

## **Hilderstone Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2014-2015**

Each year we start, as a Parish Council, not knowing what is in store for the coming year and this last year was no exception. A number of elections will have taken place prior to this meeting including the General Election and Stafford Borough Council Elections. In the Borough Elections there was a reduction in the number of Councillors serving Stafford Borough. In our area this has resulted in two Borough Councillors covering an enlarged area – Cllr Frances Beatty and Cllr Andrew Harp. It is expected that Cllr Harp will continue to cover Hilderstone Parish. Then there has been our own Parish Council where the existing Councillors continue to serve unopposed for another four years.

Taking a lead from last year .....

### **Village Consultation**

To-date a Village Consultation meeting has not been arranged for two reasons. The first being the Elections and the second that over the last few months we have been finalising the *Conservation Appraisal for Hilderstone*. This Appraisal has to be put to everyone in the village and it is proposed to present this and have an Open Meeting with every householder invited so as to collect their opinions and consult with them on the direction the village might go in the next 5 years.

### **Traffic Calming and Speedwatch**

This topic has taken up a considerable amount of my time and the Parish Council time on what can be done to restrict traffic and vehicle speeds through our village.

County Cllr Ian Parry and I have attempted to have a meeting with other Local Parish Councils but, with very little outcome. (See Minutes of that Meeting).

Because of the volume of vehicles and speed we have started to have more traffic incidents. In this last year two serious accidents occurred at Hardiwick Cross Roads and more recently one KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) in the area we call '*The Narrows*' in the centre of the village by the Roebuck. The Police have to report on the accidents and Highways have then to consider what to do. If there was an easy answer it would be done but, in this case, in the main, these accidents are down to non-adherence to the speed restrictions through the village and commuters finding alternative routes to get to work. As Chairman I have written an article to this effect and it appeared in the May 2015 Parish Magazine.

The Parish Council would like the Police & Road Safety Team to take action on the results produced by Speedwatch and to also make their presence felt along the three roads approaching the village. We have written to Matthew Ellis the Police and Crime Commissioner again and the Police Chief Constable for Staffordshire to see what action they can take to help the village with this problem and support Speedwatch. This was part of their proposal in 2014 to co-ordinate these functions.

Compared to last year the volume of vehicles through the village has been reported to have gone up from 800/hr to over 1,000/hr during the two peak times during the day. The speeds are about the same between 35-40mph round Roebuck corner and 40-50mph along Eastholme and Cresswell Road but there are now more vehicles actually exceeding these speeds. We are now also starting to incur road side damage for example fences, railings and walls being hit by traffic and this is all to do with speed.

A further concern is the proposed Business & Housing Development at Cresswell. This could involve a further 160 houses being built and that would again place more pressure on our existing traffic problems. We have reported our concern to respective Government bodies and our local MP.

During the last week Richard Pilcher informed me that he is standing down as Co-ordinator for Speedwatch and, as no one has come forward to take his place, the last speedwatch session will be at the end of May.

#### **Website – [www.hilderstonevillage.org.uk](http://www.hilderstonevillage.org.uk)**

Our website continues to be another village asset in communicating not only to the village but to the wider world. Our thanks go to Stephen Ireland who maintains the website.

#### **Village Assets – Roebuck – Christ Church – Village Hall**

##### **Roebuck**

It is pleasing to report that the Roebuck Pub continues to remain open and, as the weather improves, it is hoped more passing trade will use it. It is open from 12 noon for food and refreshment and has become a meeting place for the Book Club, Coffee Mornings and entertainment.

##### **Christ Church**

The church was successful in meeting its reduced Parish Share target this last year but will continue to struggle as it now moves to having to pay its full quota next year. This village asset will need more support if it is to be sustained both financially and in attendance. The Church Yard Clean-up team make a grand contribution to the appearance of the church yard and in scoring points towards the BKV Competition.

##### **Village Hall**

Again the Village Hall is one of the major assets and continues to be well maintained and appreciated by all who use it. Recently a defibrillator has been acquired and is sited adjacent to the front doors of the hall for all to use in an emergency. It is good to see progress being made in getting Horseshoe Cottages habitable and access has just been completed for their use through the village hall carpark.

##### **BKV - Best Kept Village**

In 2014 Hilderstone was *Highly Commended* in the small village category. Once again we thank all those involved in getting this recognition including Green Lea School for the children's posters, an essential part of the marking as is the church yard. A big thank you has to go Bill Holmes who, without his effort, much of our achievement would not have been realised.

##### **Conservation Appraisal**

During the year both Cllr Jenny Crump and I have been providing Penny McKnight of Stafford BC with supporting information to complete the new Appraisal of the village including a new village boundary. The completed document and maps is expected to be displayed in the Village Hall the week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> July for village consultation. All householders will be individually notified of the changes and invited to the Consultation. It is planned to hold a Parish Council Consultation on the same evening.

##### **Children's club**

I am sorry to report that, through lack of support, very little has taken place for the children of the village this year. During the Commemoration of WW1 the Sunday School children did take part by attending a Tea Party, sing-song and played games in the village hall and preparing decorations of poppies to support the week-end events.

##### **Village Activities in 2014**

###### **Vide Grenier**

This was a new venture whereby a garage table top sale was staged throughout the village.

### **Hilderstone Village Market**

Again another new venture which is held in the village hall on the last Saturday of each month and continues to grow in terms of the number of varied stalls etc.

**Scarecrow Weekend** -7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> June 2014 - this was the fourth occasion of this successful bi-annual event. The next one will take place in June 2016.

**100 year Commemoration of WW1** - to mark the commemoration activities were held in the Village Hall on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2014 and this was followed by a dedicated service in the church on the Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2014. Following a visit to The Tower of London Cllr Audrey Stringer purchased eight of the commemorative poppies which will be on permanent display in Christ Church.

**Summer Fair** on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014 was a successful event and is now held in the centre of the village at Lower Farm field by kind permission of Mr Valluzzi.

**Village Christmas Party** 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - once again Hazel Woodward, Jean Jones & Sue Stubbs and others staged another very successful party.

**Village Christmas Concert** – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - this is the second year this event has been held and very much enjoyed and well attended.

### **Forthcoming events for 2015**

- Hilderstone Village Market – every last Saturday in the month
- Coffee Morning for Nepal in the Roebuck – Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015
- Summer Fair – Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at 2pm
- Harvest Festival & Supper – 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October
- Christmas Party – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December
- Christmas Concert - t.b.a.

### **Thank you**

- Bill Homes for all he does in maintaining the appearance of the village.
- Jean Jones, Hazel Woodward and Sue Stubbs for organising the Village Christmas Party
- Sue Stubbs, Editor of the Parish Magazine
- The team who organise the Christmas Concert.
- Tim Kitchen and Michael Dix for their diligent litter picking.
  
- A special thank you to **Helen Howie**, our Parish Clerk, for all the work she does on behalf of Hilderstone especially this year with the Election paper work.
  
- And finally all the **Parish Councillors** who have shown their support in many different ways.

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