

Hilton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Hilton Parish **held at Hilton Village Hall at 7:00pm,** **Wednesday 29 May 2024**

Present

Councillors M Coney, C Cuddington, G Andrew, J McCreddie, S Stanton, C Nield

Also Present

District Councillor J Davies, 2 members of the public

HPM1/24 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Gaskin, Meghani and Patten.

HPM 2/24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2023 were RESOLVED to be a true and accurate record of the meeting having previously been circulated to all member Councillors

Proposed by Cllr Andrew Seconded by Cllr Stanton

HPM 3/24 Chair's Report

Cllr Coney read a report on the review of the year.

The Parish Council has continued to work hard for the community and residents of Hilton and have made many improvements over the year.

Planning

The Parish Council kept up its vigilance in scrutinising all planning applications and where it felt appropriate, to try to influence SDDC Planning. We do not have powers to veto planning applications but will always do our best to ensure the best outcome is obtained.

We have put significant time and effort into trying to influence the development of the proposed Aldi and Trenport sites. Both these sites are significant developments and delivered in the right way have the potential to provide some much needed amenities in the village. It is however very important that they do not have a detrimental effect on the existing infrastructure. We have listened to the community and continue to feed the concerns raised into the planning process in both writing

and by attending and speaking at the planning meetings. It is disappointing that both the developers and planning authority do not see these adjacent developments in a joined up way. We commissioned a traffic survey of our own to support our concerns over the potential increase in traffic. The data from this survey confirms our thoughts that the base data used in the planning applications is flawed and hence we will continue to challenge this point.

We have worked with and supported the residents of Astley Gardens in relation to the development of the Mandarin site. While the site will still be developed into commercial units we have been able to influence a better design and some other small compromises.

The Lucas Lane development by Morris Homes has continued to be an ongoing saga throughout the year, and still holds the dubious distinction of recording the most resident complaints of any development during the life of this Parish Council. We have continued to challenge Morris Homes on the implementation of the development and impact that the site traffic has had on Lucas Lane. There have been some small concessions however we continue to monitor the site to ensure the community is not left in a worse place than when we started.

Again and unfortunately, we have had little or no success in persuading SDDC to enforce planning conditions.

We would like to note the support that we have had from our District Councillors in raising the concerns from Hilton directly with the planning officers and planning committee.

Plan 2023 – 2027

Over the last year we have developed a plan of improvements across the village which has taken into account previous feedback from the community. As with every plan this will need some flexibility but it is starting to provide a good foundation and framework for delivering some significant projects. This year we have been looking at the following:

- Pitch improvements
- Benches
- Bus Stop improvements
- New playground signage
- Back Lane Pavilion improvements

The Parish Councillors are all volunteers and hence are equally engaged with other activities outside the council. To drive delivery of our plan and hence improvements in the village we have decided to employ an Office Manager. This position will greatly assist us in moving things forwards and making Hilton an even better environment.

Finances

We reviewed our budget for the year and considered the plan that we had developed including the affordability of the projects. We have been able to ensure that the council has strong finances while still being able to reduce the precept by 2.5% for the year.

Memorial Meadow

We have continued to implement the plan developed last year by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust for the Memorial Meadow. A new notice board has been installed so we can display details of memorial arrangements and we plan to provide additional features so space for more memorials can be provided in the future. The trees and environment is certainly starting to develop and take shape in a much more managed way.

Flooding

Storm Babet hit the nation in October 2023 and Storm Henk hit in January 2024. The Parish Councillors deployed sandbags and traffic management during both events to support the residents and keep Hilton moving safely. Thanks must go to all those involved with the deployment during some atrocious weather conditions.

The Aldi / Hilton Garage roundabout has seen some unprecedented flooding over the last 6 months and thanks must go to the District Councillors and the teams at SDDC and DCC who have worked to understand the water courses and culverts in the surrounding areas. Steps have already been put in place with some ditch clearing and drain jetting which has started to have a positive impact.

We are concerned that further developments in the village will have the potential to cause more flooding of both surface water and sewage as we believe the current system is working to maximum capacity and cannot fully cope at times of major down pours. We will continue to highlight this to the planning authorities and developers.

