

Hilderstone Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27th July 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. There were no members of the press or public present.

1. Chairman's Welcome. Cllr. Clark welcomed the councillors to the meeting.

2. Apologies. None received.

3. Minutes of the last meeting. The following amendments to the 22nd June 2016 minutes were made:

Page two, paragraph 6, lines three and five - refreshment stall was changed to Scarecrow Café.

Page two, paragraph nine, sentence three was changed to read: Cllr Crump offered to pay for the signs but it was agreed that the Parish Council would fund the cost, as the proceeds from these are donated to the Church and village Christmas party funds.

Page three, paragraph one, sentence three was changed to read: Cllr. Crump explained that the white notice board belonging to the village hall is locked to prevent any damage from pins to it. Her contact details are clearly displayed on the board so that residents can easily contact her to display a notice.

Page three, paragraph one, sentence four was removed.

Page three, paragraph seven, sentence two – the number twelve was changed to read six.

The minutes were then approved and signed.

4. Matters arising. Cllr. Clark stated that after Christmas the Clerk will be asked to circulate nomination papers to all of the Parish Councillors for the election of a new Chairman at the Annual General Meeting in May 2017. There is still a need for a volunteer to co-ordinate village publicity. Cllr. Crump suggested two villagers who have the right skills and could be approached to see if they would be willing to take the role on. Other matters arising were dealt with under the agenda headings.

5. Borough Councillor's Report. A new Chief Executive is to be appointed at Stafford Borough Council in the next few days to replace Ian Thompson who is retiring. The current Head of Planning and Regeneration Ted Manders is also retiring.

The new Marks and Spencer store in Stafford will open on 18th August 2016. There have been some complaints that the North end of Stafford town is looking run down and neglected. The Borough Council has plans to regenerate this part of the town and this might involve removing some of the less attractive 1960's buildings. The funding for this regeneration will come mainly from developers, who will need to be persuaded to invest in Stafford. Cllr. Harp said that unfortunately Stafford has not received as much regeneration funding from Central Government as other towns. Cllr. Clark commented that the pavements in this area of the town are not being repaired to a very high standard and are in a poor state. It was noted that pavement repairs are the responsibility of the County Council Highways department.

6. County Councillor's Report. No report.

7. Planning.

New Planning Applications July 2016

16/24332/HOU Vernon Cottage, Sandon Road, Hilderstone. Amended single storey extension, first floor extension over existing garage and internal alterations. **Resolved: There were no objections to these plans.**

Status of Earlier Applications:

16/24158/FUL Hammond Autos, Hilderstone Garage, Hall Lane, Hilderstone. Erection of a New Vehicle Storage Unit. **PERMITTED.**

8. Traffic and Highways. Hall Lane near to Manor Farm is still in a poor state of repair with some of the potholes becoming deep and dangerous. The Parish Council has previously been notified that Hall Lane was earmarked for some proper patching work, but this has yet to take place. Cllr. Clark will contact Cllr. Parry to establish what the current lead time for this work is. The 30 mph flashing sign on Sandon road is still not working properly after 18 months; the Clerk will report this to Highways again. Cllr. Clark will also ask Cllr. Parry to investigate why the sign is not being properly repaired. There has been another accident at the Hardwick crossroads recently. The Stop sign was knocked down but it was replaced promptly.

The damaged iron fence at Lower Farm is still being dealt with by the insurance company. It is likely to be sometime before it is repaired.

It was noted that there an increasing number of cyclists using local roads and sadly some of these are riding in a very inconsiderate manner, especially when in large groups. They often ride side by side and do not move into single file, even when there is a large stream of cars behind them or they are on a dangerous section of road. Cyclists dressed all in black do not appear to be aware that their visibility to motorists is very poor, especially when riding beneath trees where light levels are low.

