

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25th May 2016 at 7.30p.m.

Present: Cllr. Clark (Chairman), 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 press or public present.

1. Chairman's Welcome. Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting. It was agreed that in future years the start time of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) would be changed from 7.00pm to 7.30pm to avoid any confusion. The May parish council meeting would then follow the AGM. Cllr. Clark stated that whilst he is happy to have been elected as Chairman again, he did not wish to be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting. Cllr. Clark said that he would remain on the Parish Council until the next parish elections and then would stand down. Cllr. Jones also notified members that she would be standing down from the Parish Council at the next parish elections.

2. Apologies. These were received from Cllr. Crump and Cllr. Parry.

3. Minutes of the last meeting. These were read, approved and signed.

4. Matters arising. A village volunteer is still needed to coordinate publicity for Hilderstone. A group of local volunteers carried out a litter pick in the village during the 'Clean for the Queen' week. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. Over the last 12 months 741 new houses were built in Stafford Borough. This is the most number of units built annually in recent years and exceeds the annual target of 500 per year. The plans for the new Marks and Spencer store in Westbridge Park, Stone have now been submitted to the Borough Council for consideration.

The County Council have introduced a free smartphone and tablet app which will allow users to access Council information, make a payment or report an issue. The app is called MyStaffs and more information about it can be found on the County Council website link: www.staffordshire.gov.uk/mystaffs-app/mystaffs-app.aspx. The app will be particularly useful for photographing and reporting road defects such as potholes directly to Highways.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications May 2016

16/24158/FUL Hammond Autos, Hilderstone Garage, Hall Lane, Hilderstone. Erection of a New Vehicle Storage Unit. **Resolved: The Parish Council has no objections to this application.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

16/23820/HOU Vernon Cottage, Sandon Road. Proposed single storey extension, first floor extension over existing garage/outbuildings and internal alterations. **REFUSED.** The Conservation Officer feels that part of the current proposed extension plans are "excessive" for the size of the existing cottage.

Cllr. Woodward commented that the grass in the recreational open space at the bottom of The Meadows is very long and the field is in a poor state. Cllr. Clark said that maintenance of the field is a problem as the field in question is still in private ownership, even though it was classed as public open space as part of the development agreement when the Meadows estate was built. In previous years local parents have cut the grass when their children used the field for playing football. In recent years the field has not been used for sport so the grass

has not been cut. Ultimately it is the owner of the field who is responsible for maintaining it, not the Parish Council. The trees in the copse on the west side of the field are protected and need permissions to be cut.

8. Traffic and Highways. A resident has raised the issue of the unfinished section of top dressing on Dingle Lane. There are also several areas of wear and tear in this section of the lane. County Cllr. Parry has been contacted for a second time about this matter and he has said that he will look into it again. The pothole on Hilderstone Road near to the junction with The Meadows has been assessed by Highways as not bad enough to repair at the current time; but it will be monitored for further deterioration. The Clerk has been notified by Highways that work to the blocked road drains on Cresswell Road near to High Elms, will be carried out as part of a programme of other works in the area.

The volume of traffic through Hilderstone is still very high but there appears little that can be done to reduce this, as all roads in the area are becoming busier year on year and drivers will continue to look for the quickest routes. The Villagers Voice for Staffordshire Moorlands group are still fund raising in order to make a legal challenge to the planning decision on the development in Cresswell. Several Hilderstone residents are helping with the fund raising efforts and have also made donations. The legal costs are likely to be high and it remains to be seen if the group can raise sufficient funds.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. There are no new issues to report on the local footpaths. The Church has been unable to find a contractor to cut the grass at a price which it can afford. The Parochial Church Council has agreed that Mr & Mrs Davies can continue to cut the Churchyard grass and receive payment for this, until a suitable contractor can be found. The Parish Council agreed that this was an acceptable solution.

The willow tree on the village green on Hilderstone Road is becoming very large and will need reducing in height and width in the near future. Cllr. Clark will obtain a quotation for this and the necessary permissions from Stafford Borough Council as it is within the conservation area.

The Best Kept Village judges were in Hilderstone last week and had remarked to the Church warden that the Churchyard and car park was one of the best they had seen. The Parish Councillors agreed that overall the village was looking very tidy and that many householders have made great efforts to keep their front gardens and areas around their properties well maintained.

10. Village Events

Scarecrow Weekend, 11th & 12th June 2016.

Summer Fair, Saturday 16th July 2016 from 2.00pm in the field next to Lower Farm.

Jumble Sale, Saturday 3rd September 2016, 2.00pm in the Village Hall. Jumble gratefully received from 10.00am.

Village Christmas Party, Tuesday 13th December, 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Cllr. Woodward said that she was considering organising a village outing later on the year for local residents. The Clerk will investigate whether any further funding can be secured from Cllr. Ian Parry's County Councillor Fund to subsidise the costs of this.

11. Correspondence May 2016.

- Members' Digest 220

Members' Digest 219 (Cllr. Crump) PP4.1-4.8 Minutes of Health Scrutiny Committee (15 March 2016) included reference to the Age Well project to support older people in remaining healthy and independent. A presentation was made to members by Dr. Ruth Goldstein, Chairman of Age Well Focus Group. The committee discussed the need for all areas to have access to a Good Neighbour Scheme, particularly in rural areas. The need for good rural transportation was also stressed.

P6.17 Taking pride in our patch award. Visit www.staffordbc.gov.uk/pride or email pgammon@staffordbc.gov.uk. Members of the public, schools, parish councils etc. are asked to nominate people who make a difference by cleaning, tidying or carrying out other tasks to make their area look attractive.

P6.18 Gnosall has joined in the battle against dog fouling. In April the Parish Council joined forces with Stafford Borough Council to target five main dog fouling hot spots. One initiative was distributing free dog bags from outlets in the village. Gnosall is following the lead set by Weston.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £9050.58 in credit and the deposit account £3120.01 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. Aon UK Limited, Parish Council Annual Insurance Fee for 2016-17 - £240.83.
2. Mr Alan James, Internal Annual Audit Fee for 2015-16 Accounts - £85.00.
3. Cllr. R. Clark, Stationery Expenses - £19.14.
4. Mrs Helen Howie, Clerks Expenses & Mileage - £8.09.
5. Mr W H Holmes, Village Maintenance & Lectern Repairs - £84.00.
6. Cllr. A Stringer, Parish Council Donation towards Cost of Queen's 90th Birthday Books distributed to Villagers - £125.00.

13. Any Other Business. Cllr. Shelley commented that whilst building work at the Bird in Hand site continues, progress is a little slow.

Cllr. Clark said that he would like some succession planning for the next Chairman to take place at subsequent meetings, as there would need to be a transition and briefing period before the new Chairman takes over.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd June 2016 at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.15pm

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 22.06.16