

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25th March 2015 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. There were no members of the press or public present.

1. **Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
2. **Apologies.** Cllr. I. Parry.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.
4. **Matters arising.** The purchase of a village defibrillator is still on hold until the clerk has been notified whether the forthcoming parish election is to be contested. Cllr. Harp reported that there may be some Government funding available for village defibrillators. The clerk will investigate. Other matter arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.
5. **Borough Councillor's Report.** There is currently little to report from the Borough Council due to the forthcoming Borough elections on 7th May. There will be two Borough councillors for the Milwich ward. Cllr. Harp and Cllr. Beatty are currently standing for election for the Milwich ward. If successful Cllr. Harp will cover the North of the ward and Cllr. Beatty the South.

Cllr. Harp has continued to pursue the issue of the incomplete development at the Bird in Hand, with the Borough enforcement officers and the Health and Safety Executive. The Health and Safety Executive has stated that it has no powers with regards to such situations. The Enforcement Department is currently trying to contact the owner to try and find out what his intentions are. Cllr. Harp said that these situations are not easy to resolve and can take some time to sort out. Cllr. Woodward reported that she had recently spoken to the owner's brother who said that the owner felt that he might not be able to sell the other properties on completion due to other new builds in the area. The owner has recently moved to Wales and it appears that he does not currently intend to complete the development. Cllr. Clark said that it would be preferable if the incomplete buildings were demolished and the site left clear in order to improve road visibility and make it safer for drivers.

The New Plan for Stafford Borough which was challenged by a developer; has been deemed sound by the High Court.

6. **County Councillor's Report.** Reported under Item 8, Traffic and Highways.

7. Planning.

No new applications in March

Status of Earlier Applications:

14/20397/OUT Outline application for four bed detached house on land at the rear of the Old Chapel Cowleasow Lane. **APPLICATION MADE INVALID. APPLICANT REQUIRED TO SUBMIT AMENDED PLANS**

SMD/2014/0576 Blythe Business Park . Expansion of Blythe Business Park and 168 houses. **OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION APPROVED BY THE PLANNING COMMITTEE (COUNCILLORS).**

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

APP/Y3425/A/14/2222107 (13/19630/FUL) Appeal lodged against refusal of wind turbine at Drumble Woods, Cotwalton. **PENDING DECISION. THE APPEAL INSPECTOR VISITED THE SITE ON 17.03.2015.**

Cllr. Clark and Cllr. Stringer met with the Borough Conservation Officer to finalise the conservation area boundary and plan. Cllr. Clark thanked Cllr. Crump who was unable to attend this meeting, for her contribution to the conservation area appraisal process. The conservation area boundary has now been extended to include Hilderstone Hall, grounds and the fields behind it. Also included in the conservation area are: the strip farming in the fields on the edge of the village, some of the houses at the top of Whitesytch Lane and all significant gates and fences in the village, including the metal railings around Lower Farm. Every household within the new conservation area will receive a letter about it during April and it is hoped that a public consultation event will be held in May.

As noted above, the extension to the business park and new housing development at Cresswell has been granted outline planning permission by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The planning officers had recommended it for refusal but the Committee of councillors voted for it to be approved. Hilderstone Speedwatch have written to Bill Cash, Eric Pickles and Staffordshire Moorlands asking for full planning permission to be refused, if this is possible. Speedwatch have requested that the Parish Council do the same. It was noted that if this development goes ahead it could result in up to 100 extra vehicle per hour in Hilderstone at peak times, including many more HCVs. Three of the parish councillors felt that there is a need for more housing and employment in the area and they abstained from voting on the matter. **Resolved: The parish council will write to Bill Cash, Eric Pickles and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council asking them to take into consideration the likely increase in traffic through Hilderstone should the development go ahead.**

8. Traffic and Highways. Since the last parish council meeting County Cllr. Ian Parry had confirmed by email that safety improvements will be made to the Hilderstone crossroads as follows: "Replacing and repositioning the existing VAS junction warning signs, upgrading other signs on the side arm approaches as necessary, improving the visibility splays at the junctions, additional SLOW markings where necessary and remarking all other existing lines."

