

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 3rd December 2018 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW

Present: Councillors John Jordan (Chairman), Mrs. K. Symonds (Vice-Chairman), A. Colman, P. Coward, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Ings, G. Jeans, A. Mead, B. Norris, R. Sims & Mrs. L. Traves. Also 8 members of public

Due to GDPR it is now considered good practice not to identify members of the public by name within these Minutes.

Meeting convened at 7.30 p.m. with Public Session

The Chairman will convene the Town Council meeting after the public session (please note that members of the public are no longer permitted to speak unless invited to do so by the Chairman).

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A member of the public said that he thought the commemorative display in Lou's It Hairdressers window was very moving. The Clerk informed members that Cllr. Colman had designed this display. Cllr. Colman was duly complemented on this work. This member also said that he wanted to congratulate Wiltshire Council contractors who have repaired/replaced streetlights in Pennybank Lane.

A resident of Water Street said that with reference to the possible future development of the Beaumont's Business Park, he hoped that the planning process might consider other things that may be of benefit to the community, for example the provision of office space or studio space for small business start-ups and art studios.

Cllr. Roy Sims expressed his concern relating to issues of sunken graves and cracks in the cemetery. It was explained that the recent hot and dry summer did cause a lot of problems with cracks appearing in the cemetery and the grounds staff have done their best to fill them with topsoil. However, it was also the fact that relatives (grave owners) may not be maintaining the graves and the Town Council's grounds staff do not interfere with these unless there is a danger to the public. Cllr. Jordan said that a couple of years ago, he did go to the cemetery with a team of volunteers to do some work and he explained that it is a difficult balance between interfering with families graves and keeping the cemetery tidy. He said that the grounds staff did a wonderful job in the cemetery. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd wondered if people could pay the Town Council a nominal sum each year to look after their graves. Cllr. R. Coward said that he had some chalky soil that the grounds staff could use to fill in holes and cracks, if wanted.

Cllr. Roy Sims said that he had attended a Community Safety Group meeting a little while ago at which there was a discussion about how neighbourhood watch schemes are co-ordinated. He said he was trying to find out some more information on this and the Chairman said that, he too, was working on this.

The applicant spoke in favour of planning application 18/10831/TCA stating that the tree obstructs a lot of light and that he had consulted with his neighbour who was also in favour of the tree being felled.

***Mr. Vernon Phillips to discuss proposals for an Emergency Plan for Mere** (as per the brief distributed to members prior to the meeting)

Apologies for absence received from Cllr. E. Mitchell & Michael Streeter from Gillingham & Shaftesbury News.

215. To receive declarations of interest from members and to consider requests for new DPI dispensations.

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Mere Town Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

Cllr. Clive Hazzard declared a personal interest in planning application 18/10480/FUL

Cllr. George Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in planning application 18/10831/TCA and in 10c) and said that although he had no interest to declare in 18/10480/FUL, it was a neighbouring business. Cllr. Jeans also declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 222a) & 222c)

Cllr. P. Coward declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 219b)

216. Minutes – RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held Monday, 5th November 2018 on proposal made by Cllr. Jordan, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 5.11.18

217. Matters Arising

a) Minute No. 206a) Centenary of the end of the First World War (Battle's Over – a Nation's Tribute) – update on event – The Chairman said that the events organised by the Town Council had been very well received and, as an example, read out a letter received from a resident: "We would like to thank you and the Town Council for all the hard work and thought that had been put into the preparation which culminated in such a moving and memorable weekend. Obviously many people had been involved but the success of bringing everything together was down to you and the council. It was no mean feat to bring together the people of Mere on such an occasion when so many beliefs and opinions are involved. The weekend was a fitting tribute to the Fallen of Mere and all people working for peace. Please share this letter with the appropriate people. Thank you once again." Cllr. Rodney Coward said the display in Jubilee Gardens was superb. The Chairman said we now have 52 mementos and 52 crosses which we have gathered up and would like your thoughts on what we should do with them. Cllr. Hill felt that the mementos could go on display in the North Chapel in the cemetery. The Chairman said he would take them along to the chapel and see what they look like, along with the soldiers and in the meantime he will approach the families who have expressed an interest in keeping the mementos of their family members.

