

## Clerks Report – April 2008

### **Agenda Items**

**6 i) Letter from Mere & District Chamber of Trade** - Barbara S. Hewitt, Chairman of Mere & District Chamber of Trade writes: 'The Mere & District Chamber of Trade have for some time been concerned with the number of businesses leaving or closing in Mere. In some cases a change of use from commercial to residential have been sought and granted for the properties in question, thus reducing the capacity to rebuild the business community. This has coincided with what was perceived as an unusually quiet summer last year, where a number of businesses noticed a slow down in trade. There could, of course, be a number of reasons for this, including a bad and very wet start to the summer last year, deterring people from West Country holidays. Mere, has undoubtedly, in previous years, benefited through spring and summer months from the passing holiday trade. The Solstice Park development at Amesbury was also completed last year, and being only 30 minutes from Mere, equipped with several food outlets and a petrol station, could have deterred visitors from using the facilities in Mere. Another concern is that following the closure of the Old Ship Hotel in 2006 and the loss of the advertising board on the A303 to Wookey Hole, many visitors are by-passing Mere. The Chamber has therefore spent some months looking into the possibility of improving the advertising and signage for Mere and it's local businesses. The outcome of this, in brief, is that any proposals for private local business signage would be unlikely to be granted planning permission. The Wookey Hole sign has caused some controversy and is currently in dispute. There is a possibility, however, that we could improve and update road signs on the trunk roads leading into Mere. The brown and white sign on the A303 approaching Mere from London to the West Country is now rather jaded. At a meeting with George Jeans last year, it was advised that the cost for this would have to be met locally. The Chamber would therefore be interested to canvass the support of the Parish Council, to investigate the possibility of improving the signage advertising the facilities in Mere. The management committee of the Mere & District Chamber of Trade look forward to discussing this very important issue with the Parish Council, as well as investigating any other ideas to help improve the prospects of the business community.

**7 b) Traffic Management Scheme for Castle Street (Condition 14 of planning application for former Castle Hill Garage)** - WCC has sent a draft copy of the proposed order and comments should be sent in writing to reach WCC by 7th April 2008 (I have informed them that we will e-mail our comments on 8th April). The proposed Order is:

**No waiting at any time** will be imposed on the following lengths of road:-

**Castle Street (B3095)** – North west – from its junction with Castle Hill Lane to a point 10 metres south west of the boundary between the properties known as Bristow House and Glendene – from a point 20 metres north east of the boundary between the properties known as Bristow House and Glendene to a point 33 metres north east of the boundary between the properties known as Bristow House and Glendene and from a point in line with the boundary between the properties known as The Cottage and Butcombe to a point 39 metres north east of the boundary between the properties known as The Cottage and Butcombe.

**Castle Street (B3095)** – South east – from a point 9 metres north east of the boundary between the properties known as Waterford House and Glendon to a point 50 metres west of its junction with Barton Lane.

Deposit copies of the Order, plans and Statement of the County Council's Reasons for proposing to make the Order may be inspected at the offices of the Director of

Environmental Services, County Hall, Trowbridge during normal office hours. Details of the proposed scheme may be seen at Mere Library between the hours of 10am – 7pm on Monday, 9am – 5pm Tuesday to Friday and 9am – 1pm on Saturday until 7th April. Comments on the proposal together with the reasons for which they are made should be sent in writing to George Batten, Director of Environmental Services, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JD by 7th April 2008 quoting reference KAD/TRO/MERE.

**7 c) - Traffic Speeds on entrances to Mere** - Sgt. Blencowe from the Safety Camera Unit has been in touch with me to say that he is hoping to put up some interactive signs as an experiment and to give us an idea of their effectiveness. By the time of this meeting, the signs should have been in place for a few days. Sgt. Blencowe is unable to recommend companies that supply these interactive units and he has confirmed that WCC as Highways Authority need to agree the principle of installing the signs, where the signs are going to be placed, heights etc. Sgt. Blencowe would very much appreciate feedback on the effectiveness of these signs.

**9 a) Collection of Recycling Black Boxes** - SDC's Chairman of Environment & Transport Overview & Scrutiny Panel writes: 'At the last meeting of the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 3rd March 2008, members expressed a concern that not all residents in the District (particularly in some rural areas) are able to participate in doorstep recycling collections via the black box scheme. This is particularly problematic for older residents who, in some instances, are required to carry their black box to the nearest roadside for collection by Hills Waste. The environment and Transport Overview & Scrutiny Panel therefore resolved to compile a list of all the streets, villages and other areas where this unsatisfactory arrangement is currently in place, with the intention of bringing the matter to the attention of the Portfolio Holder for Environment. To assist us in this task, I would be extremely grateful if you could provide me with a list of any roads or other places in your ward or parish where residents either do not have doorstep recycling collections or where it is impractical for them because of the distance involved. Please send your list to me as soon as possible.

**9 b) 43 Bde Memorial March** - Major David Woodford has sent me an e-mail: 'As discussed briefly on the telephone 43 Wessex Brigade (Based in Bulford) is planning a Territorial Army march between the 43 Division (our antecedent Formation) memorials in the area as part of the TA Centenary celebrations, which occur this year. I am the project officer for this particular event. The plan is for Regiments to provide a team of 20 people with 4 people marching one of 5 x 26 mile legs of the route. In this way each Regimental team will cover the entire route. The route starts at Bodmin and finishes at Mere taking in a further memorial at Wynards Gap. The event culminates at Mere memorial (the one on top of the Hill) where we will hold a brief Remembrance service. I expect 20 to 30 soldiers to be on route at a time. Whilst wearing uniform they will not be carrying, or using weapons. All routes will be on public rights of way, i.e. long distance paths, bridleways etc. There will be a number (up to 10?) of support vehicles (minibuses) in Mere on the morning of Sun 1 Jun 08 and we hope to confine ourselves to the Castle Street car park (space allowing). Salisbury council were unable to offer us exclusive use of the car park. The Service will involve roughly 100 personnel. There may be some civilian interest through the 43 Division Association and a consequent increase in cars in the village and your offer to open the gates is welcomed'

## ***Information Items***

### **Standards Board for England:P Revised Code of Conduct 2007**

SDC's Standards Committee has asked for a short reminder to be circulated to all Parish Councils, relating to the changes to the Local Code of Conduct. Parish Councils will be aware that the new Code came into effect in October 2007 (even for those parishes that

did not pass specific resolutions adopting the new Code). The new code introduces some significant changes to the way councillors are required to declare interests and all parishes should ensure they are familiar with the new rules. For example, provided the parish council has expressly adopted provision 12 (2) of the Code (and this would require a resolution for those councils that did not previously allow public contributions during meetings) – councillors with personal and prejudicial interests may speak at meeting before withdrawing. Previously they were not permitted to speak on the matter at all. Guidance explaining the new changes can be found on the Standards Board's website at [www.standardsboard.gov.uk](http://www.standardsboard.gov.uk) and a DVD and factsheets are available from SDC;s Democratic Services Team for any parish wishing to learn more.

**Newsletters, Periodicals, Magazines**

Clerks & Councils Direct, March 2008, Issue 56

The Clerk, The Journal of the Society of Local Council Clerks, March 2008 – Vol. 40, No. 2

Wiltshire Wayfarer – Rights of Way Newsletter – Spring 2008

Fieldwork – The newsletter from the Campaign to Protect Rural England - March 2008

Local Council Review – Official Journal of National Association of Local Councils – March 2008

Trustee Voices – March 2008

Mrs. Lindsey Wood, Parish Clerk