

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22nd March 2017 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. I. Parry, Cllr. M. Shelley (Vice Chairman) and Cllr. A. Stringer. There were no members of the press or public present.

- 1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies.** These were received from Cllr. Woodward.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting.** Cllr. Crump asked for paragraph three under item nine on page three to be amended as follows: After attending a training course at Saverley Green, Cllr. Clark had raised the issue as to who is responsible for maintaining the village defibrillator and providing training. Cllr. Crump began to read her response to the questions raised in Cllr. Clark's email. Cllr. Shelley said that the Parish Council was not the forum for discussing such issues. Information has been posted in the village and Cllr. Crump agreed to write an article relating to the defibrillator to be published in the Parish Magazine. Cllr. Crump provided a copy of her report for inclusion as an appendix to the minutes (Appendix One).

The minutes were then approved and signed.

- 4. Matters arising.** The pothole on the edge of the manhole cover on Hilderstone road at the bottom of The Meadows has been repaired but there is another one forming next to it. The Clerk will report the second pothole to Highways.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. Development Control has received a lower number of planning applications in recent weeks. The planning officers are busy liaising with the County Council Highways on the road network which will need to support the additional 2000 new houses in The Plan for Stafford Borough. There will be major road works on the A34 in Stafford town centre for the next 27 weeks. The works are connected to a new ring road which will run round the back of the station and Sainsbury's car park. Development Control is also liaising with developers on the design for the new housing estates. It is intended that the estates will have a 'village feel' with local shops and services as well as a variety of housing styles.

- 6. County Councillor's Report.** No report.

7. Planning.

New Applications March 2017:

17/25784/HOU Malthouse Croft, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. Single storey utility extension, replacement windows and alterations to the forecourt. **Resolved: the Parish Council objects to the design of the replacement windows as it feels they are out of keeping with the surrounding period properties. The Parish Council does not object to the single storey side extension or forecourt alterations.**

17/25889/FUL Hilderstone Garage, Hall Lane, Hilderstone. Vehicle Storage Building. Amendment to vehicle access doors from one on the gable end of building to four on the side of building to allow better accessibility. **Resolved: the Parish Council has no objections to the plans.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

17/25766/HOU Vernon Cottage, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. Two-storey rear extension, patio, retaining wall and landscaping. Much smaller extension than the plans previously submitted and approved. **AWAITING DECISION**

16/25484/HOU Jura, Bankcroft, Dingle Lane. Construction of new garage in the front garden with conversion of the existing garage into a kitchen/dining room. Additional windows and door openings and changes to existing windows and door openings to main house. New sun pipe into landing and associated landscaping. **ALLOWED.**

16/25047/FUL Bird in Hand, Cresswell Road, Hilderstone. Minor Variations on application 09/11677/FUL. Revised window pattern to improve the aesthetic appearance of the elevations. Dormer window numbers reduced to de-clutter eaves detailing to roof. Roof pitch reduced to accommodate specified roof tile to address limitations of the site conditions of the existing building. **Revised plans submitted to meet pavement requirements have been accepted by Highways. AWAITING DECISION**

16/24533/OUT Land at Uttoxeter Road, Uttoxeter Road, STONE. Outline application for development of residential housing site for 51 market houses and 34 social rented houses. This development is not in approved The Plan for Stafford Borough. **AWAITING DECISION. Application has been called-in and is still waiting to be allocated a Committee date.**

Cllr. Clark raised the issue of the damaged iron railings at Lower Farm and asked Cllr. Harp whether the Borough Council Conservation Officer or Enforcement Officers could take any action given that the railings are Grade 2 listed. Cllr. Harp said that he would speak with the relevant officers but felt that generally enforcement action is only taken by the Borough Council if a building is in a dangerous state of repair. The Parish Council agreed that the Clerk should send another letter to the residents at Lower Farm asking what the current situation is with the repair work.

8. Traffic and Highways. Cllr. Stringer and the Parish Clerk had attended the joint Staffordshire County Council Highways and Staffordshire Parish Councils Association Workshop on Developing a Community Based Approach. The workshop focussed on the financial challenges that are facing the County Council Highways Department and how services might best be delivered in the future. Staffordshire County Council has to save £2 million every **month** for the next decade due to Central Government cuts. In the future local authorities will not receive any grants from Central Government. The main sources of income will be local Council and Business Taxes. As the number of people in the 65 to 85 age category will increase significantly over the next decade, more County Council funding will have to go into social and health care. There has also been a major increase in the number of children and families needing support through Social Services.

