

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23rd March 2016 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), Cllr. A. Stringer and Cllr. H. Woodward. Kirsty James, a journalist from the Staffordshire Newsletter. There were no members of the public present.

1. Chairman's Welcome. Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors and Kirsty James to the meeting.

2. Apologies. None received.

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

4. Matters arising. The pothole at Little Stoke on the B5037 opposite the entrance to Aston Lodge has still not been repaired and is now larger and a couple of inches deep. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. In connection with the Clean for the Queen project, Stafford Borough Council are providing free red, white and blue litter pickers and waste bags to community groups. Cllr. Harp will arrange for 10 litter pickers to be sent to Hilderstone Parish Council for distribution to local volunteers. It was noted that littering in the countryside is worsening, with many local rural roads and lanes strewn with fast food containers, plastic drinks bottles and newspapers probably thrown from cars. The journalist from the Staffordshire Newsletter was asked if she could report on this problem.

Stafford Borough Council's Streetscene department also have a Pride in Your Patch award scheme that recognises out-standing efforts by local volunteers in maintaining their community to a high standard or delivering a notable environmental project. Parish councils can nominate an individual or group of volunteers for an award.

The new multi-storey Waterfront car park in Stafford town centre is now open. Many other car parks in Stafford remain closed as the re-development of the town centre continues.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report.

7. Planning.

New Applications March 2016

16/23792/FUL Hilderstone Garage, Hall Lane. Variation of Condition 2, proposing revised siting of vehicle storage building (previously approved on consent 12/17404/FUL). **Resolved: there were no objections to the plans.**

16/23802/HOU New House Farm, Hall Lane. Proposed domestic garage. **Resolved: there were no objections to the plans.**

16/23820/HOU Vernon Cottage, Sandon Road. Proposed single storey extension, first floor extension over existing garage/outbuildings and internal alterations. **Resolved: there were no objections to the plans providing the residents in the property to the rear of Vernon Cottage do not suffer any loss of amenity.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

16/23569/HOU The Bread Stores, Sandon Road. Proposed conversion of outbuildings to form extension to main dwelling. Amendments to previously submitted plans – more technical details provided on proposes windows. **APPROVED.**

15/23358/FUL Burns Cottage, Uttoxeter Road, Hardiwick. Variation of Condition 2 on application submitted in 2012. Addition of first floor dormer window to allow view across land to the South of the property. **APPROVED.**

16/23527/HOU 1 Spot Lane, Spot Acre. Amendment to previously approved plans. Now proposed outbuilding to include garden store, W/C and games room. 0.5 metre increase in length? **APPROVED.**

16/23540/LBC The Bower, Sandon Road. Installation of additional roof-lights to provide natural light to the first floor and retention of the stairs and first floor storage. **APPROVED.**

15/23433/FUL New Beech Tree farm, Moss Lane, Moss Gate. Proposed extension to the existing general purpose agricultural building. **APPROVED.**

APP/Y3425/A/14/2222107 (13/19630/FUL) Appeal lodged against refusal of wind turbine at Drumble Woods, Cotwalton. **STILL PENDING DECISION.** September 2015 Notified Bill Cash has asked for the appeal to be 'Recovered'. Decision process now underway and Stafford Borough Council (SBC) has been consulted on the Ministerial Statement. **SBC notified that a decision should be made by the Secretary of State by 18th April 2016.**

8. Traffic and Highways. There were two more accidents at the Hardiwick crossroads in one week recently, despite the new signs and road markings. Drivers are generally approaching the crossroads at too high a speed. It was also noted that the speed of traffic approaching Hilderstone on the B5066 from the Meir Heath is often far too high, especially on the Severn Trent/Cotwalton Road corner. It was agreed that the 30mph sign just before The Meadows junction needs to be moved much further out from the village to slow traffic before they approach the bend. It was also agreed that this should be raised with Cllr. Parry.

Some Hilderstone residents are assisting with raising funds for the legal challenge being made by Villagers Voice for Staffordshire Moorlands against the planning decision to expand the Blythe Business Park and build 170 new houses in Cresswell. Hilderstone Parish Council made the decision not to make a financial contribution to this fund, but local residents are entitled to support it if they so wish. Hilderstone Parish Council will continue to lobby the local Highways authority for measures to stop heavy goods vehicles travelling via Hilderstone if the business park expansion goes ahead. Cllr. Clark reported that he had observed very high volumes of traffic through Hilderstone during the peak early evening period. The current re-development of Stafford town and works on the A34 is probably causing additional traffic to come through Hilderstone, but it is difficult to see what measures can be taken to reduce this flow. Significant house building is planned in the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area around Leek, Cheadle and Draycott as well as Cresswell and this is likely to increase traffic flows around local rural roads even more in the longer term. Cllr. Shelley commented that Hilderstone has always been a direct route from the Moorlands area to Stafford and until local roads become completely grid-locked for long periods the Highways Authority are unlikely do to anything to alleviate traffic flows. People moving into rural villages on main roads need to familiarise themselves with traffic volumes at peak times before they make the decision to buy a house.