***b) Minute No. 197 f) Cranborne Chase AONB: Our bid for Dark Sky Reserve status** – further information – with reference to the additional information provided to members with their agenda papers, Cllr. P. Coward said that he had reservations about supporting this as he had been prohibited from adding daylight panels to his house due to the AONB restrictions. Cllr. Jeans said that he was not in favour of polluting skies and was in favour of shades on street lights etc. but he was not happy to support a bid that may result in more planning restrictions. RESOLVED that the Town Council should not send in a letter of support. Proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Colman and carried with a unanimous vote.

***c) Minute No. 209e) Low River Levels – response from the Environment Agency & update from Mere Rivers Group** – members noted the contents of the letter that the Town Council had written to the Environment Agency and their response. Mr. Ian Sheppard, Chairman of Mere Rivers Group was invited to speak and said that the Rivers Group had also written to both Wessex Water and the Environment Agency and had received responses from both with the CEO at Wessex Water saying "we appreciate that our abstraction has some effect on your streams". The Environment Agency have responded to us both to say that they will thoroughly analyse the scientific data that was obtained when there was no abstraction over the winter and review their interpretations and will jointly present the findings to the Mere Rivers Group. Mr. Sheppard said that the Mere Rivers Group is not looking to stop abstraction from Mere but would like to achieve a reduction in the licence. The Rivers Group will be on BBC Radio Wiltshire on Wednesday, 5th December and I hope you all went to Mere Museum to see the exhibition on 'The tale of two rivers' which was a great success. Mere Parish Council made representations on this issue back in 1969/70 and here we are again doing exactly the same thing. In 1970 the environment agency said the water should be taken from the Wylde Valley but the Minister at the time did not agree and Wessex Water were granted a licence to take the water from Mere.

Cllr. Rodney Coward said that he was concerned as to how the increased demand would be met to supply the planned houses to be built in Gillingham & Shaftesbury. It was agreed that the Town Council would write back to the Environment Agency, thanking them for the response and to say that the Town Council is awaiting the results of their analysis.

d) Minute No. 210b) Vandalism in public toilets – The Clerk reported that the police investigations were inconclusive. The toilets have been re-opened at night now and Clerk is obtaining quotations for improved CCTV coverage.

218. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – None

b) County Councillor's report - Cllr. Jeans confirmed that he had recently attended a Mere Brownie meeting where young members spoke about some of their issues which the Town Council may be able to help with. He also reported that Wiltshire Council has funds to provide more council housing and is looking in this area to see if there is suitable land available for small-scale developments, similar to that achieved at Bramley Hill. He has attended a number of Standards Board meetings and it is becoming apparent that Parish & Town Councillors are often brought into question and complaints investigated. Cllr. Jeans also reported on a very unfortunate incident recently when Wessex Water contractors created a traffic diversion through The Lynch – he stressed that this was not authorised by the Highways Authority who have no control of the diversions created by the utility companies and their contractors. The Town Council's new Speed Indicator Device has been erected in Barrow Street and will be moved, at a later date, into Castle Street. Cllr. Jeans said that he is finding the new GDPR regulations very challenging and is often frustrated at not being able to get telephone numbers etc. He also said that Wiltshire Council had a policy whereby members of the public were informed that by entering a meeting room they are consenting to having their name recorded and he would like this to be raised as a future agenda item for a similar policy to be considered by the Town Council.

c) Report on Seeds4Success Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 7th November – the Chairman reported that he had attended this meeting along with a number of other Town Councillors. He said that the Town Council was well represented and reported that Seeds4Success was a model on how to work with young people and that he had passed on the Town Council's appreciation of the way that they work with the young people of Mere. Cllr. Sims suggested that it would be nice to encourage some of the youngsters to come along to a Town Council meeting.

219. Planning

a) Applications: (All applications can be viewed on Wiltshire Council's website <http://planning.wiltshire.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/ApplicationSearch.aspx> – and type in the relevant application number)

Application Ref: 18/10831/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in a Cons. Area
Proposal: Fir tree – fell
At: Newlands, Boar Street, Mere, Wiltshire. BA12 6DD

Having declared a pecuniary interest in the above application, Cllr. Jeans left the meeting and took no part in discussion or voting. **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Ings, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of those present.

