

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23rd July 2014 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. Alison Thomas a journalist from the Staffordshire Newsletter was present until 9.15pm.

- 1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. I. Parry.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, amended for typing errors, approved and signed.
- 4. Matters arising.** With regards to the builder's lorry seen unloading materials in the field on Cotwalton Road, it is thought that a shed might now be under construction. There was also a fire there yesterday, which was billowing out black smoke. Cllr. Harp said that he would ask the Borough Council Enforcement Department to investigate this. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.
- 5. Borough Councillor's Report.** Very little to report as it is the summer period when many officers and councillors are on holiday. Whilst minor modifications are still being made to the New Plan for Stafford Borough, the majority of it is being used in deciding new planning applications. The Plan should receive final approval at the beginning of August 2014.

Cllr. Clark commented that there has been no response from the conservation officer about the Hilderstone conservation area appraisal. Cllr. Harp explained that the temporary assistant conservation officer who was helping with the appraisals, has left to take up a permanent post with another council. Penny McKnight is too busy to do the outstanding appraisals and until the assistant's vacancy is filled there will be a delay. Committee approval must be given before the vacant post can be filled, but this shouldn't be a problem.

There have been quite a few requests from local residents for the mirror at the Bird in Hand to be replaced after the recent accident. Although the Highways Hotline staff have been telling people that it will not be replaced, Cllr. Parry has confirmed to Cllr. Clark that a new one should be in position by 27th July. It was noted that the rumble strips on the approaches to the Bird in Hand corner have been covered several times by top dressing works and now need re-applying. The clerk will report this to Highways.

6. County Councillor's Report. Cllr. Clark had met with County Cllr. Parry on 16th July 2014 to discuss various traffic and highways issues in Hilderstone which need addressing. The list of issues raised with Cllr. Parry is as follows:

Traffic issues in Hilderstone.

1. Cresswell Road and Roebuck hill build-outs – florescent reflectors not installed.
2. More early warning signs of road layout change on all roads leading into Hilderstone, especially on the B5066 from Meir where there is none. Also position one by Hall Lane junction and Sandon Road 30mph sign.
3. Hedges etc around existing signs need hard cutting back.
4. Fill in the potholes and resurface the area around Roebuck Hill build out.

5. Relocate the existing Speed Indicator Device (SID) sign to the 'narrows' adjacent to the Village Hall. Then make as permanent installation. Change existing SID signs to those used in Lincolnshire around Stamford, with yellow flashing lights indicating speed.
6. Change the flashing bend sign on Roebuck Hill for an addition yellow flashing SID as traffic approaches narrows.
7. Conduct another electronic traffic survey as undertaken in September 2013, in-order to compare improvements since the installation of the build-outs.
8. Reinforce the 30mph zone with signage along the stretch around Eastholme, both South and North bound.
9. Hardiwick cross roads – change GIVE WAY sign to STOP sign.
10. Install 40mph sections prior to all 30mph sections, especially from Cresswell and Meir.
11. Once all this is in place then support Speedwatch with positive Police van surveillance and not just at peak times. E.g. summer evenings?
12. Control the speed of JCB type road going vehicles, especially excessive speeds when lightly loaded.

It was agreed with Cllr. Parry that he would look into some of these issues and report on progress in one month.

7. Planning.

No new applications in July 2014

Status of Earlier Applications:

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

Blythe Business Park – no application as at 22.07.14

The Borough Tree Officer has been in contact with the Clerk to notify the Parish Council that the land owners are objecting to the proposed Tree Preservation Order (TPO) in the field on Cresswell Road. The objection is to the TPO being placed on the ash trees but not on the oak trees. **Resolved: the Parish Council is still in favour of all the trees in the proposed TPO being protected, as this line of trees forms an attractive 'gateway' feature to the village. Removal of the trees would be detrimental to the attractiveness and amenity of the village.**

The new owner of the bungalow on Roebuck Bank has contacted Cllr. Clark to ask if the Parish Council would agree to him pruning and thinning out the trees at the top of the grass bank opposite the property. It was agreed that the trees are currently an attractive village feature and the parish council would not want all of them removed. It was noted that thinning out of trees can sometimes result in more wind damage and that this might lead to the roots being loosened. If removed the property owner would still not be able to see over the hedge to the countryside beyond. **Resolved: the Parish Council would like the trees to remain but will seek the advice of the Borough Tree Officer on appropriate long term maintenance.**

8. Traffic and Highways. A large amount of slurry was dropped on Hall Lane and Cresswell road a few days ago by a contractor working for a local farmer (who has been identified). The spillage was due to the trailer being over-loaded with slurry. The police have been notified and they have contacted the farmer who was asked to clear it up. Mud on the roads in the parish is a persistent problem and some local farmers do not seem to take their duty of care towards public road users very seriously. **Resolved: the Parish Council will discuss this issue with**

the Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis to see if stronger action can be taken against repeat offenders. Cllr. Harp also suggested that the Parish Council gets in contact with Cllr. Winnington at Staffordshire County Council, as he has been in contact with the NFU and CLA with regards to land-owners' responsibilities.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Cllr. Davies still has not received a reply from Stone Ramblers with regards to the fingerpost for footpath fourteen but he will continue to chase them on this. Cllr. Davies will walk all the local footpaths in the coming weekends to check if anything needs doing. The yew hedge which borders footpath four at the side of the church needs cutting; the PCC will book the contractor who cuts the hedge.

