

# Hilderstone Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 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. There were three members of the public present for approximately the first half hour of the meeting.

**1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

**2. Apologies.** None received.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.

**4. Matters arising.** The three residents present wished to discuss the recent partial clearance of the trees on Roebuck Bank by Western Power. Residents living near to Roebuck Bank had been told by Western Power that all the trees would be cleared but the Parish Council had decided to restrict this work to a partial clearance and some pruning to reduce the height of trees near to the power cables. The Parish Council believe that the mature trees add to the character of the village. The residents asked if the Parish Council would reconsider the original decision and clear more of the trees as the leaves create a lot of debris on the pavement, block the road gulleys and the trees make cutting of the grass bank and hedge more difficult. It was noted that the Parish Council would have to bear the cost of any further work as Western Power were only duty bound to remove and trim trees interfering with the power cables. The residents said that they would be willing to carry out some of the work free of charge. **Resolved: that Cllr Clark would carry out a site visit with the residents early in the New Year to agree which of the smaller self-seeded saplings could be removed. The saplings to be removed will be marked with a cross. The larger trees will remain but the height of these will be reviewed periodically and reduced if deemed necessary.**

Relating to a comment made by the Police and Crime Commissioner at the 16<sup>th</sup> October meeting, Cllr. Shelley advised that agricultural vehicles generally only have one number plate at the rear of the vehicle.

The Church alarm has now been checked and is working properly; the mouse setting it off has been caught!

Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

**5. Borough Councillor's Report.** The planning application for the sun room at Dingle Lane Farm was approved at the last Development Control Committee. The Borough Council budget for 2015-2016 is currently being compiled and it is hoped that there will be no increase in the Borough Council tax again next financial year. Stafford Borough Council has handled the cuts in government grants very efficiently and has managed to avoid the large scale redundancies and severe cuts to services implemented by other councils across the country.

The Borough Council is currently going through the process of fighting the legal challenge by a developer to the New Plan for Stafford Borough. The Council can prove that it has a five year stock of land and it is hoped that it will be able to argue that the proposed new housing numbers are sufficient. It was noted that Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council do not currently have an approved development plan, which leaves them more vulnerable to speculative development. Some of the Parishes that decided to develop their own neighbourhood plan are realising how difficult and costly this process is; especially as they must have strong evidence to show that public consultation has been carried out at every stage.

**6. County Councillor's Report.** No report. Cllr. Clark will contact Cllr. Parry for an update.

**7. Planning.** Cllr. Clark, Cllr. Stringer and three members of the Speedwatch team had attended a recent meeting about the Blythe Business Park planning application. There were around 40 people at the meeting from a wide area around Draycott and Cresswell. Much of the discussion at the meeting centred around concerns about the amount of additional traffic which could be generated by the development. Draycott Parish Council initially seemed unsympathetic to the likely impact on Cresswell but as the meeting progressed they agreed to look at some of the issues raised. The main impact on Hilderstone could be an increased volume of traffic through the village as not all the new residents and employees will necessarily live and work at the development. There may also be an increase in the number of heavy goods vehicles through Hilderstone if suitable controls are not put in place. M.P. Bill Cash is 100% against the development. Cllr. Harp stated that objections to the development must be based on strong material planning grounds as current planning guidelines favour any new development that can be shown to be sustainable. It was noted that not all Cresswell residents are against the development as it is recognised that more jobs and new housing is needed. **Resolved: Hilderstone Parish Council will object to this application on the grounds that it could lead to an increase in traffic through Hilderstone village.**

#### **New Planning Applications November 2014:**

No new applications

#### **Status of Earlier Applications:**

14/21172/HOU Dingle Lane Farm, Dingle Lane. Addition of single storey garden/Summer room to side of house. **PERMITTED**

14/21189/HOU 8 Roebuck Court. Single storey side and rear extension. **PENDING CONSIDERATION.**

SMD/2014/0576 Blythe Business Park, Cresswell . Expansion of Blythe Business Park and 168 houses. **PENDING DECISION.**

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.**

**8. Traffic and Highways.** The Neighbourhood Highways Team were not in the village on the revised dates; the clerk will chase up. The reflectors on the traffic build-outs need cleaning; the clerk will ask Bill Holmes to attend to this under the Highways Agreement contract. The rumble strips at the Bird in Hand corner have been replaced.