Traffic/Highways

We have challenged a number of road safety issues in an around the village including visibility of the new crossing on Derby Road, vehicles travelling up the A50 slip road in the wrong direction and several issues around The Mease Spencer school.

As a Parish Council we continue to be frustrated and concerned by the attitude of DCC highways to road safety and their approach of requiring fatalities or injuries before considering improvements. Many of our suggestions for improvements are met with long replies that can be summarised as 'No'

As the Parish Council, we continue to monitor the condition of our roads, pavements and footpaths and report any deficiencies to DCC highways seeking support from our County Councillor when required to resolve any issues.

Leisure Facilities

Again, the regular services were provided to the community throughout the year with all facilities being well used. It is great to see the play areas being intensively used. We again installed Hanging Baskets and Christmas trees on the lamp posts around the village.

We have started the refurbishment of The Back Lane Pavilion and hope that this will attract a wider range of users who can use the facility to support activities on the playing fields. We have started a project to look at how the Back Lane fields can be improved to make them better for all users throughout the year.

We have installed 2 items of adult gym equipment on the Main Street play area and these are being used by all ages. We now have equipment around the village that caters for all from the age of toddler.

We have installed 5 new benches around the village at the end of Soar Close, on Percy Wood Close, on Main Street and at the top of Lucas Lane. These have been a vast improvement and we plan to install further benches each year.

We have planted a number of new trees around our estate in particular at the bottom of the Back Lane field. We recently supported the planting of the trees around the village in memory of Maggie Adcock and we will continue to ensure these are nurtured and looked after.

We have been supporting the Hilton Harriers Football Club with a proposal to improve the facilities at The Mease pavilion and turn this into a wider sports village. While there are a number of hurdles to jump, we believe that the proposals are much needed and we will continue to support this exciting vision.

We continue to challenge the SDDC events that are solely centred on Swadlincote and we would like to see some events put on in this side of the district. There are plenty of excellent facilities not only here in Hilton but also in the surrounding villages of Hatton, Etwall and Willington that could be used.

Village Hall

We recognise that the Village Hall is an asset to the community which should be accessible by all to enable a wide range of activities to take part. We are exploring way of how we can work closer with the village Hall team and how we can support their future plans for making the venue even better.

Groundsmen

We continue to employ Simon, Jim and Tony as our team of groundsmen who the residents will see around the village throughout the year and in all weathers. They work hard to ensure that Hilton stays a safe, pleasant and well maintained environment for all to enjoy. Their efforts are sometimes forgotten and go un-noticed, we take empty bins for granted, so I would like to pass the thanks onto the team.

Admin Assistant

Wendy is our essential link in ensuring pitch bookings are arranged, orders placed and received and information posted in a timely way. Again, Wendy's efforts may sometimes go unnoticed but I would like to pass on our thanks for her invaluable support.

Thanks

I would like to thank the Parish Councillors for all of the work they have put in over the last 12 months. Much of this is behind the scenes and not immediately visible to residents.

I would also like to thank the District Councillors for their assistance in a number of issues that we have been working on this year. The support is appreciated and I know they take on cases directly from residents as well.

Our County Councillor provides a link into DCC and I would like to offer thanks for the support given.

Finally, I would like to thank the residents of Hilton for the continued support and feedback on how we can improve our services.

HPM 4/24 Responsible Finance Officer Report

Cllr Andrew presented the annual financial report. It was noted that the precept amount received from South Derbyshire District Council remained the same at £172,900 which meant that the Parish Council cost per household was reduced for a fifth year in a row, whilst maintaining the ability to invest in projects. As a result of prudent spending an additional £60,000 had been made available for the Parish Council 4 year plan and Cllr Andrew reported that the Parish Council is in a healthy financial position.

The Parish Council accounts had been audited and the external audit report was awaited.

HPM 5/24 Matters Raised by Electors

Concerns were raised about the damaged and untidy state of the bus shelter on the Derby-bound side of Derby Road.

Queries were raised about the duties of the Groundsmen and Cllr Coney provided an update on the full range of duties.

Concerns were raised about damage to the soft landing surface in the play area at the Village Hall. This had been vandalised by children on the nights of Monday 27 or Tuesday 28 May 2024. CCTV footage would be checked.

Meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Signed _____ Chairman / Vice Chairman

Notes taken by Cllr J McCreadie