

## Hilderstone Parish Council

### Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 7.30p.m.

**Present:** Cllr. Clark (Chairman), 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 public or press present.

1. **Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
2. **Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. J. Crump.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.
4. **Matters arising.** The post box near the Bird in Hand has yet to be replaced although the brick work surrounding the old box has been removed. Royal Mail has said that the box will be replaced. It has been confirmed that the three trees which were cut down on Hilderstone Road were badly diseased and Highways had been involved in the decision to fell them on public safety grounds. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.
5. **Borough Councillor's Report.** The Borough Council is busy at the moment but most of the work does not directly impact on the parishes. Some of the parishes that have decided to develop a neighbourhood plan are running into difficulties. This is a very expensive and complicated process and not really necessary for those parishes that are not ear-marked for major house building projects in the New Plan for Stafford Borough. Cllr. Clark re-iterated that Hilderstone Parish will not be developing a neighbourhood plan. The village conservation area appraisal should form the basis for any planning decision once this has full approval at the Borough Council. Cllr. Harp notified that the Parish Council that the Conservation Officer, Penny McKnight will be leaving the Borough Council in the near future but this should not delay approval of the Hilderstone conservation area appraisal.
6. **County Councillor's Report.** No report.

#### 7. **Planning.**

No new planning applications in November 2015.

#### Status of Earlier Applications:

15/23020/HOU Beech Tree Byre, Moss Lane, Hilderstone. Retention of timber frames parking/store building. **AWAITING DECISION.**

15/22901/HOU 1 Spot Lane, Spot Acre. **Amended to single storey garden store, W/C and games room. APPROVED.** The building dimensions are more or less within permitted development rights. Officer states it is difficult to prove harm to the green belt and not detrimental to the character of surrounding buildings or rural area.

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 has been consulted on the Ministerial Statement.**

The Parish Council is disappointed that the owners of Bank Cottage on Dingle Lane have removed the wooden village boundary fence as part of their garden extension. In their original discussions with the Parish Council they had stated that they would retain it. The Planning Department has been notified of this and also that the new garden area has been brought into use. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the Planning Department will consider it expedient to take enforcement action, especially as most of the planning conditions related specifically to the boundary hedges rather than the wooden fence.

It was agreed that councillors would continue to keep an eye on the stable block on Cresswell Road to ensure that it is not being used as a dwelling by the owner.

Cllr. Clark has submitted a request to the Borough Tree Officer for permission to remove the self-seeded trees on Roebuck Bank. These will be replaced with up to seven smaller trees which should require less long-term maintenance as well as being more attractive. The cost of removing the existing trees will be £720.00 (including VAT). The cost of the replacement trees including planting will be approximately £330.00 (including VAT). Cllr. Parry has agreed to provide a grant of £720.00 from his County Councillor's fund towards the total cost of this project. The Parish Council will need to fund the balance. **Resolved: the Parish Council agreed that this project should go ahead and that it will fund the balance to cover the cost of the new trees and planting.**

**8. Traffic and Highways.** A local resident has notified the Parish Council that the white line at the side of the road opposite Dingle Lane (where there is no footpath) has not been replaced after the road re-surfacing works. The resident felt that this posed a safety issue for pedestrians. Cllr. Clark said that the white line was not intended to act as footway marker but to high-light the side of the road and keep vehicles away from the property boundaries. It was agreed however that the Parish Council would like this white line reinstated if possible and the Clerk was asked to contact Cllr. Ian Parry to request this.

Villagers Voices for Staffordshire Moorlands are mounting a legal challenge to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) on the validity of the decision made on the recent planning application at Cresswell. They are currently trying to raise £15,000 to cover the initial legal costs. Information about their fund raising campaign which includes a local lottery and a Just Giving donation page had been sent to the clerk. **Resolved: It is not appropriate for Hilderstone Parish Council to become involved in the legal challenge to SMDC or to donate funds to this cause.** Hilderstone Parish Council is still concerned about the increase in traffic that might be generated through local villages as a result of such development. Hilderstone Parish Council will continue to request that the local planning and highways authorities ensure that adequate measures are put in place to stop additional heavy goods vehicles travelling through Hilderstone if the development should go ahead.

**9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village.** Cllr. Davies reported that most of the hedges on footpath 14 between the infant play area and The Meadows have now been cut. Cllr. Davies will contact the Rights of Way Department to see if they will write to the owners of 7 The Meadows who have still not cut their hedge. The yew hedge on footpath 7 near the Church has been cut back hard. Maintenance work has also been carried out on the oak and four yew trees in the Churchyard. The final bill for this work was £540.00 (including VAT). The Parish Council had previously agreed to pay for half of this cost, but as the Church has also had to pay for a recent leak to be repaired and water damaged carpet to be replaced, it was agreed that the Parish Council would increase its contribution to the tree work to £400.00.

The 2015 Best Kept Village Competition judges' report was encouraging but there are a few areas in the village which could be improved. It was agreed that more attention needs to be focused on the village facilities, particularly the village hall surrounds. The clerk was asked to write to the Village Hall Committee in the New Year to request that more work is carried out on the hall surrounds and a larger floral display provided. The clerk will also write to the Roebuck landlord to ask if the floral display there can be expanded to provide more impact.

**10. Village Events.** The Village Christmas Concert is to be the pantomime Cinderella this year and promises to be very entertaining. Tickets for the Village Christmas Party on 8<sup>th</sup> December are selling well and preparations are underway.

Forthcoming events for 2016 include the Scarecrow Weekend to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Hopefully the village market will continue next year. Organisers are encouraged to

publish event dates on the village website, notice boards and in the Parish Magazine as soon as possible.

## 11. Correspondence.

- Letter from Staffordshire County Council re: Consultation on Countryside Parks and Green Spaces. Closing Date: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2016.
- Letter from Staffordshire County Council re: Winter Road Gritting Regime.
- Members' Digest 213.

Members' Digest 212 (Cllr. Jones) – Developers building in Stafford Borough will be asked to contribute towards the infrastructure in different ways. These requirements will be attached as conditions to the planning permissions. Stafford Borough Council has agreed to a land swap at Abbey Street, Stone to facilitate the expansion of the Mansion House Surgery.

A delegated refusal of the appeal has been made for the traveller site at Woodfield, Hilderstone Road, Spot Acre.

Stafford Borough Council working with the Police, continue to fight taxi and private hire drivers who are operating without the necessary licence and sometimes insurance. The Council is determined to clamp down on these offenders.

## 12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £8682.14 in credit and the deposit account £3119.25 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 W H Holmes, Labour & Plant Cost for Village Flower Boxes - £117.75.
2. Staffordshire Parish Council Association, Audit Training Course Fee - £20.00
3. Mrs H Howie, Clerk's Mileage and Phone Calls - £29.78.
4. Cllr. H Woodward, Village Christmas Party Costs - £500.00.
5. Mr S Down, Contribution to Churchyard Tree Surgery Work - £400.00.

**13. Any Other Business.** Cllr. Woodward commented that new road signs at Hardiwick crossroads should improve road safety, although there has been another accident there recently.

**14. Date of next meeting.** There is no meeting in December, the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.30 p.m. Cllr. Clark closed the meeting at 9.30pm thanking everybody for all their work during the year and wishing everybody a Happy Christmas and New Year.

..... Cllr. M. Shelley, Vice-Chairman. 27.01.2016