

CLERKS REPORT – December 2013

Agenda Items

5a) Proposals relating to Walnut Road/Shafesbury Road junction – Minute 65a):

A Working Group comprising Councillors M. Cassidy, D. Hope, J. Jordan, E. Mitchell and R. Sims met on site on 25 November 2013.

It was accepted that the present mini-roundabout configuration at this junction does not work and is hazardous. Vehicles travelling along Clements Lane/Shafesbury Road mainly drive straight over the mini-roundabout without reducing speed. Furthermore, the exit from Walnut Road (which serves both the Walnut Road/Oak Lane housing development and the Walnut Tree Inn) is hazardous because drivers cannot see left (south) into Shafesbury Road. The 'give-way' line to the mini-roundabout at the mouth of Walnut Road is positioned well back in relation to a boundary wall on the corner of the junction, so that approaching traffic from Shafesbury Road cannot be seen.

Following inspection of the junction layout and further consideration, it was agreed that:

- the present mini-roundabout and its associated signage should be removed, and the junction should be converted to a T-junction;
- the give-way line at the mouth of Walnut Road should become a stop-line with a 'Stop' sign, and should be repositioned forward to align with the kerb of Shafesbury Road.
- Rumble strips or other physical means of slowing traffic on Shafesbury Road in the Mere direction should be installed just before the Walnut Road junction. This will also help if a housing development goes ahead on the Hill Brush Site and traffic serving the housing is using a T-junction at Woodlands Road.
- a limited widening of the Shafesbury Road adjacent to Walnut Road could be raised in negotiations between the Hill Brush Company and the developer C G Fry & Son Ltd.

David Hope

25 November 2013

5b) Proposals for siting and building specification for a club house in the Recreation Ground for Mere & District Railway Modellers – Minute 69a) - Mr. Snook writes:

'There is I think one area where clarification may be useful. The comment in question was made in good faith by Cllr Cassidy but I think he got a little mixed up, so I will qualify the situation. We are at present attracting 12 –15 members who use up to 3 cars to attend our fortnightly meetings held in the Small Lecture Hall. The majority of Mere based members walk to these meetings, and I see that this will not change if the meeting place is the Recreation Ground. I think the influx of people that Cllr Cassidy stated was at our exhibitions that are held in both Lecture Halls, and the 250-500 people expected to attend the 2 day exhibition planned for the weekend of June 21st/22nd 2014 will use the 2 main car parks in Mere. I request this qualification be placed in brackets so that the correct meaning is apparent to all of the councillors.

Mere & District Railway Modellers proposed site update 10th November.

Today the principle decision makers of the club visited the four sites that have been mentioned by the good officers of the Parish Council. Our proposal as it stands is our preferred option as long as the car parking issues can be resolved. On closer inspection of the site in front of the Bowling Green that we both looked at is large enough to accommodate our needs, but we are very concerned about the cost of supplying services, and we would require your advice and financial help to prepare the site. If these were available then this would be an alternative solution.

Should the above two options be beyond the resolution of the Parish Council, then the alternative proposal of utilising the area to the right hand side of the Band Hut when facing it, is possible. A smaller tighter building measuring 40 feet by 20 feet will just fit in. This is acceptable as long as we could use the kitchen and toilet in the Band Hut on a temporary basis until such time as we have accumulated funds to incorporate our own.

Finally the swimming pool has been totally rejected at this time, as in our opinion there are so many unknowns and possible pitfalls that we cannot commit our limited resources to such a project, even though on the surface all the amenities and services appear to be in place.

I hope this is received positively, and will enable a decision to be made as soon as possible. I have been asked to ask you to email this to Councillors Hazzard and Jeans as soon as is practical.

***d) Report from Mere Footpath Group** – Cllr. John Jordan writes:

Mere Footpath Group

Who are we? A small band of volunteers who first met late in 2012.

During the 1990s and until 2002, a 'Mere Footpath Group' was formed which achieved an amazing amount. They visited every footpath in the parish and made 70 new stiles and bridges as well as cutting back overhanging brambles. Since 2002 the stiles have begun to age and the footpaths overgrown. As a result the Mere Footpath Group was reformed in November 2012 by Alan Mead.

We have, since re-forming, been awarded a grant by the SW Wiltshire Area Board for the purchase of tools and safety equipment. We have done a good deal of walking the footpaths to assess the work needed and set up an internet based system to record the condition of footpaths in and around Mere and our plans for clearance and improvement work. While we are out walking the paths we have been adding way-markers to make the paths clear for other walkers. Our work is of two types: 'gardening' - where we spend time cutting back growth which obstructs the paths or stiles; and 'building' where we repair or replace stiles and, in one case, a bridge across a stream. What of the future? As well as regular tours keeping the vegetation in check, we have plenty of stiles already identified as needing repair. We also hope to develop Burton Path and the way back to Mill Lane as a tarmac covered circular route for wheelchair and pram access. This will need some agreement from interested parties and some fund raising events! We hope to encourage a few more hardy souls to become members and to, generally, promote the walking of footpaths in Mere - both the tarmacked paths in the village and those that cross the fields and hills from end to end of the parish.

If you are interested in joining us on one of our working parties then please contact Alan on 07880988214 or John at john.a.jordan@hotmail.co.uk

JAJ - 17/11/2013

Information Items

Red tape cut to ease parish councils' progress

Financial burdens for over 9,000 parish councils ended to allow electronic payments.

The government is removing the unnecessary and burdensome financial restrictions on parish councils to improve their productivity and stop them being fined, Brandon Lewis announced today (11 November 2013).

The Local Government Minister laid the parliamentary papers to abolish the existing, inflexible, "2 signature rule" that currently prevents parish councils from using electronic payment methods and wastes too much of council members' time.

Currently, all parish council transactions have to be completed with a cheque that is then signed by 2 members of the council. This makes it difficult for parish councils to use electronic means of payment and many businesses and other public bodies that parish and community councils deal with are increasingly either refusing to take cheques or discouraging their use by discounting electronic payments.

The government attaches the highest importance to the security of public funds. New guidelines will allow parish councils to use electronic methods of payment provided robust anti-fraud measures are in place. Councils will need to ensure that they have a sound and comprehensive system of internal control with checks before and after a payment is made.

Brandon Lewis said:

"Given that there are over 9,000 parish councils in England and 50 of them spend over £1 million each every year, it was ineffective to continue with the current system.

"Removing this red tape that is strangling parish councils will not only free up members' time and let them do more useful council work but also save the councils money by getting discounts for using electronic payments."