Whitesytc Lane. Proposed garage extension to the side with bedroom above and utility/kitchen extension to the rear. **PENDING DECISION.**

15/22176/HOU Hillcrest, Sandon Road. Conversion of space over exiting detached garage to form dependant relative accommodation. **APPROVED**

15/22275/LBC The Bower, Sandon Road. Installation of four additional conservation roof-lights to provide natural light to upstairs room. **WITHDRAWN.**

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. Speeding traffic and the number of heavy goods vehicles are still an issue in Hilderstone. The Hilderstone Speedwatch Team has now ceased operation because there is no Co-ordinator and also disillusionment amongst the volunteers caused by the lack of support from the Safer Roads Partnership. Although Cllr. Clark had received a response from the Police and Crime Commission, Matthew Ellis about this issue, no further progress appears to have been made. The Chief Constable still has not replied. The speed and traffic volume data provided by the Hilderstone Speedwatch team was very useful in proving to the authorities that these are real issues for the village. Cllr. Clark commented that the village may have to accept that no further measures will be taken by the Police and Highways Authority to reduce the speed and volume of traffic through Hilderstone. Further action may only be taken if there is an accident classed by the Police as 'serious' in the village. It was noted that there appears to be more construction traffic travelling though Hilderstone in recent months this could be related to works on the A34 around Stafford. There are also more quarry lorries travelling from Cheadle via Hilderstone.

The children's speed awareness posters have been re-printed onto boards and placed around the village. It was agreed that the clerk should order two more posters to be placed in other suitable locations.

The road defects on Hall Lane and Whitesytc Lane have still not been repaired; Cllr Ian Parry has recently reported that the budget cuts at Staffordshire County Council are having an effect on the way in which Highways are having to prioritise jobs. There are a number of road signs through the village that are being obscured by overgrown hedges. The clerk will arrange for the vegetation around the signs to be cut back under the Highways Agreement.

The Villagers Voices for Staffordshire Moorlands group are to have another meeting in August to discuss if anything else can be done to reduce the impact on the approved plans for the industrial park extension and new housing estate at Cresswell. The group has requested that other local parish councils attend the meeting. It was agreed that Hilderstone will send a representative to the meeting.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. The new bench has been installed in the infant play area. It was agreed that another bench could be purchased to replace the one on Roebuck hill which is reaching the end of its life.

There are several hedges around the village which are over-hanging the main road and public pavements. The clerk will write to the householders concerned requesting that the hedges are cut back. Cllr. Davies will ask the contractor to give the hedge on footpath 4 at the side of the Churchyard a hard cut back. This will be done after the end of August.

The missing plank from the bridge on footpath 7 has been reported but has yet to be repaired. The clerk has received a letter from the Rights of Way Department saying that owing to budget restraints, repairs which pose significant health and safety issues or form part of a promoted route will take priority over the summer. Other repairs and general footpath maintenance will be carried out when resources are available.

The Best Kept Village results presentation evening will take place on Monday 3rd August at Stafford College. Cllr. Harp, who is a Best Kept Village judge said that the competition was again very close with only half a point separating the top villages. Volunteers should not become disheartened if they do not win or get a placing as the standard is very high in most of the villages.

10. Village Events The recent village fete raised £430.00. There were approximately 80 adults and 20 children at the fete. It was disappointing that more villagers did not run stalls and activities, although it was good to see Hilderstone Hall Care Home represented.

The event on Saturday 12th September to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the village hall will be free to all villagers and this will include a hog roast, soft drinks and a disco.

11. Correspondence July 2015.

- Letter re: consultation on proposed changes to the Archive Service and newsletter.
- Letter re: Walkwise Programme.
- Information about the SPACE Children's activity programme.
- Members' Digests 209

Members' Digest 208 (Cllr. Jones) - Borough Cllr. P.W. Jones has been elected as Mayor for the ensuing municipal year at the Annual Council Meeting held at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre on 16th May 2015. All leaders appointments in The Cabinet were also allocated at the meeting.

Matters relating to landscaping at the former Bird in Hand site have been resolved. This relates to planning applications 07/08560/OUT and 11/16077ext.

From 6th April 2016 all dogs over eight weeks old must be micro-chipped by law or owners could face a fine of £500. Stafford Borough Council are currently offering free microchipping vouchers to the first 200 owners who contact them. Owners should email dogs@staffordbc.gov.uk or telephone 01785 619000. The vouchers can only be used at The Island Veterinary Practice in Stafford or their Stone practice.

The Food Standards Agency currently has a national campaign to reduce food poisoning from chicken. More information can be found on the agency website:

www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/campaigns/chicken-challenge-summer

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £6297.54 in credit and the deposit account £3118.73 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. Creative Bee Ltd, Printing of Five Children's Speed Awareness Posters - £150.60.
2. Mrs H. Howie, Clerk's Expenses and Cost of New Bench in Infant Play Area - £246.67.
3. Mr W H Holmes, Village and Highways Maintenance - £159.00.
4. Cllr. J. Crump, Best Kept Village Poster Competition Voucher Prizes - £30.00.

The clerk had received confirmation from the external auditor Grant Thornton that the annual return for 2014-2015 has been approved. The Village Christmas party grant application of £550.00 has also been approved by Cllr. I. Parry from his Local Community Fund allocation.

13. Any Other Business.

It would appear that the Hilderstone Children's Club has currently folded due to a lack of volunteers to run sessions. The clerk will put a request in the next Parish Magazine and on the village website for more volunteers to see if the group can be resurrected. It was agreed that the village appeared to be losing momentum again with regards to running village groups and activities.

There is a problem with persistent barking from a few dogs in the village. The clerk will place a reminder in the next Parish Magazine that this can be stressful for neighbours and that owners have a responsibility to check that their dogs do not bark for long periods especially when dogs are left alone in the house. Where proven persistent dog barking can be classed as a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Health Act and owners can be fined.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th August at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.30pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 26.08.15.