

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22nd October 2014 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. J. Crump, Cllr. A. Harp, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, and Cllr. M. Shelley (Vice Chairman). Cllr. A. Stringer joined the meeting at 7.45pm. There were no 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 and Cllr. Woodward.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.
- 4. Matters arising.** Work at the Bird in Hand appears to have ceased again.

The Neighbourhood Highways Team were not in the village on the scheduled date and none of the work specified has been done as of today. The clerk will check with Rob Steele if they have been delayed. The hedges and road defect on Whitesytch Lane have also yet to be actioned. The clerk will check the lead-time with Highways.

The poor broadband speed in Hilderstone is unlikely to be resolved in the near future. Cllr. Clark reported that because BT owns the local exchange it effectively has a monopoly control over the line speed. Residents who have a broadband contract with other companies may therefore have a much lower broadband speed than if they are with BT. Cllr. Clark has managed to get released from his contract with Talk, Talk. Cllr. Crump said that she has switched to EE. Even when the Staffordshire Superfast Broadband Project is rolled out to Hilderstone, there is unlikely to be a significant improvement unless the exchange is upgraded.

Cllr. Clark and the parish clerk had attended the recent Parish Forum meeting at Stafford Borough Council. This covered the topics below:

Staffordshire Policing: Matthew Ellis, The Police and Crime Commissioner had reported that by March 2015, an extra 7000 hours per week will be available for front-line policing. This will be achieved by all police officers being issued with a tablet on which they can directly log crime information etc. without having to return to the station and complete various forms. The importance of community policing is recognised and the PCSOs should be visiting the parishes more regularly again. Another parish council asked Mr Ellis about how Speedwatch groups will be supported and stated that their own group was not receiving any feedback from the Safer Roads Partnership. Mr Ellis agreed that the current situation was not working very effectively and that a review is currently underway. He promised that the Safer Roads partnership, Police and Speedwatch groups will be better co-ordinated in the near future.

2015 Elections: The General, Borough and Parish elections will all take place on 7th May 2015. There will be a short period of around 10 days during which parish councillors will be able to get their nomination forms completed and returned to the elections office. It was noted that Parish Councillors will be responsible for returning their own nomination forms to the elections office in case of any errors. The clerk will be attending an elections training session in February and will then be able to brief councillors on the process and information required. The clerk is required to publicise the parish elections and notify local residents that they are entitled to be nominated to stand for election. If there is a contested election the costs to the parish will be in the region of £2000 - £2500. The final recommendations for the Borough's electoral boundaries have been submitted and are awaiting approval.

The New Plan for Stafford Borough: This was formally adopted in June 2014 and currently forms the basis of planning decisions. Unfortunately The Plan has been subjected to a legal challenge by Gladman Developments Ltd who are challenging the required housing numbers stated in the plan. If the legal challenge succeeds, The Plan will no longer be valid and the

Borough may be required to deliver more than the 10,000 houses stated in the plan. The Borough Council will also have difficulty in preventing speculative planning applications.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. Stafford Borough Environmental Health and the Environment Agency have been involved in the issue of muck spillages on Hall Lane. It is hoped that this problem has now been addressed.

There have been several cases of fly-tipping locally and the Borough Council is considering putting up warning signs that CCTV cameras may be in the location. Cameras have been used successfully in other locations around the Borough.

If the New Plan for Stafford Borough stays in place, the planning officers have been asked to give due consideration to the design of buildings. It is important that new buildings look attractive and remain so in the long term. It is important that all parish councils comment on the design of new buildings when they receive applications for consideration.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications October 2014:

14/21172/HOU Dingle Lane Farm, Dingle Lane. Addition of single storey garden/summer room to side of house. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to these plans. Although the house has previously been extended and the garden room will mean that the total footprint of the property will be increased by slightly more than the 70% allowable, the Parish Council feels that this will not have a detrimental impact on neighbours or the character of the area.**

14/21189/HOU 8 Roebuck Court. Single storey side and rear extension. **Resolved: The parish Council has no objections to these plans as it feels that the extension will not have a detrimental impact on neighbours or the character of the area.**

SMD/2014/0576 Blythe Business Park . Expansion of Blythe Business Park and 168 houses. **The Parish Council will await further information about this application, but in principle it is against it due to the possible increased traffic through Hilderstone village resulting from it.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

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

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

A local resident is concerned that the stables on Cresswell Road are not conforming with the approved plans. The resident will be asked to liaise directly with the enforcement officer on the issue.