Speedwatch are currently a little disillusioned with the continuing lack of feedback from the Safer Roads Partnership and also the co-ordination with the Police. The camera van has been in the village recently but the visits are still a bit infrequent and more communication with Speedwatch would probably increase the effectiveness of the visits. The Police and Crime Commissioner has promised improvements, but it is likely to be several months before these are seen.

Cllr. Clark asked Cllr. Crump to find out the postcode and grid reference for the village hall to make it easier for visitors the village to find the hall. This information together with the standing and seating capacity of the hall could then be put on the website and included in any other marketing materials.

**9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village.** Cllr. Davies has spoken to the contractor about the yew hedge bordering the churchyard. The contractor has said he will come out again to tidy it up. The clerk will liaise with Bill Homes on winter village and highways maintenance jobs for the next couple of months. It was agreed that the village will continue to enter the Best Kept Village Competition as this helps to foster a community spirit

and improve the village environment. The work on the oak tree in the churchyard has now been carried out, invoice to follow in the new year.

**10. Village Events.** The village market was well attended in October and another one is scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> November. Other forthcoming events are:

- Village Christmas Party - Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 7.00pm in the village hall.
- Children's Club Christmas Party - Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December, 11.00am – 1.00pm in the village hall.
- Village Christmas Concert – Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December, 7.00pm in the village hall.

#### **11. Correspondence Received November 2014**

- Members' Digest 201
- Donation Request from Citizens Advice Bureau

#### **Members' Digest 200 (Cllr. Crump)**

Pp1.1-1.8. Presentation by Sue Arnold, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. Detailed the Police Cadet Service for Staffordshire and Miss J Turner (a police cadet) gave an overview of her experiences.

Pp4.1-4.24. Update on Age Well and Work Well initiatives. Case Study of Tommy Burns (under Age Well)

Planning. Permit of tree work at Christ Church, Hilderstone.14/20965/TCA.

pp6.26-6.38 Parish Forum information – meeting held on Thursday 25 September 2014.

#### **12. Finance.**

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £7939.34 in credit and the deposit account £3117.69 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. Mrs H Howie, Clerk's Expenses - £36.12.
2. Cllr. H. Woodward, Christmas Party Funding & Donation - £500.00.
3. Citizens' Advice Bureau Stafford, Donation - £25.00.
4. Hilderstone PCC, Donation to Village Christmas Lights - £50.00.

As agreed at the last meeting the clerk had circulated a revised draft budget showing a 2.5% increase (as well as the previously discussed 2% and 3% increases). **Resolved: the Parish Council agreed a 2.5% increase in the precept charge to tax payers in the 2015 – 2016 financial year.** It was noted that the council tax base (number of households where council tax can be charged) often changes from year to year and this determines the actual total precept received by the parish council. The clerk has yet to be notified by the Borough Council of the tax base for 2015-2016 but will liaise with Finance to ensure that the increase to tax-payers is not more than 2.5%.

The clerk had investigated the likely costs of a defibrillator for the village. The British Heart Foundation offer part-funding to community groups but the parish council would have to contribute £400. Commercial prices for defibrillator start at around £1000 not including the cost of training. It was agreed that the clerk should contact the local First Responders Group for advice as it was understood that Fulford village had recently obtained a defibrillator for free.

#### **13. Any Other Business.**

The clerk had received entries for the Speedwatch Poster competition. The Parish Council judged these and awarded a first prize and two runner-up prizes. It was agreed that a W H

Smith voucher would be sent to each of the prize winners. The clerk will arrange for the posters to be printed in the new year for the Speedwatch campaign.

Cllr. Crump asked if the Best Kept Village certificates could at some point be put into one large frame to save wall space. It was agreed that this idea could be considered once space starts to become a problem.

Cllr. Clark suggested that another village consultation meeting should be held in the spring possibly on 15<sup>th</sup> April. It is hoped that by this time the conservation area appraisal will be ready for public consultation. The meeting will also consider the progress that has been made over the last couple of years and how residents would like to see the village develop further.

Cllr. Clark thanked all the councillors and the clerk for their commitment over the last twelve months and wished all a Happy Christmas and New Year. Cllr. Shelley thanked Cllr. Clark for his hard work and dedication to Hilderstone.

**14. Date of next meeting.**

There is no meeting in December. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.30pm

..... Cllr. M. Shelley, Vice-Chairman. 28.01.15