

CLERKS REPORT – November 2014

Agenda Items

5b) The future of Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Service – Public Consultation — Having attending the meeting in Trowbridge on 13th October with Cllr. Jeans, I then submitted the following comments on the consultation: 'The Parish Council has come to the conclusion that Scenario 3 (Merge with Dorset Fire Authority) would be the best scenario in terms of making the most financial savings and protecting the most front line services. In Mere we are largely concerned with protecting our local fire station and the service that it provides in and around Mere. We are close to the A303 where accidents are prevalent. It is interesting to note that statistics have just been published by the Department of Transport which show that 60% of road fatalities occur on rural roads – far higher than the death toll on motorways. 862 people died and more than 7,500 were severely injured on English rural roads last year. The statistics report that three people die, on average, each day on rural roads and that the number of people killed on country roads is almost 11 times higher than on motorways. We are also reliant on our fire service to provide a back-up response service for medical emergencies in this area as it can take up to 40 minutes for an ambulance to reach us. For these reasons, it is therefore vital that our local fire station should be safeguarded.'

8a) Report on site meeting with Julie Wharton, Wiltshire Council's Senior Traffic Engineer, on 21st October 2014 at 10 a.m.

Present: Julie Wharton (Wiltshire Council's Senior Traffic Engineer), Councillors Mrs. Traves (part), B. Norris, G. Jeans (part) and C. Hazzard (part) + The Clerk.

Julie Wharton met councillors & The Clerk in the Parish Council office where we briefly went through the Parish Council's Highway, Traffic & Transport Priorities, as requested by the South West Wiltshire Area Boards' Community Area Transport Group and submitted to them.

The group then walked around Mere to show Julie Wharton some of the problems/issues faced and discuss requests and ideas to address these problems:

- Parking Restrictions (yellow lines) for Water Street/Ivymead to maintain unobstructed access for school buses and emergency vehicles
- 'Road width' signage for HGVs at Hazzards Hill/Water Street junction
- Reconfiguration of car parking layout in Salisbury Street Car Park to increase number of parking spaces and reduce confusion (especially in the centre of the car park) whilst maintaining HGV parking in car park during the night. Also to provide 2 disabled parking spaces near the doctor's surgery.
- Parking Restrictions (yellow lines) along Salisbury Street (both sides)
- Modifications to parking restrictions (yellow lines) in The Square
- Removal of 'No Vehicle' sign to south of Clock Tower island
- Road adoption issues of Barnes Place
- Removal of mini-roundabout at junction of Shaftesbury Road/Walnut Road
- Issues relating to HGVs travelling along The Lynch

Julie Wharton to consider these issues and provide advice to the Parish Council on ways in which they may be addressed and procedure for requests etc.

Other issues discussed but ruled out were:

- Problems faced by traffic coming out of Castle Hill Lane onto Castle Street and lack of visibility – Julie Wharton advised that a 'Highway Mirror' as a visibility aid is unlikely to be sanctioned.

- Traffic calming for Pettridge Lane – Julie Wharton felt that the road narrowing and priority sections provided an element of traffic calming and that any other traffic calming measures would be either ineffective or unpopular.

11b) Consultation on BT's current programme of proposed public payphone removals – Wiltshire Council writes: 'We have received notification from BT regarding consultation on their current programme of proposed public payphone removals.

There are currently 85 public payphones which have very low usage levels and BT propose to remove them following a full consultation. Details of these payphones are shown on the enclosed sheets which include telephone number and addresses. BT has also placed consultation notices in the relevant payphone kiosks.

We are required to carry out our own consultation process to canvas the views of the local community.

Therefore, we are seeking the views of parish councils, Wiltshire Councillors and other groups and organisations representing the community on the removal of these payphones.

Please can reasons be provided for any objections to the removal of specific phones as a blanket objection is unlikely to carry much weight.

BT have provided some examples of factors that may be relevant (see link to their guidance at bottom of page):

- If there is predominantly privately rented or council housing in the area, this may suggest people on a lower income without access to mobile and fixed telephones and support the view that a public call box should be retained.
- There may be concerns about access to telephones services in areas with particular low population densities.
- The payphone may be sited in an area of particularly poor mobile phone coverage.
- There may be a higher than average need to access emergency services, including breakdown services due to specific local factors for example, the call box is near a known accident black-spot.

BT offers the opportunity for parish councils and registered charities to adopt a kiosk for just £1, thereby protecting the heritage of the community.

Details about this can be found at <http://business.bt.com/phone-services/payphone-services/adopt-a-kiosk/>

The consultation period will close on 8 January 2015 so we would be very grateful if you could return your comments by 22 December 2014 as all responses need to be collated and channelled via a single point of contact.

Please can comments to be returned to Tim Martienssen at Wiltshire Council who will co-ordinate the response on behalf of the Council.'

As I understand it, the only payphone in Mere being threatened with this removal is the one in The Square.

Cllr. Nick Beale has put forward the following suggestion:

'Could we buy it for £1 and let different groups or organisations use it for 6 months at a time, i.e. The library, Mere School gardening club, Mere Museum, Mere Town Football Club to show what they do. Obviously they would need to leave the outside as it is but it would keep it interesting and 'living'. It would be something dynamic and unique for Mere. A smaller quirky version of what's in the Clock Tower.

Just an idea, would be a shame to see it go for the sake of £1 and a re-paint every few years.'