

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27th April 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) 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.** These were read, approved and signed.
- 4. Matters arising.** The large pothole at Little Stoke has finally been repaired. One of regular volunteers has taken possession of the new litter pickers and bags and is trying to organize a group picking session. Cllr Clark is currently trying to organize some publicity for this with the Staffordshire Newsletter. Cllr. Clark commented that it would be helpful if a resident in the village would be willing to volunteer to coordinate publicity for village activities and events. It needs to be somebody who can be available in the village to meet with the press for photo-shoots, as well as sending information to them for publication.

The minutes from the recent Stone Area Parish Liaison Group had been circulated. Hilderstone Parish Council had decided not to send a representative and there was nothing discussed at the meeting that was directly relevant to Hilderstone. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. The recent 'Clean for the Queen' litter picking campaign promoted by Stafford Borough Council has been successful with several villages organising a litter picking session during the week of the Queen's birthday. Traffic delays in Stafford town centre are likely to get worse over the new few months due to the mains sewer pipes being replaced along Beaconside and Weston Road. The other mains water and sewer works around the town should be finished before this work starts. It was noted that traffic in Stone was also becoming very congested possibly due to all the road works in Stafford; but it could also be due to there being too many traffic lights in Stone. There appears to be significantly more traffic going through Hilderstone; possibly to avoid the congestion in both Stone and Stafford.

New housing development has started to the North of Stafford and the new Marks and Spencer in the new Riverside development should be opening in two months time. It was noted that the new houses needed for the forces returning from bases in Germany have been built very quickly.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report.

7. Planning.

No new applications in April 2016.

Status of Earlier Applications:

16/23792/FUL Hilderstone Garage, Hall Lane. Variation of Condition 2, proposing revised siting of vehicle storage building (previously approved on consent 12/17404/FUL).

WITHDRAWN.

16/23802/HOU New House Farm, Hall Lane. Proposed domestic garage. **WITHDRAWN.**

16/23820/HOU Vernon Cottage, Sandon Road. Proposed single storey extension, first floor extension over existing garage/outbuildings and internal alterations. **AWAITING DECISION.**

APP/Y3425/A/14/2222107 (13/19630/FUL) Appeal lodged against refusal of wind turbine at Drumble Woods, Cotwalton. **The Secretary of State has agreed with the Inspector's conclusions and recommendation; dismisses the appeal and refuses planning permission. This decision may be challenged within six weeks by application to the High Court.**

Cllr. Harp commented that he felt that Development Control are sometimes a little slow at looking at new planning applications and that this sometimes causes inconvenience to applicants.

8. Traffic and Highways. Parish Councils have been sent a letter from County Cllr. Mark Deaville outlining imminent cuts to the Neighbourhood Highways Team Service and also the Minor Highways Works Agreement. Cllr. Ian Parry had already notified the Parish Council at a previous meeting that many County Council departments are facing severe budget cuts over the next few years and that this will impact on service levels. Cllr. Deaville has stated that Parish Councils will be involved in discussions over the next 12 months to 'see how community involvement can be increased' in delivering local environmental improvements.

There is a large section of top dressing near to the Dingle Lane junction that has not been completed by the contractors. This is resulting in patches of wear and tear. The issue has been brought to the attention of County Cllr. Ian Parry who has indicated that he will investigate when the works will be completed. Despite being repaired several times the 30mph flashing speed sign at the southern end of the village is still not working properly. The sign is now quite old and might need replacing; this will be raised with Cllr. Parry along with the issue of the potholes on Hall Lane.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. Mud has accumulated on the footpath near Church farm and the footpath at the side of the Church needs strimming again. Cllr. Davies will deal with these two jobs in due course. The new contractor for grass cutting in the Churchyard is now unable to undertake the work. Cllr. Davies reported that there has been great difficulty finding another contractor that is within the scope of the Church budget. Currently Cllr. Davies and his wife are cutting the grass and this may have to continue if a reasonably priced contractor cannot be found. The recent Churchyard volunteer team tidy had been very successful with 13 people attending. The new Best Kept Village Competition Boards are now in place and it is hoped that villagers will get involved and help to look after their area of the village. There is some evidence that a few new small groups are forming around the village. The Clerk has been informed that the road and pavement sweepers should be in the village the week beginning 2nd May.

A local volunteer has agreed to give the phone box a new coat of paint; it was agreed that the Parish Council will cover the cost of the paint. Cllr. Crump has made a temporary 'Information Centre' sign for the phone box, but Cllr. Clark will investigate the cost of a more permanent one with a local printer.

Cllr. Crump had collected The Best Kept Village children's posters from Green Lea School and these were judged and enjoyed by the Parish Council. Unfortunately only Class Two had the time to submit posters. A first and two runner-up prizes were awarded. Thanks were expressed to the pupils and staff at Green Lea School for their contribution to the competition. Entries from other children that live in Hilderstone can be judged at a later date.