Application Ref: 18/10805/LBC + 18/10387/FUL
Application for: Listed Building Consent & Full Planning
Proposal: Partial demolition of rear lean-to extension and erection of 2-storey extension to provide a ground floor kitchen & family room and a first floor bedroom and en-suite bathroom with dressing room.

At: Longmead, Barrow Street, Mere. BA12 6AB

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above applications on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a majority of those present. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

Application Ref: 18/10480/FUL

Application for: Change of use of land from garden to parking vehicles ancillary to F. J. Chalke Ltd

At: New House, North Street, Mere. BA12 6HH

The Chairman pointed out that this was a retrospective application. F. J. Chalke had recently purchased New House in North Street and had taken away part of the garden of this property to incorporate it within their forecourt. Cllr. Norris said that he thought this application would have incurred some objections but had noticed that there were none on the planning portal. The Clerk said that she had not received any objections. Cllr. Mead said that he felt that local businesses should be supported and Cllr. P. Coward agreed. Cllr. Ings said that there are sometimes complaints about F. J. Chalke cars being parked in the public car park and that this application may help to alleviate that issue. **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. Hill and carried with a vote of 11 for and 2 abstentions. (Cllr. Hazzard, having declared a personal interest in this application, refrained from discussion or voting & in order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

Application Ref: 18/10942/FUL

Application for: single storey utility extension to side

At: The Pax, Limpers Hill, Mere. BA12 6BD

Application Ref: 18/10944/FUL

Application for: Single storey oak framed family room extension to rear

At: The Pax, Limpers Hill, Mere. BA12 6BD

The Clerk explained that the above two applications had been received since the agendas had been issued but that the consultation expiry dates were on 27th & 28th December respectively and that the Town Council could either consider the applications now, ask for a consultation deadline or delegate authority to the Clerk & Chairman to respond closer to the deadline. Members agreed to delegate authority for the Clerk & Chairman to submit an approval response subject to no objections having been raised by members of the public, either direct to the Town Council or on the Wiltshire Council planning page.

***b) Early consultation for development of Beaumont's Business Park** – Having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, Cllr. P. Coward left the room whilst this matter was discussed. The Chairman said that the Clerk had received a request from Savills Planning to discuss initial proposals for the redevelopment of Beaumont's Business Park and that he, Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, Cllr. Norris & Cllr. Jeans had gone along to meet them and look at the site last week. He said that many residents had noticed that the site has had traps for reptiles installed recently and had probably guessed that something was in the pipeline. At the meeting, we put a case for the issues affecting Mere but we need to respect the fact that they did ask for us to keep it in confidence so I am not going to pass around their initial drawings or say any more on the subject other than to report that we did request that if they come to a point where they are going to submit a planning application then they come to a Town Council meeting beforehand. Mr. Hamish Bell, Chairman of Mere & District Chamber of Trade pointed out that the CoT had received an expression of interest from 20 small businesses for hot-desk facilities.

220. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward, Wiltshire online reporting & street lighting faults – no new issues were reported. The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council had reported three faulty street lights during November.

b) Report on Community Area Transport Group (CATG) meeting held on Wednesday, 7th November – The Chairman reported that he attended the meeting and made representations for some dropped kerbs in and around the Woodlands Road/Shafesbury Road junction. At the meeting, Cllr. Wayman had informed him that C. G. Fry had funds to spend on dropped kerbs and so that was something we needed to investigate further.

Cllr. R. Coward asked if it would be possible to have a white line put in the middle of the road outside the bank/antiques shop

Cllr. Mrs. Symonds asked if something could be done about the obliteration of the double yellow lines in The Square. Wiltshire Council used black paint to cover up the yellow lines no longer required instead of burning off the lines but, unfortunately, the black paint has now worn off and the double-yellow lines reappeared.

Cllr. Sims brought of the issue of emergency access at Bramley Hill. The Clerk & chairman informed him that these matters were being investigated and would be discussed at a future meeting.

