

## Hilderstone Parish Council

### Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 at 7.30p.m.

**Present:** Cllr. Shelley (Chairman), Cllr. R. Clark, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, Cllr. A. Stringer (Vice Chairman) and Cllr. H. Woodward. Cllr. J. Crump joined the meeting at 8.30pm. Mrs K. Hulse, a member of the public. No members of the press were present.

**1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Shelley welcomed the councillors and Mrs Hulse to the meeting. Cllr. Shelley explained that Mrs Hulse was observing the meeting because she is considering becoming a Parish Councillor when a vacancy arises.

**2. Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. Davies and Cllr. Harp.

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

**4. Matters arising.** These were considered under the relevant headings.

**5. Borough Councillor's Report.** No report.

**6. County Councillor's Report.** No report

**7. Planning.**

#### New Planning Applications November 2017:

17/27352/HOU Malthouse Croft, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. Proposed utility room extension, new roof window to East elevation and alterations to existing forecourt. New application as Appeal for previous application has been dismissed. **Resolved: the Parish Council has no objections to this application.**

#### Status of Earlier Applications:

17/27280/ful Stone Heath, Sharpley Heath Road, Hilderstone. Proposed agricultural vehicle shed. **AWAITING DECISION**

17/26465/FUL Jesmonde, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. Detached dormer bungalow to rear of Jesmonde. Amended plans submitted. Skylights to rear of property removed and inserted in front of property in order to reduce loss of privacy to neighbouring property. **REFUSED BY COMMITTEE.** (Due to height and inappropriate design).

17/27068/HOU Stone Heath, Sharpley Heath Road, Hilderstone. Amended plans submitted. Variation of condition 2 on previous application. Alterations to internal first floor plan. **AWAITING DECISION.**

With regards to the drive and wall alterations at Copes Croft on Sandon Road; Cllr. Clark said that the Conservation Officer's comments about Article 4 Directives rarely being invoked due to a lack of staffing resources, is unacceptable.

**8. Traffic and Highways.** The 30mph flashing light on Sandon Road is not working properly again. The Clerk will report to Highways to see if can be repaired again. If it cannot, the Clerk will liaise with Cllr. Parry to see if it will be possible to have it replaced by the County Council. The Clerk reminded the Parish Council that the Police and Crime Commissioner is currently offering rounds of funding for road safety measures. The Parish Council may want to consider applying for this funding and purchasing its own Speed Indicator Device which it would have more control over. It could also access the vehicle speed data captured by these devices. Cllr. Clark agreed to look into the cost of purchasing and running one of these signs.

Cllr. Woodward stated that she felt that the traffic-calming build-outs are not working and are more of a hazard than a benefit to the village, especially at peak traffic times. Cllr. Cark reminded her that the evidence collected by Speedwatch had showed that traffic speeds had generally reduced after the build-outs had been introduced. Also there have been no accidents caused by the build-outs.

Cllr. Woodward also said that the build-outs regularly look untidy due to debris collecting around them. Cllr. Stringer added that the street cleansing services never clean round the back of the build-outs. The Clerk responded by saying that the road sweeper can not clear round the back of the build-outs and it is unlikely that the driver would be allowed to get out of the cab and clear it with a brush. Bill Holmes clears around the build-outs throughout the year, but the Clerk will ask him to check them on a weekly basis through the winter when the problem is worse. The Clerk re-iterated that due to the severe cuts to the Highways budget which has been discussed for the past two years, the Parish Council is likely to have to spend more of its own resources on general highways and village maintenance if it wants a persistently tidy local environment. This is the main reason that the budget and precept need to be increased significantly over the next few years.

**9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village.** The hedge around the Churchyard is still to be cut. The tree surgeon is aware that the trees on Roebuck bank need to be replaced and the various tree work jobs around the village are still on his list. It was agreed that given the cuts to the County Council Highways Environmental Maintenance services and the proposed increase in the precept charge, the village maintenance contractor will be required to carry out more work in the village. The Parish Council will consider the list of highways and village maintenance jobs in the New Year and discuss with the contractor.

