

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2014 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. P. Davies, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, Cllr. A. Stringer and Cllr. H. Woodward. Kerry Ashdown a reporter from the Staffordshire Newsletter was present throughout the meeting. There were no other members of the public present.

- 1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. Crump and Cllr. Harp.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting.** Page three, paragraph 5: the jumble sale will raise funds for the church as well as the village Christmas party. The minutes were then approved and signed.
- 4. Matters arising.** Dealt with under the agenda headings.
- 5. Borough Councillor's Report.** No report.
- 6. County Councillor's Report.** No report. It was noted that Cllr. Parry has yet to respond to the list of highways issues raised by Cllr. Clark at the meeting on 16th July 2014.
- 7. Planning.**

New Planning Applications September 2014:

No new formal plans had been received from the Borough Council.

Dingle Lane Farm. Some pre-application discussions had taken place between the owners of Dingle Lane Farm and Cllr. Clark and Cllr. Harp. The owners wish to replace the existing porch with a much larger conservatory. The preliminary plans that have been drawn up were considered by the Parish Council. There were no objections as it was felt that there would be no detrimental effect on neighbours or the character of the area. Formal plans will need to be submitted to the Borough Council. As the house has already been extended by 70% the planning officers may refuse permission; Cllr. Harp may have to 'call it in' for a Committee decision to obtain approval.

Status of Earlier Applications:

14/20494/COU Land off Dingle Lane Hilderstone. Proposed Garden Extension at Bank Cottage. **PERMITTED.** There is no indication in the conditions that original village boundary fence should be retained as requested by the Parish Council. The clerk will query this with the planning officer.

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

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

Trees

Western Power Distribution were in the village recently to survey the trees on Roebuck Bank that are growing near to the power cables. Cllr. Clark spoke with the team leader and agreed on the most appropriate programme of pruning. Two trees will be removed completely, the rest will be pruned so that there is at least a one metre clearance from the cables. No work is to commence without prior notice to Cllr. Clark. It was noted that by law, Western Power Distribution can overrule the Borough Council and the Parish Council if it can be shown that

trees are likely to interfere with the power supply. Some of the trees further down the bank which are not near to the power cables will also need pruning soon; the Parish Council will need to arrange for this to be carried out by another tree surgeon.

The Borough Tree Officer has agreed for the long boughs on the oak tree in the churchyard to be cut back to reduce the weight loading near to the crack. The Church PCC has received the formal permissions and can now go ahead with organising a tree surgeon to do the work.

8. Traffic and Highways. Further complaints have been made recently to Cllr Clark about frequent agricultural muck spillages on Hall Lane. It is thought that same farmer is responsible for all these spillages. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation and will keep raising the issue with the local police.

The hedge bordering Peakshill Farm on Whitesytc Lane is still very overgrown. The clerk will report to Highways for action. The road surface near to the cattery on Whitesytc Lane is in a very poor state. This will also be reported to Highways.

A meeting with The Police and Crime Commissioner Mr Matthew Ellis has been arranged for Thursday 16th October at 7.15pm in the village hall. All parish councillors are welcome to attend, but the meeting will not be open to the public. The purpose of the meeting is to raise the following local issues with Mr Ellis:

1. Speeding traffic and the current status of police camera van visits (which are not deemed sufficient)
2. Irresponsible behaviour by some local farmers with respect to speed and muck spillages.
3. Local PSCO/Officer visit to Hilderstone (which have not been very frequent in the last couple of years).
4. Any other local crime issues such as anti-social behaviour.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Cllr. Davies is still trying to get hold of the contractor who cut the yew hedge for the Church to ask him to cut it back further. Most of the private hedges on Footpath 14 have been cut, apart from the one belonging to 7, The Meadows. The clerk will write to the property owner to request that it is cut. The Highways Neighbourhood Team will be in the village on 30th September and 1st October. They have been asked to tidy up Cotwalton corner, cut back the nettles next to the School House and if they have time clear the weeds on Dingle Lane.

The Best Kept Village Judges' Report has been received. Despite only getting a Highly Commended certificate this year the report was very good with very few negative comments. The Community Council covering letter indicated that the standard was very high this year and that only a small margin separated the best villages. It was agreed that Hilderstone is capable of winning the small village category but only if there is a strong co-ordinator who can identify problem areas and direct the volunteers accordingly. The co-ordinator must be a village volunteer and not a member of the Parish Council.

10. Village Events The village market was not held this month but the organiser has indicated that she does want to continue with it. It is hoped that another market will be held before Christmas. The next event is the jumble sale on 27th September followed by the Harvest Supper on 6th October. The Christmas concert is to go ahead again, with the first rehearsal/auditions on 8th October. The village Christmas party is on Tuesday 9th December and the Children's club Christmas party is on Saturday 13th December.

11. Correspondence Received September 2014 :

- Agenda for Parish Forum on 25th September 2014
- Members' Digest 199

Cllr. Clark has received an email from the SuperFast Staffordshire broadband project saying that there are unlikely to be any improvements to the broadband speed in the Hilderstone area before 2015. Cllr. Clark has been told by TalkTalk that the speed is unlikely to improve above 2.0 Mbps due to the age of the local exchange. Currently the average speed appears to be 0.38 Mbps despite some residents paying for 16 Mbps!

Members' Digest 198 (Cllr. Jones) – Stafford Borough Council's net revenue budget for 2013/14 was set by the Council in February 2013 at a net expenditure of £12, 635 million. The table shows that actual net expenditure was £13,109 million, £474,000 more than budgeted. Investment income was £18,000 less than expected due to continuing low interest rates in the investment market. There was also a loss of income in the following areas: Alleyne's Swimming Pool, Environmental Health, Parking Fees, Revenues and Benefits and Parks and Open Spaces. As the Council's current policy is to retain a working balance of £1 million , £885,000 will be available to support the revenue budget going forward.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £4602.38 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, office space and storage - £80.00
2. OVH Limited, village website hosting fee for 6 months - £38.95
3. Royal British Legion, Remembrance Day wreath donation - £25.00

Cllr. Stringer has reserved eight of the ceramic poppies that are currently on display at the Tower of London. The intention is for these to be displayed in Hilderstone Church to represent the soldiers from Hilderstone who fought in the First World War. The poppies cost £25.00 each plus postage and packing and 10% of the proceeds go to relevant charities. The poppies will not be released until after Remembrance Day. **Resolved: The Church and the Parish Council will each pay 50% of the cost of the poppies.**

The clerk will prepare the draft budget for 2015-2016 for the October 2014 parish council meeting.

13. Any Other Business.

It was noted that some more building works appear to have taken place at The Bird in Hand recently.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd October 2014 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.15pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 22.10.14