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Hilperton Update

(not HilperTOWN!)

Summer/Autumn 2017

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Cllr. Ernie Clark.

Your Independent
Wiltshire councillor.

Experience Competence Energy Action Results

Dear Resident,

A massive 'Thank You' yet again

'Thank you' to everyone who voted at the Wiltshire Council election back in May. An even bigger 'Thank you' if you voted for me!

Hilperton had a 43% turnout compared to a county average of 39%. Some of the Trowbridge seats only managed a meagre 29%.

You gave me 1,342 votes (79.6%), a slight increase from 1,329 four years previously.

I am honoured to be allowed to represent you at County Hall and

assure you that I will continue to battle for Hilperton.

Ernie.

Keeping in touch with you

I intend to continue with my Hilperton Update newsletters two or three times a year. However, I send out a monthly e-newsletter which has more 'topical' news. It also allows me to contact residents regarding important local issues. If you wish to be added to the mailing list (your details will not be passed to anyone else) **please register via** www.ernieclark.org.uk

Draft Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan

The Wiltshire Council draft Development Plan Document is in the public realm. If you have internet access do please check this document out. <http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=66252#mgDocuments> It will take you to the necessary WC web site page. Items 1k and 18 relate to Hilperton.

If you go to the WC consultation portal you need to click on '5. Housing site allocations', then 'North and West Wiltshire Housing Market Area', and finally 'Trowbridge'. Hardly user friendly!!

There are some minor alterations to the Settlement Boundary, which is basically the old Village Policy Limit, to cover some of the in-fill development which has occurred over the past few years. None of these alterations look to be very contentious.

HOWEVER Wiltshire Council is suggesting that all the land on the Trowbridge side of Elizabeth Way should be allocated for housing (policy H 2.3) but admit that possible effects on protected species, nearby heritage assets, protection of mature and semi-mature hedge-

rows and trees, 'dark corridors' for foraging bats, and surface water drainage would all need mitigation (paragraphs 5.58 to 5.66).

Measures to address these issues would reduce dwelling capacity to approximately only 205 dwellings on over 16 hectares of land. To my mind this shows the stupidity of the idea if only that number of houses could be built on that quantity of greenfield land. This low density would not be allowed by the planners on any other site and seems to indicate the desperation of the spatial planners at County Hall to build on all the green spaces between the town and the surrounding villages.

Remarkably, there seems to be no mention of the largest brownfield site within the town boundary - the currently desolate ex-Bowyer site next to Trowbridge railway station.

This is a significant brown field site which could provide upto 200 houses and should be allocated as a sustainable town centre housing development and brought forward as a priority. Oddly, it has not been included in the allocation of housing for Trowbridge.

The application for Ashton Park has not yet been determined, which is substantially due to the

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mitigation measures which need to be agreed for the Bechstein Bats, which roost in Green Lane and Biss Woods.

The developers are claiming that once this is approved they will then only be able to commit to a build rate of 300 houses per year, which will deliver 1,600 out of the 2,600 by 2026, leaving a shortfall of 1,000. Why they can only build 300 houses a year is not clear.

The various sites ignored by WC are clearly a priority for housing allocation so that the Hilperton Gap sites (263 & 297), amongst others, do not need to come forward for planning.

Sites 256 (South of Green Lane) which is the extension to Castle Mead and 292 (North of Green Lane) which lies between Ashton Road and Paxcroft Mead have been discounted due to their proximity to Green Lane Wood and the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (published by Wiltshire Council on 10th September 2015).

The main issues are the presence of hedgerows (particularly on the

site north of Green Lane) and the impact of residents accessing the woods themselves for recreational purposes including dog-walking. There has been significant development close to Green Lane Wood and Biss Wood and there is significant further development proposed.

The Guidance indicates a 1.5km circle from the woods which should be considered when assessing planning impact. Within this circle lies almost all of Paxcroft Mead, Castle Mead, and the Ashton Park allocation. In total some 4,000 houses have already been built in the last 20 years and a further 2,600 have been allocated to be built in this zone.

It is VITAL that as many people as possible respond to the consultation. Whatever your thoughts on why the Gap should remain green, make sure that WC knows them! You have until 5.00pm on Friday 22nd September to comment.

Hilperton Parish Council will be holding a special meeting at the village hall on Tuesday 5th September to discuss its response to the DPD. Start time 7.30pm.

**For up to date news on local issues,
or to register for my e-newsletter,
please visit**

www.ernieclark.org.uk

Village Green application

I am pleased that one set of residents read my previous newsletters and submitted a Village Green application for part of the Hilperton Gap - Church Field (the field by Hilperton Cemetery).

If you first used the field in 1997, or earlier, please contact them at churchfieldfriends@gmail.com. The use does not have to have been 'continuous'.

It is still possible to register village green applications for the other fields on the Hilperton side of Elizabeth Way.

Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan

The plan has completed its Regulation 14 consultation and the planning consultant is drafting revisions. Several developers gave the steering group the benefit of their perceived 'wisdom'!!

Speeding in Hilperton

Of the issues mentioned to me, one stands head-and-shoulders above the rest; speeding.

Whilst it would be nice to think that the police will take action, I regret that, with the cut back in the number of police officers, that is simply not going to happen (other than on a very rare basis).

However, there is a Community Speed Watch team operating in the parish which would be happy to greet new volunteers especially from the Hilperton Marsh area as Horse and Marsh Roads do not get visited by CSW quite as often as the residents would like.

The time requirement is not onerous - the minimum commitment is only one hour a month. The police provide a short training session and all volunteers are insured whilst carrying out CSW duties. Contact me for more information.

How to contact me

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