Cllr. Parry had also organised a meeting on Tuesday 24th March 2015 to address local traffic issues which included other parish councils. Cllr. Parry feels that addressing traffic issues in Hilderstone might simply move the problems to other neighbouring villages or parishes. Cllr. Clark went through presentation he had made at this meeting about the traffic issues Hilderstone faces and why the parish has continually raised these with the County Councillor. Although separate notes to the meeting will be circulated at a later date, Cllr. Clark summarised that the current priorities for Hilderstone were to request that all road markings in the village are refreshed and that the Speed Indicator Device near to the church is relocated to the centre of the village opposite the village hall.

The drain cover on Whitesytch Lane has not yet been repaired; the clerk will chase. The tarmac around the manhole cover on Hilderstone Road at the junction with The Meadows also needs repairing. The 30mph flashing sign on Sandon Road is not working properly. The clerk will report both these jobs for action.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Cllr. Davies has reported the finger post on Cresswell road and also another stile in need of repair to the Rights of Way Officer. He will continue to walk the rest of the footpaths over the coming weeks. Footpath 14 between Brompton Croft and Hilderstone Road is in need of tidying. The pavement on Hilderstone Road opposite Mistletoe Cottage needs clearing of the shells from the overhead trees. The clerk will ask Bill Holmes to carry out these jobs. The Neighbourhood Highways Team is scheduled to be in the village for the end April to tidy the pavement and verges on the Severn Trent corner, edge the grass and tidy the pavement on Roebuck Bank.

The clerk has entered the Best Kept Village Competition and will email the volunteers to ask if they will continue to help. Cllr. Crump will collect the Best Kept Village posters from Green Lea

School on Monday these will be judged at the next Parish Council meeting and then displayed in the bus shelters by the end of April, ready for the first round of judging. It was agreed that the Best Kept Village signs are in need of replacing and that Cllr. Clark should arrange for these to be re-printed (approximate cost £100). Cllr. Crump has asked John Wareham if he will re-paint the phone box.

10. Village Events The monthly village market will be held again this Saturday 28th March. Cllr. Davies reported that this has been well attended so far this year. The Harvest Supper will be held on Monday 5th October 2015, 7.00pm for 7.30pm in the village hall. The clerk will arrange for this date to go on the village website.

11. Correspondence March 2015.

- Information re: Police & Crime Commissioners Fund.
- Members' Digests 205.
- SPCA Gazette.
- Thank you letter from Erin Brown for Speedwatch Poster Competition voucher prize.

Members' Digest 204 (Cllr. Jones) A special Borough Council meeting was held on Monday 12th January 2015 about Stafford Hospital. The Leader of The Council introduced the report and provided some background information explaining why this special meeting had been convened. It was reported with great sadness that the specialist legal opinion received from the Barrister appointed to examine The Council's challenge to the decision to transfer services from Stafford Hospital, stated that there was no prospect of legally challenging the decision at this time. The Council was advised however to keep up their vigilance and efforts in respect of this matter.

A man from Meir Heath has been fined a total of £150 for fly tipping. There were more than 350 reports of fly tipping in 2014 which cost the Borough Council £140,000 to clear up. The Borough wishes to send a clear message that people caught fly tipping will be fined and prosecuted. The public is urged to notify the Borough Council if they have information which could lead to those responsible for fly tipping to be held accountable. The costs involved in clearing fly tipping could be better spent improving the local environment for residents.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £5749.39 in credit and the deposit account £3118.08 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 R. Pilcher, Speedwatch Administration Expenses 2014-15 - £43.50.
2. OVH Limited, Village Website Hosting Fee April – Sept 2015 - £38.95.
3. Mrs H Howie, Clerk's Expenses, Mileage & Overtime - £193.33.

The clerk has received the annual return papers from the external auditor, the deadline for submission is 6th June 2015. The internal audit of the accounts and annual return will take place on 12th May and the Parish Council will need to approve these at the Annual General Meeting on 20th May. The new Transparency Code for smaller parish councils requires the clerk to publish more financial information from 1st July 2015. Although from 2017 there will be no requirement to submit the annual return to an external auditor, parish councils will still be required to prepare and publish financial information in the same format as the annual return. The clerk will therefore, have the same amount of work relating to the end of year accounts.

13. Any Other Business.

Cllr. Woodward commented that she hopes the village residents will continue to support the Roebuck and that business will increase during the spring and summer months when more people are out and about. The parish council unanimously agreed.

Cllr. Jones asked if the Church had made a decision on where the World War One ceramic poppies will be placed. Cllr. Stringer reported that the Church has agreed to have a competition amongst residents to determine this.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd April 2015 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.30pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 22.04.15