

Hilderstone Parish Council

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

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), Cllr. J. Crump, Mrs. H. Howie (Clerk), Cllr. J. Jones, Cllr. A. Stringer and Cllr. H. Woodward. Kirsty James a journalist from the Staffordshire Newsletter joined the meeting at 7.40pm.

1. **Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
2. **Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. Davies, Cllr. Shelley and Cllr. Harp.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting.** These were read, approved and signed.
4. **Matters arising.** The Clerk had contacted Royal Mail about the missing post box near the Bird in Hand and had been advised that it had been stolen (probably a metal theft). There had been a spate of such thefts across the country and the post box at the bottom of Airedale Road in Stone had also been stolen recently. At this stage Royal Mail was unable to state when the post box will be replaced. In order to ensure that the post box is replaced, the Clerk will place a request in the Parish Magazine asking those who use the box to notify the Parish Council. Kirsty James from the Staffordshire Newsletter said that she would also contact Royal Mail about the missing post boxes to see if and when they will be replaced.

Cllr. Crump queried the cost of the Royal British Legion poppy wreath, stating that the Women's Institute had purchased one at a lower cost. The Clerk said that Royal British Legion (RBL) classes the charge for the wreaths as a donation. As RBL is such a worthy cause, Hilderstone Parish Council has for the last few years agreed to make a slightly larger donation than that suggested. (£25.00 instead of £17.50).

Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. **Borough Councillor's Report.** No report.
6. **County Councillor's Report.** No report.
7. **Planning.**

New Planning Applications October 2015:

15/23020/HOU Beech Tree Byre, Moss Lane, Hilderstone. Retention of timber frames parking/store building. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objection to this application as the building is in keeping with the rural setting and is built on the site of a less attractive agricultural building.**

15/22901/HOU 1 Spot Lane, Spot Acre. **Amended plans submitted** for a single storey garden store, W/C and games room instead of a residential annexe. **Resolved: The Parish Council objects to the plans as it is opposed to garden development in green belt and conservation areas unless there is a clearly proved need for additional accommodation for a highly dependant elderly or disabled relative(s).**

Status of Earlier Applications:

15/22807/HOU Ash Grange, Sandon Road. Proposed extension to form wet room and garage extension. **APPROVED.**

APP/Y3425/A/14/2222107 (13/19630/FUL) Appeal lodged against refusal of the wind turbine at Drumble Woods, Cotwalton. **STILL PENDING DECISION.** September 2015 Parish Council was notified that Bill Cash MP has asked for the appeal to be 'Recovered'. This decision

process is now underway and Stafford Borough Council has been consulted on the Ministerial Statement. Stafford Borough Council is still against the application.

8. Traffic and Highways. Cllr Clark reported that the white lines through the centre of the village have now been completed and that the potholes at the Hall Lane junction have been filled and properly patched. It is hoped that the other road defects along Hall Lane will be repaired in the near future. The flashing road safety warning sign at Hardiwick Crossroads is working again and the flashing sign at the entrance to the village on Sandon Road now works at 30mph rather than at a higher speed.

It was noted that there had been a few instances of inconsiderate and dangerous parking around the village in recent weeks. The Clerk was asked to put a request in the next Parish Magazine for residents and their visitors to park with more consideration to other drivers and pedestrians.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. The residential hedges that border footpath 14 between the infant play area and The Meadows still have not been cut and are now severely over-hanging the footpath. The Clerk will write to all the householders again to request that the hedges are cut as a matter of urgency. If they are not cut within the next few weeks, the Parish Council will contact the Rights of Way Officer to see what enforcement action can be taken. It was agreed that it is disappointing that some residents do not appear to be motivated in keeping the village a tidy and attractive place in which to live.

Several mature trees have been cut down in the Parish in recent weeks without any reference to the Parish Council. Current information suggests that Highways sanctioned the felling of three trees on the B5066 Hilderstone Road between Balaam's Lane and Spot Lane. The Clerk was asked to contact Cllr. Parry to confirm if this information is correct. Some trees have also been cut down on garden land in the Eastholme area of the village. The clerk was asked to put a reminder in the next village magazine that trees over a certain age/trunk diameter within the conservation area must not be felled or pruned without the prior agreement of the tree officer at Stafford Borough Council.

Resolved: The self set trees on Roebuck Bank should be removed as they will grow into large trees that will need significant maintenance in the long-term. The Parish Council will pay for some smaller, ornamental trees to be planted in more suitable positions on the bank. Cllr. Clark will obtain a written quote from a local tree surgeon for the removal and replacement of the trees.

It was noted that the iron fence in front of Lower Farm is in need of painting. Cllr. Crump said that she may have some volunteers willing to help with this and also with the maintenance of the village hall surrounds. Cllr. Clark reported that the iron fence in the Churchyard which is a protected feature must also be maintained; this is another cost for the Church.

10. Village Events. The village Christmas Concert is to go ahead again on Saturday 19th December 2015 at 7.00pm in the village hall. Rehearsal dates have been released and although there was a good turn out for the first meeting, more singers and performers are required. The Women's Institute Christmas party will be held on Tuesday 1st December at 7.00pm in the village hall. The tickets for the village Christmas party are now available from Hazel Woodward, Jean Jones and Sue Stubbs at a cost of £8.50 per person. The recent coffee morning and Christmas fair raised £541.00 for the Nepal Crisis appeal. The monthly village market continues to be a success.

11. Correspondence Received October 2015.

- Letter from Stone Town Council re: Local Parishes Liaison Group. **Resolved: that Hilderstone Parish Council would not join this Group.**
- Minutes from Stafford Borough Council Parish Forum on 24th September 2015.
- Members' Digest 212.

Members' Digest 211 (Cllr Crump):

pp2.42-2.45 - Information on Bridge Street Pay On Foot Multi-Storey Car Park.
Charges: Up to 1 hour £1, over 8 hours £8, all day Sunday £1.50.

pp2.49-2.53 - Stafford and Surrounds Health and Well Being Strategy. The five key principles has been signed by the partners.

p6.8 - 15/22411/HOU Whitesytc House, Whitestych Lane, Hilderstone. Proposed garage extension to side with bedroom above and utility/kitchen extension at rear. Permit.

p6.25 - Article about Weston's battle with dog fouling. Weston aims to be the first village in the country to be free from this nuisance. Another resident fined £75 for not clearing up after his dog.

p6.26 - Man fined over £1000 for dumping builders' waste on a school playing field – response to an advert on Facebook to remove builders' waste for £60.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £8576.82 in credit and the deposit account £3119.12 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, Gravel and Labour Costs for Church Footpath - £116.38.
2. Mrs H Howie, Clerk's Expenses & Mileage - £20.68.
3. Mount Nurseries, Two Sacks of Daffodil Bulbs for Village Communal Areas - £104.00.

The draft Parish Council budget and precept request for 2016-2017 was considered. The clerk had prepared the budget and precept to show a 2%, 2.5% and 3% increase. **Resolved: the Parish Council agreed a 2.5% increase in the precept charge to tax payers in the 2016 – 2017 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 2016-2017 but will liaise with Finance to ensure that the increase to tax payers is not more than 2.5%.

13. Any Other Business. The Parish Council held a closed session at the end of the main meeting to discuss an issue in the village which required confidentiality. The Staffordshire Newsletter journalist was asked to leave at this point.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th November at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.30pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 25.10.15.