

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th February 2016 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. J. Crump, Cllr. P. Davies, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. I. Parry, Cllr. A. Stringer and Cllr. H. Woodward. There were no members of the public or press present.

- 1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. Harp, Cllr. Jones and Cllr. Shelley. Cllr Davies joined the meeting at approximately 8.00pm.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.
- 4. Matters arising.** Cllr. Woodward presented the accounts from the village Christmas party which 90 people had attended and enjoyed. She thanked Cllr. Parry for the grant contribution which he had made towards the party, from the County Councillors' Community Fund. Cllr. Woodward also reported that building work at the Bird in Hand site has re-started. It is hoped that this development will now be fully completed.

The tree felling on Roebuck Bank is complete but the tree stumps still have to be treated so that they do not grow back. It is hoped that the new trees will be planted by the end of February. There has been some damage to the emerging daffodils but this can be made good in the autumn with some new bulb planting.

Cllr. Jones has recently moved to Fulford but is still able to serve on Hilderstone Parish Council because her new address is within three miles of the parish and she resided in Hilderstone Parish for the whole of the twelve months preceding the last parish election.

Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

- 5. Borough Councillor's Report.** The Borough Council is unable to provide hard copies of the Hilderstone Conservation Area Appraisal document due to lack of resources. The Parish Clerk will arrange for the printing of eight hard copies (one for each parish councillor and one for the clerk).
- 6. County Councillor's Report.** Cllr. Parry reported that the County Highways Department is falling behind on maintenance jobs and he plans to meet with the relevant officers soon to ask what can be done to improve the situation. Cllr. Parry hopes that the Speed Indicator Device near the Church will be moved in 2016. The Parish Council is pleased that an illuminated pedestrian warning sign has been installed near to Dingle Lane where there is no pavement.

The Parish Council raised the issue of blocked road drains on Cresswell Road and the poor state of the ditches on Whitesytch Lane. Cllr. Parry said that due to the severe restrictions on current highways resources, the County Council is going to struggle to keep on top of these problems. Ditches are the responsibility of the adjacent landowner and there are many areas around the County where ditches are being neglected. This is often due to the landowner having a lack of resources to clear the ditches, financial difficulties facing farmers or land being rented out to tenants who do not clear the ditches. Cllr. Parry agreed that ideally the landowners should be forced to clear the ditches where they are causing a flooding problem, but many landowners simply ignore letters and ultimately the County Council does not have the resources to take them to court. The County Council has to prioritise main A and B roads for maintenance as these carry the most traffic. It was noted that there is a very large pothole opposite the access road to Aston Lodge at Little Stoke which has needed attention for some time.

The owners of the potential quarry land around Moddershall have lodged an appeal against the emerging Staffordshire County Council Minerals Plan which excludes this site. Cllr. Parry will represent the views of local residents during the appeal process (which is not open to public comment).

Cllr. Parry asked if there is any value in local Parish Councils coming together to discuss common issues such as community transport schemes, rural health or possible economies of scale on village maintenance. Cllr. Clark commented that his experience from attending similar meetings was not very positive; but Hilderstone Parish Council would consider attending if a meeting on a particular topic of interest was organised.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications February 2016

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 proposed windows. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to the amended plans.**

15/23358/FUL Burns Cottage, Uttoxeter Road, Hardiwick. Variation of Condition 2 on application submitted in 2012. Addition of a first floor dormer window to allow a view across land to the South of the property. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to the plans.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

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. **AWAITING DECISION.**

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. **AWAITING DECISION.**

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

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. Reported under item 6.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Cllr. Davies reported that all the stiles in the Cotwalton lane area are in good working order apart from one near to Wooliscroft Farm which has been notified to the Rights of Way Officer. All the hedges on footpath 14 from the infant play area to The Meadows have now been cut and it is hoped that householders will maintain these on a regular basis throughout the year. The maps and lecterns on footpath 14 are in need of replacement. It was agreed that the clerk should obtain prices for replacing these with metal or plastic structures; which should need less maintenance than wood.

There is still a need for more Best Kept Village Competition volunteers in order to focus on winning the competition. Cllr Stringer suggested that a few organised sessions in key areas of the village might encourage more residents to join the group.

A resident has reported to the Parish Council that there is a problem with dog fouling on Whitesytch Lane and has asked whether a waste bin can be installed to encourage dog

owners to bag and bin the mess. It was agreed the Clerk would make enquiries with Streetscene at the Borough Council to see if there is a suitable location.

10. Village Events The last film night at the village hall was well attended. Forthcoming events are as follows:

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

Film Night, Friday 29th April at 7.00pm. The Theory of Everything.

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

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.

11. Correspondence.

- Copies of the Updated Electoral Register
- Members' Digest 217

Members' Digest 215 (Cllr. Crump) pp4.5-4.7 Stafford Market. Presentation from the Head of Planning and Regeneration on initiatives aimed at the promotion of Stafford Market. A discussion following this included the tenure of the Market Manager, there was also concern over the general condition of the market etc. Head of Planning and Regeneration updated the committee on the progress against the recommendations from the Stafford Market Task and Finish Review. This covered the review of the management structure to the encouragement of younger people to use the market with the provision of WiFi.

Litter louts fined a total £2100. Three women seen by a Stafford Borough Council officer dropping cigarette butts on the street were handed fixed penalty fines. The fixed penalties were not paid so the women were taken to court and given higher fines plus costs.

Members' Digest 216 (Cllr. Crump) p.4.6 Information on budgets. Presentation of Healthy Staffordshire Hub given to the Health Scrutiny Committee.

T1 Sycamore fell. T2 Sycamore reduce co-dominant westerly stem to approx 2.5m high to branch junction point to remove encroachment towards Lea House. Granted.

p6.11 Businesses in Stafford reminded to make sure they display "no smoking" signs at all entrances to their premises. Owners warned they could face a £200 on the spot fine or a maximum fine of £1000 in court

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £7455.40 in credit and the deposit account £3119.63 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. Community Council of Staffordshire, Best Kept Village Competition Entry Fee - £15.65.
2. Mrs Helen Howie, Clerk's Expenses and Mileage - £25.29.

From the 2017-18 financial year new audit procedures will be in place. Parish Councils with an income of less than £25,000 will no longer be required to submit the Annual Return to an

external auditor. Small parish councils will still be required to have an internal audit and publish (on a website) all the information which has previously been submitted to the external auditor. In effect, the Parish Council is still required to carry out the same amount of work as before. Parish Councils can choose to have an 'external audit' and a decision on whether to go down this route must be made by 31st March 2016. Choosing to have an external audit would effectively introduce a third level of audit under the new system and an additional cost to the Parish Council. As Hilderstone Parish Council is very small in terms of income and has had no issues with the audits for the last six years, it seems unnecessary to choose to have an external audit. It was decided that as there were only four parish councillors present at this point in the meeting, a final decision would be made at the 23rd March 2016 meeting.

13. Any Other Business. In addition to the Annual General Meeting, the Parish Council must hold an annual Parish Meeting (or open village forum) at which parishioners can raise matters of interest or concern. This meeting must normally be held in May. A provisional date of Wednesday 11th May 2016 was suggested and will be confirmed at the next Parish Council meeting.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 23rd March at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 23.03.16