

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 28th January 2015 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. J. Crump, Cllr. P. Davies, Cllr. A. Harp, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, Cllr. M. Shelley (Vice Chairman), Cllr. A. Stringer. There were no members of the public present.

- 1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Shelley welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. Clark, Cllr. Parry and Cllr. Woodward.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.
- 4. Matters arising.** Cllr. Shelley reported that the Staffordshire Showground has two defibrillators which cost in the region of £1000 each plus the cost of the storage cabinet. These came with a training DVD and the defibrillators are apparently very easy to operate. The Clerk added that she had contacted Fulford First Responders who had advised that the British Heart Foundation is still offering partial grant funding to voluntary groups for defibrillators. Groups have to provide £500 towards the cost of the defibrillator plus the cost of the storage cabinet (which start at around £200). Fulford First Responders had stated that they can provide training free of charge to Hilderstone village. It was agreed that the cost of the defibrillator should be split between the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee. It was also agreed that further consideration of obtaining a defibrillator should be put on hold until after the end of May as the Parish Council may incur substantial expenses if the forthcoming parish election is contested.

Cllr. Crump informed the Parish Council that the postcode for the village hall is: ST15 8SF and the grid reference: SJ94 8345.

Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. The Borough Council budget for 2015-2016 will be considered in the coming week; there is no planned increase in the Borough council tax. The Borough Council has again been very prudent with the government funding it receives and is still managing to avoid wide-scale redundancies and severe service cuts. The Borough Council also has a 98% collection rate of council tax which is much higher than many other councils. The 2% it has difficulty collecting equates to 3,300 properties and many of these are public houses where landlords are struggling to cover all their overheads. The Borough Council does work hard to try and recover these debts through the courts where possible.

The Westbridge Park re-development in Stone should start in the next few months. The Borough Council is contributing a substantial amount of funding towards this project and much of this will come from monies levied on private developers carrying out the large scale building work in Stafford. As there will be a new public swimming pool built at Westbridge Park, the pool at Alleyne's School will close. The Borough Council will have more control over the new pool and this will give other schools in the area more opportunity to use it.

Cllr. Harp has recently liaised with the Borough Enforcement Officer on the state of the Bird in Hand re-development. There has been little progress on this build for several months and there are areas of the site which look unsafe as well as untidy. It is understood that the developer has moved out of the area and it might take some time for the Enforcement Officer to make contact with him and for action to be taken. The Enforcement Officer also visited the stable block on Cresswell Road just before Christmas in response to a complaint by a local resident that the block looked as though it was being converted into a bungalow. The Enforcement Officer has reported back that the block still conforms to the approved plans.

6. County Councillor's Report. Report provided under item 8 Traffic and Highways.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications January 2015:

14/20397/OUT Outline application for four bed detached house on land at the rear of the Old Chapel, Cowleasow Lane. **Resolved: The Parish Council objects to this application as the design is out of character with the surrounding properties and rural setting, it is also within the conservation area and it does not meet current local housing needs.** The village consultation survey carried out in 2012 showed that the main housing needs in the village are for low cost starter homes for adult children currently living at home and for retirement housing for local residents to downsize to. Moreover the Parish Council feels that there is already sufficient housing of this size within the village and there are several detached/family size properties currently for sale within the village.

14/21556/HOU Whitesytc House, Whitesytc Lane – alterations including garage extension to the side with bedrooms above and single storey rear extension to kitchen and utility area. **Resolved: the Parish Council has no objections in principle to this house being extended but would query whether the proposed extension meets the 70% rule as the property has been extended in the past. In addition, the Parish Council would prefer that there were no balconies or balcony style attachments to the windows as it feels that these are out of character with a rural setting.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

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

SMD/2014/0576 Blythe Business Park . Expansion of Blythe Business Park and 168 houses. **PENDING DECISION.** (To be considered at the Staffordshire Moorlands February Planning Committee).

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. Cllr. Shelley raised concerns about the recent spate of serious accidents at the Hardiwick Crossroads and said that the last accident was very nearly fatal. Although not present at the meeting, County Councillor Ian Parry had submitted a report by email to the clerk stating that due to these recent accidents the County Council Highways Department was now investigating the crossroads and carrying out a safety review. Cllr. Parry is making this issue a priority and intends to get safety improved. He must wait for the outcome of the investigation and the recommendations, but he checked progress last week and will report back to the Parish Council as soon as possible.

Speedwatch monitoring will resume soon after the winter break and they are to have a review meeting during February. Several wing mirrors have been found in the road near Roebuck corner and Richard Pilcher has suggested that these and other vehicle debris resulting from minor collisions should be made into a 'totem pole' in the centre of the village to warn drivers to drive with care. **Resolved: the Parish Council is not in favour of this idea as it feels it would look an eyesore in the village. It was noted that the Borough Conservation Officer might also be against this.**

Cllr. Jones reported that there is a drain cover on Whitesytc Lane requiring new tarmac around it. The clerk will report this to Highways.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Cllr. Davies will inspect all the local footpaths and stiles over the next few weeks to see if any repairs are required. A stile on Dingle Lane has recently being replaced presumably by the County Council Rights of Way Department. It was noted that Grandfathers' rights with respect to the use of pesticides are to be abolished on 26th November 2015 and all contractors carrying out weed-spraying and born

before 31st December 1964 will need to take a competence test and obtain a certificate. Bill Holmes had advised the clerk that if he decides to obtain the certificate he will need to increase his charges to cover the cost. If he does not, the clerk will need to find another contractor that is able to carry out weed spraying.

10. Village Events The village Christmas Party and village Christmas concert had both been well supported and very successful.

Another village market is to be held on Saturday 31st January 2015. The village website events diary is currently empty and village groups are urged to get their event dates on the website as soon as they can.

11. Correspondence.

- Information on funding for Youth Groups
- Information on the oil buying club
- Letter of thanks from a local resident.
- Members' Digests 202 & 203

Members' Digest 201 (Cllr. Jones) Stafford Borough Council is hoping to increase the supply of affordable housing across the borough. This may include the purchase of existing dwellings in need of renovation and empty homes. A mix of urban and rural provision will be required where a housing need is clearly identified. A senior borough councillor is urging home owners who have empty properties to work with the Council to avoid court action. The warning follows a case in which a property owner was fined £600 plus £100 costs for failing to provide the Borough Council with information regarding his vacant property. The Borough Council has a scheme which offers interest free loans to improve vacant properties so that they can be let or sold.

The Borough Council is stepping up its campaign on littering. A man in Stafford was fined £450.00 for dropping a cigarette butt after he ignored the initial fine of £75.00.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £6930.92 in credit and the deposit account £3117.95 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, Children's Club Hall Hire - £20.00.
2. Mrs H Howie, Clerk's Mileage and Expenses - £38.69.
3. Cllr. H. Woodward, Village Christmas Party Costs - £76.30.
4. Ven-Agri Services, Roebuck Bank Cutting - £270.00.
5. Cllr. A Stringer, 50% of Cost of Ceramic Poppies for the Village - £123.80.

13. Any Other Business.

Cllr. Stringer reported that the ceramic poppies to commemorate World War 1 have been delivered and she had brought one to the meeting to show the councillors. The Church has not yet decided where these will be displayed and she asked the Parish Council if they had any thoughts on this; no particular preferences were expressed other than in the Church. The Parochial Church Council will discuss this matter soon.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th February 2015 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

..... Cllr. M. Shelley, Vice-Chairman. 25.02.15