Conservation Area Appraisal Progress: Cllr. Clark had asked at the Parish Forum when Hilderstone was likely to get some feedback on the appraisal information submitted to the Conservation Officer. This enquiry was to be passed to the conservation officer but a reply has yet to be received. It was hoped that a public consultation meeting about the proposed conservation area could be held by the end of this year, but this is now unlikely.

Cllr. Clark asked the parish council to consider whether there should be another village consultation meeting in March 2015. A decision will be made on this at the November meeting.

8. Traffic and Highways. Cllr. Stringer reported on the recent meeting she had attended at Staffordshire County Council about the new infrastructure contractor Amey. Amey has merged with Enterprise and will be responsible for delivering highways and other infrastructure services. Cllr. Stringer's report from the meeting is attached to the minutes at Appendix One.

Cllr. Clark, Richard Pilcher and the parish clerk had met with Matthew Ellis the Police and Crime Commissioner on 16th October. County Cllr. Parry was also present at the meeting. The main issues raised were:

The frequency of PCSO visits to Hilderstone – Mr Ellis said that he hoped that by March 2015 there will be more hours available for community policing due to the new technology that is being rolled out. Parishes should receive more frequent visits from PCSOs or officers. He said that he would look at how often the PCSO/officers had been to Hilderstone in recent months and if this was not satisfactory he would request a more regular visit as soon as possible via the Local Commander. Since the meeting with Mr Ellis the PCSO has enquired about having a desk at the monthly village market so that members of the public could raise any local issues with him.

Recent agricultural muck spillages – Cllr. Clark described the police response to the recent muck spillage on Hall Lane and said that this was not satisfactory. Mr Ellis said that he would be interested to know why the officers had not given this incident more attention. He agreed that muck spillages and also inconsiderate driving by a minority of the farming community was a problem across the county. There was also an issue about some agricultural vehicles having no number plate and therefore being difficult to identify when they are committing an offence. Cllr. Parry suggested that the Parish Council contact the National Farming Union for advice about these issues.

Speeding traffic and the Safer Roads Partnership support to Speedwatch – Mr Ellis and Cllr Parry both agreed that the Safer Roads Partnership support to local Speedwatch groups is unsatisfactory and also that the camera vans visits to rural villages should be more frequent. The Safer Roads Partnership is currently under review, but Mr Ellis cannot currently say how long it will be before improvements will be seen.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Shrubs from a private house are over-hanging footpath 14 on the section from Brompton Croft to Barns Croft. The Clerk will write to the household concerned.

It was noted again, that unless there is a co-ordinator for the Best Kept Village Team and a highly organised system of ensuring that each judged area of the village is maintained to the highest standard, Hilderstone is unlikely to win the Best Kept Village Competition. The villages that have won in recent years have 'military-style' teams of volunteers who meticulously attend to each area of their villages. It was agreed however that Hilderstone will continue to be entered in the competition as it helps to keep the village in good condition and fosters community spirit.

10. Village Events:

- Coffee Morning – Saturday 22nd November, 10.00am – 12.00am in the village hall.
- Village Christmas Party - Tuesday 9th December, 7.00pm in the village hall.
- Children's Club Christmas Party - Saturday 13th December, 11.00am – 1.00pm in the village hall.
- Village Christmas Concert – Saturday 20th December, 7.00pm in the village hall.

11. Correspondence Received October 2014

- Minutes from Parish Forum on 25th September 2014
- Members' Digest 200
- Newsletter from Police & Crime Commissioner

Members' Digest 199 (Cllr. Jones) – a large part of this digest highlighted the need for the Borough Council to produce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) policy as a priority.

