Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26th November 2016 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 no members of the public or press present.

- **1. Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors and members of the public to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies. These were received from Cllr. I Parry.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting. These were read, approved and signed.
- **4. Matters arising.** The Parish Clerk had logged an enquiry with Royal mail about the post box at the Bird In Hand, but has yet to receive a reply from the area collections manager. The Clerk will follow this up before the next meeting. It was noted that there are now only two collections a week from the Dingle Lane post box. It was agreed that the re-painting of the telephone box should start in March if the weather is suitable. The Clerk will instruct the contractor accordingly. Cllr Crump reported that she had been in contact with the Stone and Eccleshall Gazette to report on the success of the recent village trip and to publicise the village 100 Lottery. She had also liaised with the Community Events contact at the Staffordshire Newsletter.
- **5. Borough Councillor's Report.** The Sandon and Burston Neighbourhood Plan has been rejected; one of only very few not to be given approval. One of the main reasons for the refusal was that there had been insufficient consultation with the local community. There is little benefit for non-key service villages in developing a neighbourhood plan. The current Local Plan clearly identifies the main areas for development and to a certain extent this protects the small villages from new development. It was agreed that the major areas of development around Stafford, Stone and the larger villages will need investment in infrastructure, particularly improved highways. Cllr. Harp said that the County Council Highways Department will be involved before any final approval is given to major housing schemes. Developers will also be expected to provide other forms of infrastructure as part of the schemes. Estates will need to be of a high design quality with a 'village' feel including local shops and other services. It was noted that there had been no recent news about the business and housing development at Cresswell.
- **6. County Councillor's Report.** In response to the two accidents that occurred in October and November 2016 Cllr. Clark contacted County Councillor Ian Parry to ask if any further safety measures can be implemented at the crossroads. Cllr. Parry has stated that the County Highways Department will continue to review safety measures in response to accidents. Due to the recent severe Government funding cuts to local authorities and increasing social care costs, it is very unlikely that the County Council will be able to install a major road safety feature such as a mini-roundabout or traffic lights at the Hardiwick crossroads. Drivers are asked to take extra care at the crossroads particularly in respect of speed. Local residents and businesses should not place advertisements on the railings and fences near to the crossroads, as these are providing a distraction to drivers. Cllr. Parry has again stated that the Give Way sign on the approach to the crossroads from Sandon cannot be changed to a Stop sign due to the current highways regulations.

7. Planning.

No new applications in November 2016.

Status of Earlier Applications:

16/24977/HOU Priory Cottage, Church Down, Hilderstone. Single storey rear extension with accommodation in roof space, first floor extension over the garage, single storey orangery extension and associated internal alterations. **AWAITING DECISION**

16/24907/FUL Ivy Cottage, Sharpley Heath Road, Hilderstone. Variation of condition 2 on application 13/19080/FUL. **AWAITING DECISION**

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. **AWAITING DECISION**

16/24864/HOU Woodcutters, Cresswell Road, Hilderstone. Two-storey side extension, single storey rear extension and addition of ancillary living accommodation in new first floor over the detached garage. **ALLOWED.**

16/24837/HOU Vernon Cottage, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. Revised two-storey rear extension (which is substantially smaller than the previous approved application). **ALLOWED**.

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 expressed the Parish Council's disappointment that the most recent planning application for Priory Cottage on Church Down had not been called-in to the Planning Committee. Cllr. Harp stated that Cllr. Beatty had recently changed her email address and appeared not to have received the correspondence with regards to this matter before the required deadline. Cllr Harp said the plans met planning regulations and the officers would have difficulty in justifying a refusal. The Local Authority had to be mindful of having too many planning appeals as this ultimately can cost the Borough Council a lot of money if appeals are approved by the Planning Inspectorate. The parish councillors expressed strongly that on the whole they are unhappy that some of the decisions made by planning officers are completely at odds with what the Parish Council wants for the village. Given that Hilderstone is a small rural village with the core being a conservation area the Parish Council does not want to see a plethora of excessively large extensions which are out of character with much of the local architecture. In some cases this also makes small properties even less affordable for first time buyers or lower income families. Cllr. Clark requested that Cllr. Beatty is still contacted to see if it is possible to call-in the application for a Committee decision.

As the Tree Officer post at the Borough Council is currently vacant, the Clerk had emailed Planning with regards to the possibility of protecting the trees along Cresswell Road on the approach to the village. Cllr. Harp commented that it is unusual for the Borough Council to protect groups of trees such as these and as the planning team has a very high work load this is likely to be seen as a low priority.

Cllr. Harp reported that the pavement design at the Bird in Hand development is currently being queried by the Highways Department. It is hoped that this will not hold up the progress of the development.