Hall Lane is still in a poor state with the many potholes still awaiting repair. The road drains on Cresswell Road near to High Elms still have not been repaired despite being marked up for several weeks.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. The tree removal and re-planting is now complete and there have been no complaints from members of the public. The trees near the Severn Trent works are in need of cutting back as they are severely over-hanging the pavement. The trees in question are on a piece of un-owned land and therefore the Parish Council will have to take responsibility for maintaining them. Cllr. Clark has received a quotation for the pruning of £230.00 (including VAT). **Resolved: the Parish Council will pay for the cost of these trees to be pruned.**

Cllr. Clark has written an article about the Best Kept Village Competition for the April Parish Magazine and the village website which requests all residents to take a pride in the village. The article also asks for more volunteer teams to be formed in each area of the village. If one person in each area can galvanise neighbours and friends into joining a group there is a high chance that Hilderstone can win the competition. The Church yard sessions will start again soon and these have proved very successful in the past. Cllr. Crump confirmed again that the Village Hall Committee has plans to improve the hall surrounds and are co-ordinating some volunteers. The Scarecrow Competition which is being held in June will add to the sense of community involvement.

10. Village Events

Jumble Sale, Saturday 9th April at 2.00pm. Donations of jumble gratefully received from 10.00am.

Film Night in the village hall, Friday 29th April at 7.00pm. The Theory of Everything.

Scarecrow Weekend, Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th June.

Grand Village Dinner Party, Saturday 21st May.

Village Fete, date to be confirmed soon. The Village Hall Committee may run an evening event after the Fete at the village hall.

Village Christmas Party, date to be confirmed.

Village Market, last Saturday of each month apart from December.

The Queen's 90th Birthday will be celebrated nationally on 10th June 2016. It is not clear yet whether there will be an event to celebrate this, but the date coincides with the Hilderstone Scarecrow weekend on 11th and 12th June. Cllr. Crump suggested that a party could be held in the village hall on the Saturday evening if there are people willing to organise this.

11. Correspondence March 2016.

- Notice of Crime and Commissioner's Election on Thursday 5th May 2016
- Members' Digest 218

Members Digest 217 (Cllr. Crump) – The only item of interest to Hilderstone was that The Roebuck public house is still on the Register of Assets of Community Value.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £7699.96 in credit and the deposit account £3119.76 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 H. Howie Clerk's Expenses, Mileage & Annual Home Office Allowance for 2015/16 - £184.70.

The Church has received a sample of a multi-faith book which has been published to commemorate the Queen's 90th Birthday. It is called Hope Together and the forward is written by the Queen. Copies of the booklet can be purchased for £1.00 each and the Church would like to give one of these to each household in Hilderstone. The Church has asked if the Parish Council will make a donation towards the total cost which will be approximately £250.00. **Resolved: the Parish Council will donate £125.00 towards the cost of the booklets. Cllr Crump abstained from voting on this matter.**

As discussed at the February meeting, information regarding the new external audit regulations which will be in place from 1st April 2017 had been circulated to all the parish councillors prior to the March meeting. **Resolved: Hilderstone Parish Council will not opt to have an external audit in addition to the internal audit and the new transparency requirements for smaller authorities.**

13. Any Other Business. Cllr. Crump reported that the adopted telephone box at Cresswell has an 'Information Centre' sign around the top which draws more attention to it. It was agreed that the Hilderstone telephone box could do with a similar sign, but perhaps one sited in the side panes of glass so that key heritage features of the box are not removed. This would be re-considered at a later date.

Cllr. Clark reported that since the last meeting the Parish Council has been notified that the Superfast fibre optic broadband cable has now been installed in Hilderstone. This will only improve speeds for residents living within 2-3km of the British Telecom cabinet on Sandon Road. Those living nearest the cabinet will get the highest broadband speeds. Residents must get in contact with their broadband provider in order to subscribe to the improved service. There are now several broadband providers able to offer the service in Hilderstone and residents should negotiate to get the best deal. The Superfast Staffordshire project officers will be holding an information session in the village hall on Thursday 7th April between 10.30am and 12noon to advise residents about the new service and how to obtain it. Cllr. Stringer has agreed to be present at the session on behalf of the Parish Council as Cllr. Clark is unavailable during that week.

14. Date of next meeting.

The date for the Village Forum was changed from the evening of Wednesday 11th May to Wednesday 18th May 2016 due to councillor availability. The Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 25th May at 7.00pm; prior to the normal monthly meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th April at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.40pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 27.04.16