Approval has been given to creating a temporary planning officer post in Forward Planning to assist with the increased workload of the team. The new post will deal with future housing needs (including affordable housing) and policies relating to development and conservation. The post will be for a period of 24 months at a cost of £33,000 and part of this cost will be funded by fees from the recent influx of planning applications.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £8673 in credit and the deposit account £3117 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. Mount Nurseries, Daffodil Bulbs for the Village - £70.00.
2. Funtastic Entertainments, Children's Club Christmas Party - £230.00
3. Mrs H. Howie, Clerk's Expenses and Overtime - £53.04
4. Cllr. R. Clark, Printer Ink and Mileage - £36.75
5. Mr W H Homes, Village Maintenance and Plants - £145.00

The second precept payment was received on 2nd October 2014. The County Councillor's grant of £500.00 for the village Christmas party was received on 7th October 2014. Thanks were expressed to County Councillor Ian Parry for this grant.

The draft Parish Council budget and precept request for 2015-2016 was considered. The clerk had prepared the budget and precept to show a 2%, 3% and 4% increase. It was agreed that a 4% increase was too high and that consideration will be given to 2.5% increase at the November meeting. The clerk will amend the draft accordingly and circulate it prior to the next meeting for final approval.

13. Any Other Business.

Cllr. Clark had recently attended a briefing meeting about the Stafford Borough Community Fund to which all parishes had been invited. Only three parishes had attended. The Fund will bring all sources of funding available to local voluntary groups under one body. The Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Service funding will be included. Grants from £150 to £30,000 will be available, although larger grants will require groups to raised match funding. Although no start date was given at the meeting for groups to apply for funding, it was agreed that the clerk should put details of The Fund in the next edition of the Parish Magazine.

Cllr. Crump asked the Parish Council to consider whether the village should have a community defibrillator. It was agreed that the clerk should investigate the cost of one and the associated training.

Cllr. Crump also raised the issue of the number of community signs around the village advertising events etc. It was agreed that the parish council would monitor the situation and ask for some to be removed if it was felt there were too many. It was also noted that the church alarm had been going off recently. Cllr. Clark said that this may be due to mice in the church, but the system will be checked.

Cllr. Jones reported that the recent jumble sale had raised £170.00. £80.00 will be donated to church funds and the rest will subsidise the village Christmas party costs.

14. Date of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th November at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 10.10pm.

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 26.10.14

Appendix One

Meeting concerning AMEY at Staffordshire County Council, 25th September 2014.

Officers who spoke at the meeting were:

Mark Deaville Cabinet Support member for Highways and Transport
Ian Wykes Commissioner for Rural Issues
Mary- Ann Rafferty Highways Programme Engineer

On behalf of Amey

Steve Jones Account Director Amey

Jo McNamara (female) Amey

Darren ? Was working for SCC now works for Amey

- Amey are due to start the contract on 1st October 2014. They are an amalgamation of Enterprise (contractor until 2014) and Amey. This company is owned by Ferrovial who operate Nationally and Internationally and according to Steve Jones able to afford to invest in their workforce, management systems, equipment etc. They work across a range of services including canteen services, airports, penal service, transport, rail networks. Amey apparently work with other councils (Hampshire, York, Manchester)
- Enterprise had a **maintenance** contract with SCC but the new contract is more holistic, covering **maintenance, public rights of way, street lighting, highways, country parks etc** (referred to as **Infrastructure**)
- They are introducing a new approach to scheduling works to be done called **SOM~ Standard Operating Model**.
- Jobs reported to the council will be **assessed**, then scheduled for action, using an IT software package they have developed, monitored, using the software package (they also have supervisors to inspect work being done/completed) and validated. They claim that they can then link up similar jobs in the area to be actioned at the same time thus saving time and money. They will also have an emerging historic data base of the area.
- PC should still use their community liaison officer (Chris Mitchell) to report environmental issues. Other issues - potholes, lighting straight to council
- After Xmas 2014 it should be possible to look up progress of issues reported on website.

AMS