#### **10. Village Events**

- Village Christmas Party on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm in the Village Hall. Tickets £9.00 from Hazel Woodward, Jean Jones and Phil Davies.
- Village Christmas Concert on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Now confirmed. Ticket details nearer the time.
- An Evening with Gail Morecambe on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 6.30pm for 7.00pm at Fulford Village Hall. Tickets £20.00 which includes a hot two course dinner. Proceeds to Fulford and Hilderstone Church Funds. This has nearly sold out.

The Murder Mystery evening in the village hall on 17<sup>th</sup> November was well supported. The coffee morning on 18<sup>th</sup> November was very successful and raised £1,000. The Remembrance Day parade was well attended this year.

#### **11. Correspondence.**

- Members' Digest 237

**Members' Digest 236 (Cllr. Jones)** Cabinet recently considered a report on progress regarding the Heritage Lottery Fund application for the restoration and enhancement of Victoria Park in Stafford. The report sought approval to spend a capital of £2,223,590 from the General Fund Capital Programme to undertake the project. The expenditure will include the construction of a new pedestrian bridge as part of the enhancement scheme. There was also a request for additional revenue expenditure of £21, 060 per year for five years from 2018/19. This is to cover increased management and maintenance costs of the buildings and the grounds; which is a condition of the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Tree work to address damage caused by a storm at Hilderstone Hall was approved by planning, as it is within the Hilderstone Conservation Area.

Taxi drivers have been warned that they risk losing their private hire licence if they seek fares illegally. Drivers are breaking the law if they take fares that are not pre-booked. This is

designed to protect customers from unlicensed and uninsured drivers and also promote fair competition between taxi businesses.

A senior borough councillor is warning litter louts after five people were ordered to pay a total of nearly £1,700 for littering streets in Stafford and Stone. Nearly 150 people have been fined for littering in Stafford Borough this year. It costs Stafford Borough Council approximately £1 million per year to keep the streets clean and the recently launched Litter Free Stafford Borough Campaign will take a zero tolerance approach to any kind of littering.

## 12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £10,516.36 in credit and the deposit account £3121.15 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. Mr W H Holmes, Village & Highways Maintenance plus winter bedding plants - £266.00.
2. Mrs H Howie, Clerk's Expenses & Mileage - £20.00
3. Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, Fee for Clerk's training on VAT - £20.00.
4. Cllr. H. Woodward, Village Christmas Party Costs - £500.00.

**2018-19 Budget and Precept Approval:** the Clerk had prepared a paper showing the effects of an overall 8%, 10%, 12% and 15% increase in the precept on Band D and Band G parish charges. After further consideration, it was agreed that the **annual** increase in charges to properties will be relatively small.

**Resolved: the Parish Council unanimously agreed a 12% increase in the precept charge to tax payers in the 2018–2019 financial year in order to ensure that village and highways maintenance are kept at acceptable levels. The resolution was proposed by Cllr. Woodward and seconded by Cllr. Shelley.**

The Clerk had attended the recent Value Added Tax (VAT) training course organised by the Staffordshire Parish Council's Association. Parish councils can claim the VAT back on some **non-business** expenditure, but this can be time-consuming administratively. Parish councils are also liable for VAT on business activities that generate over £5,000 of income per annum in total. Business activities include events such as the Village Christmas party, sales of history or information pamphlets. Hilderstone Parish Council does not currently exceed the £5,000 income threshold but it is important that this is monitored in the long term.

**13. Any Other Business.** Cllr. Clark reported that there has been general approval at the Church for the disabled access and refreshment area. The Church will need to obtain planning permission for this in due course. External funding is available to the Church for this project. Cllr. Clark also circulated the new policy on who can be buried in the Christ Church, Hilderstone burial ground. In general, people who have a strong, **long-term** connection with the village can be buried in the grounds, even if they move out of the village in their later years.

Cllr. Jones asked if the village defibrillator has ever been deployed in an emergency. Cllr. Crump confirmed that it had not.

Cllr. Jones commented that it was good to see that the Roebuck appeared to be busy most of the time.

**14. Date of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

..... Cllr. M. Shelley, Chairman. 24.01.2018