10. Village Events. Preparations are underway for the Scarecrow Competition on 11th and 12th June 2016 but more entries and helpers are required. The jumble sale held on 9th April raised £200 which will be divided between the Church and the village Christmas Party funds. The Queen's actual birthday on 21st April was acknowledged at the Church service, but as yet nothing has been organised for the official birthday on the weekend of 11th/12th June. The Grand Village Dinner Party is set to go ahead with an encouraging number of households taking part.

The Christ Church Village Fete will take place on Saturday 16th July 2016, hopefully in the field at Lower Farm again.

Unfortunately the Village Market has had to cease operation. The organiser had planned to modify the market by offering cream teas and changing the timing, in the hope of increasing footfall. Queries were raised by the Village Hall Committee as to whether all the necessary insurance, health and safety regulations would be met by the organisers. Cllr. Crump who is also the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, submitted the following report on the events leading to the cancellation of the village market by the organiser:

Village Market

1 I am very sorry to report that the Village Market arranged for 30 April 2016 has been cancelled by the organiser.

2 The Village Hall Committee (the committee) has been particularly keen to foster activities in Hilderstone and the Village Hall. In pursuance of this it enabled the village market to take place, charging only a nominal (and in fact loss-making) fee of £5 for each session.

3 Unfortunately, without consultation with the members of the committee, the organiser changed the time and nature of the event. What was to take place was described as Cream Teas and Market. The immediate effect of the change of time was to lose a booking for the Village Hall made by a Hilderstone resident.

4 Unfortunately the organiser refused an invitation to discuss the future of the market.

5 The committee considered the situation and decided that for the event to take place all legal requirements must be shown to have been complied with and public safety protected, for instance by registration of all businesses supplying food, and there should be in place appropriate insurance. In order to assist the organiser a reduction of just less than 30% of the usual fee for hiring the Village Hall was offered.

6 The organiser was informed of the decision of the committee. Unfortunately the organiser of the event responded *"At this late stage in the day to require these conditions is a step too far. Most of the requirements have already been met but we feel that it will be untenable to provide insurance for the entire event that you now require."* and that she had cancelled the event. The members of the committee are disappointed that the market is not to continue but, in discharging their duty to villagers, consider it essential that members of the public are fully protected by compliance with legal requirements and insurance when participating in events held in the Village Hall.

7 The first time the members of the committee learned of a proposal to hold a car boot sale at the Village Hall was in an email copied to it by the clerk to the Parish Council. The proposal had not been raised, or discussed, with the committee. The committee considered the issue and decided that the site of the Village Hall is not suitable for holding car boot sales for several reasons, including the interests of the neighbours of the Village Hall, the safety of those accessing the Village Hall site and it is not insured for such events.

The management committee of the village hall deeply regret the organiser's course of action. The committee acted to ensure that legal, public protection and health issues were to be properly dealt with and the organiser had arranged appropriate insurance.

The Parish Council agreed that whilst it was very disappointing that the village market had been cancelled, it agreed with the Village Hall Committee that all insurance and health and safety requirements must be met by **all** organisers of events. It is hoped that the market organisers will reconsider running the market again in the future by investigating ways of securing and funding the necessary insurance and any other certificates required.

11. Correspondence April 2016.

- Electoral Register Changes
- Members' Digest 219

Members' Digest 218 (Cllr. Jones) – Tree Felling at Moddershall Valley Trout Farm. Grant two permissions. Tree felling at Hilderstone House, Hilderstone. Grant two permissions (a cherry and an apple). Tree felling at The Hollies, Hilderstone. Grant two permissions (one a dead cedar). Tree felling at Highfield House, Hilderstone. Grant two permissions (ash).

In relation to the new Stafford Borough Plan period covering the next 20 years, 682 houses have been built, but a further 7,069 dwellings are still required. In addition to this, 346 houses have been built to provide accommodation for military personnel returning from bases which are being closed in Germany. The Plan allocates 1,000 houses to be built in Stone over the plan period. The Plan recognises that it is important for an appropriate mix of dwelling types to be built.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £6688.19 in credit and the deposit account £3119.89 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. Staffordshire Parish Councils Association, annual membership fee 2016-17 - £202.00
2. Simon Down, tree felling and planting relating to Roebuck Bank project - £1104.00
3. Mrs H. Howie, Clerk's mileage and expenses relating to village website - £77.90
4. Mr W H Holmes, village maintenance in April - £95.00

13. Any Other Business. The date of the annual village forum/meeting was reconsidered as Cllr. Clark stated that he would like Cllr. Shelley to be present as Vice-Chairman. It was agreed that the date be changed from Wednesday 11th May 2016 to Wednesday 18th May 2016 at 7.30pm in order that Cllr. Shelley can attend. It was noted that Cllr. Crump was not available on 18th May.

Cllr. Crump reported that the broadband capacity in the village hall has been increased since the new cable had been installed in the village. Cllr. Clark confirmed that the U3A computing group are finding speeds are much improved at the village hall. Cllr. Stringer reported that eight local residents had turned up to the broadband information session held by the Superfast Broadband project officers on 7th April 2016 in the village hall.

14. Date of next meeting.

The Annual General Meeting and next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th at 7.00 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

..... Cllr. R. Clark, Chairman. 25.05.16