***c) Cllr. Wayman's Highways Newsletter** – the Chairman noted that there was some interesting information about civil parking enforcement and grit bins within the newsletter.

d) Parking in Mere – the Chairman said that several members met about a year ago to look at parking problems in Mere, particularly poor and inconsiderate parking. The answer, at the time, was to ask the police if they would follow it up. At a recent Community Safety Group meeting, we were told that parking would need to be a danger to the public before the police would deal with it. The Chairman said that there were a number of towns with similar or worse parking problems than Mere. Cllr. Jeans said that parking congestion in The Square will become worse when the old Lloyds Bank building and Old Ship building have been developed, there is already parking in between the trees on the open space grass area between Castle Hill Crescent and Manor Road and he wondered if the Town Council should think about where it can accommodate more parking and perhaps places where double-yellow lines should be added such as Church Street, Water Street, North Street and did we ought to add a disabled parking bay by the chemist. He said that the idea of overspill parking in the church field in Angel Lane should not have been abandoned and he said that he felt that three or four councillors should come together to suggest priorities & actions. Cllrs. Colman, Mead, Sims and Jeans agreed to meet to put forward some priority suggestions to the Town Council.

221. Buildings, Open Spaces, Play Areas, Sports Grounds, Allotments & Cemeteries

222. Finance, Policy & Resources

***a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedule, on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of those present. (Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room and took no part in discussion or voting).

***b) Emergency Plan for Mere** – with reference to the presentation made by Mr. Philips, Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that she felt that Neighbourhood Watch Schemes may cover some of the aspects that Mr. Philips mentioned and she also had experience with the emergency services who, in some circumstances, don't like people being involved in helping with emergencies and would prefer them to be out of the way. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that she would, however, like a local help group to clear snow so that people can get out and about. Cllr. R. Coward said that of the possible scenarios suggested by Mr. Philips, the most likely would be a multiple crash on the A303. Cllr. Ings said that one of the biggest problems experienced earlier on this year with the snow blockages on the A303 were the number of people that got stuck on the A303 and had nowhere to go. As a town, Mere can offer hospitality but people do not know what to do and where to go. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that a volunteer emergency help group was set up a few years back but disbanded before making any headway due to a clash of personalities amongst the group. Cllr. Philip Coward said that during the 1980s the Parish Council had an emergency plan in place and a lot of us became community advisers so that if something happened, we would be contacted to put plans into place. He said that having a Community Building available such as the Grove Buildings, should a disaster

strike, was a good idea. The Chairman explained that the school is required to have an emergency plan in place which is basically a line of communication. Cllr. Norris said that Wiltshire Council have tried to put this in place before, asking for contacts for 4X4 drivers and farmers with tractors etc. Cllr. Jeans said that he thought it may be a good idea for a few people to gather round and discuss ideas. Mr. Philips said that he keeps hearing the word 'communication' and felt that this was key to the whole scheme. **RESOLVED** a working group of people to gather together to focus on getting good lines of communication. Proposal made by Cllr. Jordan, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote. Volunteers for the working group: Cllrs. George Jeans (three or four meetings only), Cllr. P. Coward, Cllr. G. Ings and Vernon Philips.

c) Quotation for CCTV on public toilets & car park – Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, left the room whilst the matter was discussed. The Clerk confirmed that she had sought one quotation for CCTV for the car park but that she wanted to obtain more quotations before presenting to the Town Council. Cllr. Mead said that it might be worth going to see what these cameras can do. Cllr. Sims said that the Town Council should seek advice from the Bobby Van.

223. General Items & Consultations/Briefing Notes

***a) Suggestion of Blue Plaque for The Maltings, Castle Street where Mr. Wolfe Frank once lived** – Cllr. Jeans said that if the Council was going to approve this proposal then any such plaque must say that it is where Mr. Wolfe Frank lived for a short time as he actually lived in Lynch Close, Mere for a much longer period of time. Members were unsure about what the costs would be and the process in gaining a blue plaque and requested that the Clerk find out more information on this before making a decision.

***b) Councillor Briefing Note No. 373 – Service Devolution & Asset Transfer to Towns & Parishes** – members noted the information in the Briefing Note.

c) Judging Xmas lights – Cllr. Ings was persuaded to take on the role of judging the Xmas Lights and Cllr. Jeans volunteered to donate/source prizes.

12. Forthcoming meetings/events

13. Future agenda items

Note: Members are reminded that the Town Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.

*Further information on these items enclosed/attached

Meeting closed 21.29