9. Footpaths/Village Maintenance/Best Kept Village. There was nothing to report on footpaths. The Roebuck Bank has been cut recently and looks very tidy. Mr & Mrs Davies are managing the Churchyard grass cutting well. Cllr. Clark remarked that the weeds in the road gulleys and on the pavements are particularly bad this year. The Clerk was asked to check with the County Council whether any weed spraying has been carried out this year in Hilderstone. It is likely that in the longer term Parish Councils will have to organise and pay for more village maintenance, as the County Council budget is reduced further.

The judging for the Best Kept Village Competition has now ended and the results evening will take place on Monday 1st August at 7.00pm at Eccleshall Community Centre. Cllr. Clark and Cllr. Stringer will attend. Cllr. Harp said that the competition organisers the Community Council of Staffordshire is asking for comments from parish councils on whether the children's poster competition need to be changed. It was agreed that the topic(s) for the competition need to offer children more scope for being creative, as the posters are often very similar in content.

The Clerk had obtained details of the Stafford Borough Council Pride in Your Patch Award. It was agreed that the process for nominating an individual local volunteer was far too long, as it requires a detailed submission of 650 words plus supporting information. The Parish Council may provide its own award and will reconsider this in the autumn.

10. Village Events. The Village Summer Fair had to be held in the village hall as the field was too wet. There was a steady flow of people to the Fair all day and it raised £412. The evening event organised by the Village Hall Committee was not as well supported as expected; with around 30 villagers attending including some teenagers. Cllr. Clark suggested that charging in advance for this event in the future might encourage more people to attend.

Cllr. Woodward has organised a village trip on Saturday 1st October 2016 to Acton Scott Victorian Working Farm in Shropshire. A coach will leave the village hall at 9.00am and return around 6.30pm. There will be a refreshment stop at Wyevale Garden Centre near Telford on the way. Tickets are £8.00 per person and are available on a first come first served basis from Cllr. Woodward or Cllr. Jones. Full details of the trip and contact details for the tickets are in the Parish Magazine and on the village website. The cost of the tickets for the daytrip is being subsidised by funding from the County Councillor's Fund and the Parish Council in attempt to increase community involvement. If the trip is popular and successful it is hoped that more can be arranged in the future although it may not be possible to subsidise these.

It has been confirmed that the Village Christmas Concert will go ahead again on Saturday 17th December at 7.00pm in the village hall.

Other forthcoming village events include:

Jumble Sale on Saturday 3rd September at 2.00pm in the village hall.

Harvest Supper on Monday 19th September at 7.00pm for 7.30pm in the village hall.

Village Christmas Party on Tuesday 13th December at 7.00pm for 7.30pm in the village hall.

11. Correspondence Received July 2016

- Thank you letter from Oak Tree Farm Project
- Members' Digest 222

Members' Digest 221 (Cllr J. Jones) Most of this edition related to neighbourhood planning. Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the 2011 Localism Act to give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhoods with the local planning authority through the production of Neighbourhood Plans. It also enables them to shape development and growth in their area. The Neighbourhood Plan produced by local councils must satisfy all the basic conditions required by National Planning Policies.

12. Finance.

The monthly accounts were presented and signed by the Chairman. The current account is £6640.66 in credit and the deposit account £3120.28 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. Mr W H Holmes, Village Maintenance July 2016 - £115.00
2. Cllr. J. Crump, Best Kept Village Children's Poster Competition Prizes - £20.00

The Clerk had received notification from NatWest Bank that due to the current low interest rates, the Bank may have to charge interest on current accounts in the future.

It was agreed that the Clerk could order three news signs for the community jumble sales based on the draft artwork provided by the printer and shown to the Parish Council at the meeting.

13. Any Other Business. Cllr. Crump asked if her email address could be removed from the Parish Magazine. The clerk advised that she would have to contact the Magazine Editor to get it removed.

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th August at 7.30 p.m. The meeting closed at 9.00pm

..... Cllr. M. Shelley, Vice-Chairman 24.08.16.