Cllr. Crump reported that some of the shrubs in the private gardens on Farm View and Roebuck Court are overhanging footpath fourteen. The clerk will write to the householders asking them to cut any overhanging shrubs back.

Cllr. Clark and Cllr. Crump had visited Green Lea School to present the certificates and prizes for the Best Kept Village Poster Competition. All the children were given a certificate and first and second prizes were awarded in each of the two age categories. Cllr. Crump said that they had been made to feel very welcome and that the children enjoyed having visitors to the school. The Best Kept Village award evening will take place on Monday 4th August at Stafford College. Cllr. Davies, Bill Holmes and one of the volunteers will attend on behalf of Hilderstone.

10. Village Events The Church Summer Fete had been very successful with attendance figures much higher than in recent years. £600 was raised for church funds. The new location on Sandon Road had proved very popular with local residents and it was good to see many families walking to the fete through the village. There had been lots of new volunteers this year who had helped to set up and clear away; this had made the job much easier. It is hoped that there will be more stalls and activities next year, especially for the younger children. Thanks go to the Church Committee, especially Phil Davies for organising the fete, more volunteers to run stalls and help organise the event are always welcome.

The next village event will be the 100th Year Commemoration of World War One on 2nd and 3rd August. On Saturday 2nd August there will be a sing-along plus games for the children. On Sunday 3rd August there will be a church service which will begin with a procession by the children. It is hoped that local war memorabilia will be on display throughout the weekend. The Harvest Festival Supper will be held on Monday 6th October, 7.00pm in the village hall. This will be followed by an auction of produce afterwards. Proceeds will go to the church funds.

11. Correspondence Received July 2014 :

- Email re: Theme Park Safety.
- Letter re: Library Consultation
- Information re: Individual Electoral Registration
- Invitation to Borough First World War Commemoration Service 02.08.14.
- Members' Digest 197

The email about theme park safety had been circulated electronically to all the parish councillors prior to the meeting. Its contents were acknowledged. It was noted that as a percentage of all the people visiting theme parks, accidents and injuries were still probably relatively low. The Parish Council felt that it was not in a position to take any further action and that members of the public could make their own considered decision about whether to visit theme parks.

Staffordshire County Council is consulting on the re-shaping of the local library service. At the moment there are no plans to close any libraries, but the County Council wants to look at how the service and under-used libraries can be improved and run more efficiently. There will be a series of drop in sessions and more formal presentations across the county at local libraries.

The consultation is open until 7th October 2014. More information can be found at: www.staffordshire.gov.uk/connectedlibraries.

Members Digest 196 – More work needs to be done in integrating HS2 into the existing rail network. The Borough Council's view is that this link is vitally important for Stafford Borough and North Staffordshire. Without the link, services to and from Stafford may become less frequent and take longer. Concern has also been expressed in the Higgins Report that the deletion of the Handsacre link at Lichfield, despite saving several hundred million pounds, would have a profound impact on the services running between Stafford and London.

The wind turbine application at Drumble Woods was refused at the planning committee, despite the developer Hallmark Power asking for the decision to be deferred so that they could submit further information. In addition to a high number of objections to this planning application, a petition of 1800 signatures had been collected from members of the public who were opposed to it.

12. Finance. The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £5796.89 in credit and the deposit account £3117.17 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. Hilderstone Village Hall Management Committee, Concurrent Funding - £404.00.
2. Hilderstone PCC, Concurrent Funding - £404.00.
3. Cllr. J. Crump, Best Kept Village Poster Competition Prizes - £30.00.

The external auditor Grant Thornton has approved the Parish Council Annual Return for 2013-2014. This along with the Notice of Conclusion has been published on the village notice boards and the village website as required. There will be no external audit fee payable for 2013-2014 as the Parish Council's income for that year was less than £10,000.

13. Any Other Business. Cllr. Woodward reported that on a recent visit to Stafford Town Park with her grandchildren that she had been very impressed with the recent refurbishments and the high standard of maintenance in the park. The park was very busy with at least 400 visitors. A litter picker was in attendance throughout her visit and all the park staff were pleasant and helpful. Stafford Borough Council should be commended for the park. Cllr. Clark reported that the litter and rubbish at the North end of Stafford Town Centre, mentioned at the June meeting, has now been cleared. It is hoped that this will be maintained.

It was noted that there are a high number of residents' cars parked overnight in the village hall car park on a regular basis. These are taking up spaces needed for those using the village hall. Cllr. Crump, said that the village hall committee has been trying to deal with this problem for sometime. A few of the residents are paying a fee to park there, but most are not. Notices had been placed on the cars asking them not to use the car park but these are being ignored. A locked gate would no longer be practical due to the access required to the rear of Horseshoe Cottages. Cllr. Crump said that the village hall committee will try to seek legal advice on this issue.

Cllr. Crump said that she had noticed an increase in the number of motorists travelling through the village using their mobile phones. Unless a photograph showing the driver using the phone and the car registration can be obtained there is little that can be done to stop this.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th August 2014 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

..... Cllr. M. Shelley, Vice-Chairman. 27.08.14