Due to the boarding up of the Roebuck since the last Parish Council meeting the Clerk had been instructed by Cllr. Clark to contact Admiral Taverns to establish what is going to happen to the pub. The Clerk had received the following email response from a representative at Admiral: "We have taken the decision not to re-open the pub with a tenancy and therefore have decided to sell the freehold of the pub so it will be going on our 'for sale' list in the near future". After considering the performance of the Roebuck and the level of community support over the last four years since the last time it was under threat of permanent closure, the Parish Council again resolved that it is not in a position to purchase the Roebuck and to take out a loan to do so would be a huge financial risk to all residents living in Hilderstone Parish. The

Parish Council has taken the steps it can to protect the pub by getting it listed on the Borough Register of Assets Community Value. This gives local residents an opportunity to buy the pub and run it themselves if they feel it can be a viable business. **Resolved: Hilderstone Parish Council should not be involved in a community purchase of the Roebuck and does not have the necessary resources and expertise to be involved in any other community group which wishes to do so.**

- 8. Traffic and Highways. The Clerk had been notified that the Speed Indicator Device (SID) will generally only come to Hilderstone every 6 months. The schedule is determined by the speed data collected from the device, so the more problematic locations around the County will have it on a more regular basis. The Staffordshire Parish Council Association has reported that that the County Council Highways Department might try to devolve responsibility for minor surface repairs to Parish Councils. It is difficult to see how this could work in practice for very small Parish Councils with low precepts like Hilderstone. Earlier this year all Parish Councils had been sent a letter informing them that the Neighbourhood Highways Team maintenance service would be reduced in 2016-17 and from April 2017 the Minor Highways Maintenance recharge agreement will be terminated. This will mean that Hilderstone Parish Council will need to absorb the cost of some of the regular highways maintenance jobs such as clearing drain gulleys after storms, cutting back vegetation around road signs, and washing down road signs.
- **9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village.** Cllr. Davies reported that the hedge around the Church still needs to be cut and he will chase the contractor again. All the hedges along footpath 14 between the infant play area and the Meadows have now been cut. Since that last meeting a large branch on the willow tree on the village green had split from the trunk during a storm. Fortunately the branch was at the back of the tree and had fallen towards the field at the back. The tree surgeon has been asked to prune the remainder of the tree as soon as possible to avoid any branches presenting a danger to road users. It was noted that during that particular storm many branches had fallen onto the roads around Hilderstone mainly from trees on farm land.

It was agreed that Hilderstone should enter the Best Kept Village again in 2017 because even though the competition is tough, taking part helps to motivate residents to help in keeping the village tidy and attractive.

10. Village Events. The first film night of 2017 will be held on Thursday 19th January at 6.30pm for 7.00pm in the village hall. The film will be Dad's Army the British Empire Strikes Back.

Ticket sales for the Village Christmas Party are underway but Cllr. Woodward said that it was difficult to get people to commit themselves early enough, which can make planning difficult.

Rehearsals for the Village Concert are now in full swing and it promises to be another enjoyable evening.

Cllr. Crump reported that the recorder event held in the village hall was very successful and the organisers liked the facilities. It is hoped that a recorder concert may follow-on as a result of this.

The village website diary needs filling up for 2017 and organisers should make sure that event dates and at least basic details are provided soon.

11. Correspondence November 2016.

- Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association Annual Report & Accounts
- Members' Digest 226

Members' Digest 225 (Cllr. Jones) – The Freedom of the Borough has been granted to Joe Clark from Stone. This is in recognition of his winning a gold medal in the men's K1 Slalom at

the Rio Olympics 2016 and also his service in raising the profile of Stafford Borough and Stone Canoe Club. He has been asked to switch on the Stone Christmas lights in November 2016.

Stafford Borough Council will accommodate 50 refugees in Stafford. This was viewed by the Home Office as an example of best practice regarding this matter.

There will cut backs in funding for the Housing Reforms and Supporting People projects. This will make it more difficult to house the most vulnerable tenants.

Currently Blue Badge holders can park for free on any Council car park. This will change with the introduction of a new concession that will restrict free parking to four hours on short stay and three hours on variable stay car parks in Stafford. The exception to this will be the Waterfront and Riverside car parks where charges will apply. Long stay car parks will remain free of charge.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £9825.29 in credit and the deposit account £3120.80 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 & Mileage. £7.70.
- 2. Mr W.H. Holmes, Village Maintenance & letterbox. £272.00.
- 3. Cllr. H.Woodward, Village Christmas Party Expenses. £500.00.

Final approval was given for a 3% increase in the budget and precept request for 2017-18. The budget document was signed by Cllr. Clark, Cllr. Shelley and the Parish Clerk/Responsible Officer.

13. Any Other Business. Cllr. Clark reported that the recruitment process for the new vicar is being organised. The vicar will only be half time in Hilderstone and shared with St. Nicholas Church in Fulford. An article has been placed in the latest edition of the Hilderstone Parish Magazine asking residents to let the Church Parochial Council know what qualities they would like to see in the new vicar. The deadline for responses in writing is 5th December 2016. There is a full rota of visiting vicars until Easter 2017 to cover the vacancy so that Church services can continue as normal.

Cllr. Clark reminded councillors that a new Chairman will need to be selected for May 2017. Consideration should be given to ensuring that the Chairman can only remain in post for a maximum three year period. Cllr. Clark said that he intends to compile a village consultation questionnaire to go in the February edition of the Parish Magazine. The result of this questionnaire and possibly a village consultation meeting in March will form the basis of an agenda for the new Chairman over the next few years.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting w closed at 9.30pm	/ill be	held on	Wednesday	25 th	January	2017	at 7.30	p.m.	The meeting
			Cllr. R. Cla	rk, C	hairman.	25.01	.17		