As a result of these issues, sacrifices will need to be made in other services and Highways is one service where budgets will be severely reduced. Initially the main area of spending to be cut is environmental highways maintenance. This covers jobs such as grass strimming, cleaning road signs, cutting vegetation away from around road signs, weeding, edging pavements, maintaining public amenity areas. If Parish Councils wish to see these aspects of highways maintenance kept to an agreeable standard they will have to fund these themselves. County Highways will continue to meet their statutory road safety duties by repairing potholes and other road defects, emptying gully drains and cutting grass verges, but some of the jobs classed as low priority will be subject to a longer lead time. There is no intention that parish councils will be expected to carry out significant road repair works. There will still be investment in major projects but the focus will be on the roads that service the main employment areas and new housing developments around the County.

At the workshop Parish Councils were asked to consider ways in which environmental highways maintenance could be carried in the future. For example could neighbouring Parish Councils work together to secure contracts that would save them money through economies of scale? Could local volunteers be used for certain jobs such as litter picking, sign washing or pavement gritting? Some of the larger Parish Councils had already taken on contracts for grass cutting, but it was accepted that the small parish councils did not have the financial resources to do this. Parish Councils were also asked to consider what obstacles would prevent them from taking on some of the services. The main reasons given were: lack of funding (especially in the smaller parishes), insurance cover, lack of statutory authority, low Parish Clerk hours/staffing, and lack of expertise in the field of contract management.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. The yew hedge around the Church has now been cut on the roadside. The contractor will return at a later date to cut the footpath side when the weather permits. It was noted that the width of Footpath 4 appears to have reduced and there was a question over whether the boundary fence to the adjacent field had been moved at some time in the past. It is understood that the footpath was historically a cart track and would have been much wider than it currently is. Cllr. Crump agreed to visit Staffordshire Record Office to see if there are any historic maps that show it to be a cart track.

Cllr. Crump suggested that in order to increase the number of posters for the Best Kept Village Competition, the pre-school pupils at Green Lea could also be involved. It was agreed that this would be a good idea. Cllr. Crump will also find out how many children from Hilderstone currently attend Green Lea School.

Thanks were extended to Sue and Richard Pilcher who have recently voluntarily tidied up the leaves and other debris around the Roebuck, as it would seem that Admiral Breweries appear to have no intention of doing any regular grounds maintenance at the property.

10. Village Events. Cllr Davies reported that it is hoped that the village Christmas Concert will be held again in 2017, date to be confirmed later. Other forthcoming events are:

Jumble Sale on Saturday 8th April at 2.00pm in the Village Hall.

Children's Activity Morning based on St Georges Day on Saturday 22nd April, 10.00am – 1.00pm in the Village Hall.

Film Night showing Florence Foster Jenkins on Friday 19th May at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Village Consultation Meeting on Thursday 25th May at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Charity Bingo Night in aid of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution on Friday 15th September at 7.00pm in the Village Hall. Pay at the door.

Jumble Sale on Saturday 16th September at 2.00pm in the Village Hall.

Village Trip to Adam Henson's Farm in the Cotswolds on Saturday 30th September, departing at 8.30am from the Village Hall.

Village Christmas Party on Tuesday 12th December at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Cllr. Crump reported that due to the Roebuck being closed, the Village Hall Committee have decided to run a bar once a month in the Village Hall using the services of the Red Lion at Milwich. The two first dates are Friday 28th April and Friday 26th May from 7.00pm to 11.30pm.

11. Correspondence March 2017.

- Electoral Register Changes
- Members' Digest 230

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £6974.86 in credit and the deposit account £3120.93 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. Community Council of Staffordshire, Best Kept Village Competition Entry Fee - £16.51
2. Mrs H. Howie, Clerks Expenses (including Home Office Allowance 2016-17, Mileage & Overtime - £277.55.

3. Mount Nurseries, Daffodil Bulbs supplied in November 2016 - £70.00.

The first precept payment for the 2017-18 financial year should be received soon. The Clerk will need to complete the end of year accounts and audit paperwork for 2016-17 in April and early May.

The Village Hall Committee will increase the office and storage space rent from £80.00 to £100.00 per year from April 2017. There has been no increase in this charge for several years and it was agreed that this rise was acceptable.

13. Any Other Business. It was agreed that a call for new people to become Hilderstone Parish Councillors should be made at the Village Consultation meeting in May. Cllr Clark said that he would be willing to stand down as a parish councillor if somebody new expressed an interest in standing. Cllr. Jones has also indicated that she would not be standing as a parish councillor at the next elections in May 2019 so there will be another vacancy. There is a need for some younger people with fresh ideas and approaches to be involved.

Phil Dale has been in contact with the Clerk to say that he is willing to send a letter to every resident in the village in an attempt to see if there is enough support to form a group to save The Roebuck.

Cllr. Crump reported that she had recently witnessed a local child deliberately dropping litter in the middle of the village. It was agreed that the a reminder should be placed in the Parish Magazine about littering.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th April 2017 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.35pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 26.04.17.