

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 1st April 2019 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW

Present: Councillors John Jordan (Chairman), A. Colman, P. Coward, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, G. Ings, A. Mead, E. Mitchell, B. Norris, R. Sims, & Mrs. L. Traves.
Also 12 members of public + 1 press

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).

Please Note: *By entering the meeting room you are consenting to the use of your name being recorded in the Minutes. The meeting may also be recorded by the press or members of the public. Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast any meeting of the Council or its committees is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them so doing and by choosing to film, record or broadcast proceedings they accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.*

Mr. Dick Morris of Downside Close reported that the stone steps leading from Upper Old Hollow to Lower Old Hollow had still not been repaired and he was concerned that they were a public safety hazard. The Clerk confirmed that this had been reported twice to Wiltshire Council online and the issue had been updated online last Thursday to say that it had been attended to. The Clerk confirmed that this would be investigated further.

Mr. Ian Sheppard said that he was requested, on behalf of Mere Rivers Group, that the Town Council write a letter to the Environment Agency asking them to adjust the abstraction licence issued to Wessex Water. He said that anyone who has walked along the streams in last year will know that they are flowing well and they've been fantastic but this is by default and not by design as Wessex Water have only been taking 4 million litres per day (mld) instead of the 9 mld that they are licensed to abstract. Mr. Sheppard says that he has a letter from Wessex Water to say that they only need 4mld for local use and if they start abstracting the 9mld again then the rivers will suffer. We would therefore like to request a permanent reduction in the abstraction licence to 4 mld litres per day.

Mr. Martin Fuller of Castle Hill Crescent said that he understood that Wiltshire Council were looking at the possibility of building in the area and parking issues. He said that all residents of Castle Hill Crescent were concerned about this. He also pointed out that there were abandoned vehicles parked on the road at the present time. Mr. Fuller also raised the point that there was a business, known as Castle Hill Garage on Google, which operated on North Road and that the cars parked alongside the road here were causing a massive problem, blocking visibility at the junction.

Mr. Roy Sims reported, on behalf of the local cancer committee, that they raised £432.72 during the spring fair. He wanted to thank everyone for supporting this event. Mr. Sims also wanted to thank the contractors for the work recently carried out on Castle Street. He said that they had done a terrific job and were very helpful and polite.

The Chairman added to this and pointed out that Cllr. Mitchell had suggested that we make contact with the contractors about providing some road sweeping planings to help fill the potholes in the car park at Duchy Manor and they were very happy to do this. He thanked Cllr. Mitchell for this suggestion.

Mr. Alan Mead asked if and when there was going to be some action to repair the Castle Street Car Park wall along Burton Lane.

Mr. Rodney Coward said that he would like to thank Clive Hazzard for the tulip displays in the town and said that they looked absolutely wonderful.

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. G. Jeans & Mrs. K. Symonds,

256. 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. John Jordan declared a personal interest in Planning Application Ref: 19/02451/TCA

257. Minutes – **RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 4th March 2019 on proposal made by Cllr. Mitchell, seconded by Cllr. Colman and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 4.3.19

258. Casual Vacancy – to report on whether or not an election has been requested –The Chairman confirmed that regrettably, Mrs. Jane Hurd had found it necessary to resign as a Town Councillor. He explained that both he and Cllr. Hazzard had been to see Mrs. Hurd and thanked her for all her hard work as a Town Councillor. The Clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Council had been notified of the vacancy and the statutory 'Notice of Vacancy' had been displayed on the Town Council noticeboard and facebook page. An election to fill the vacancy will be held if TEN electors from the town write to the Returning Office by 28th March asking for an election to be held. If an election is not requested by that date, then the Town Council can fill the vacancy by co-option as soon as practicable. The Clerk was unable to find out whether an election had been requested in time for the meeting tonight but confirmed that if not, the Town Council would be able to fill the vacancy by co-option at the next Town Council meeting and if that is the case she would advertise the co-option and ask for any potential candidates to submit personal statements for distribution prior to the meeting.

259. Matters Arising

a) Consultation on improving our management of water in the environment – response from Mere Rivers Group (see Minute 247c) – The Clerk pointed out that the Rivers Group had submitted a response to the consultation paper and in support, she had submitted a similar consultation response on behalf of the Town Council. Cllr. R. Coward said he wondered where the water is going to come from when they build the 2000 houses in Gillingham and 1000 in Shaftesbury.

***b) Children's Centre Rationalisation – Councillors Briefing Note No. 19-002 (see Minute 247e)** – The Clerk had circulated a copy of the Town Council's response to Wiltshire Council's Children's Centre Services Consultation. Cllr. Hazzard said that there was a School Governor's meeting tomorrow which he would attend.

c) Suggestion of Blue Plaque for The Maltings, Castle Street where Mr. Wolfe Frank once lived (see Minute 226a) – the Clerk informed members that since the January meeting, she had now heard back from both Jenny Wilding and Dr. Longbourne who both felt that although Wolfe Frank was a person of great international significance he was not particularly well known in Mere until the recent publication of a book about his work. That said, a second book about Frank's work in tracking down war criminals is due to be published soon and as he becomes better known, a plaque in Mere might attract a mention in the literature and perhaps draw visitors here which would be a beneficial outcome. However, it may be that the people of Mere would perhaps find it more important that exceptional people of Mere origin and/or provenance be thus honoured e.g. William Lander, Isaiah Mags, Charles Jupe, John Walton, Arthur Coward & Anne Lander. Having considered these responses members of the Town Council felt that they were not the appropriate authority to make a blue plaque application for Wolf Frank or any other significant person with a connection to Mere and agreed that the Clerk should write back to Mr. Paul Hooley to suggest that he submit his own application to the Salisbury Civic society for their consideration.

d) Green Dog Code – Green Dog Code – Cllr. Mead reported that the Green Dog Code Initiative was up and running and 6 volunteers have signed up at present although more people have expressed an interest. Quite a few areas in Mere are being monitored and we are only a month into the scheme so we hope to see an improvement in the future.

260. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – Cllr. Sims said that he was disappointed that PCSO Tscherniawsky did not divulge any information on the changes in Wiltshire police’s ‘Lost & Found Property’ policy when he gave his report last month: from 1st March, the police will no longer deal with the vast majority of lost and found property – they are trying to encourage people to deal with these matters themselves, via social media etc. They will still, however, take in and record Firearms, ammunition, explosives or other weapons, poisonous, toxic or dangerous chemicals, foreign passports or identity documents, cash, anything that contains personal or sensitive data either electronically or in print such as mobile phones, laptops, digital cameras or diaries – to protect the data from fraudulent use. Cllr. Sims also reported on the launch of ‘On the beat campaign to highlight local policing in Wiltshire.’ This is a month-long campaign which will run throughout April and be focused on social media, aiming to educate and inform the public about what their local police service looks like.

b) County Councillor’s report - None

c) Report on Emergency Planning meetings – Cllr. P. Coward said that the group had met since the last Town Council meeting and we have now invited Mr. Chris Manuel (Wiltshire Council’s Emergency Planning Officer) to attend a meeting with us this Friday so that we can get his advice and opinion on how to proceed so that we do not tread on toes of other emergency organisations that all have their own emergency plans.

261. 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: 19/02451/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in a Cons. Area
Proposal: Bay tree – fell
At: Hillview, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JQ

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Hill and carried with a majority vote (Cllr. Jordan, having declared a personal interest in this application, refrained from discussion or voting).

Application Ref: 19/01938/LBC
Application for: Listed Building Consent
Proposal: Replacement of gate and handrail and the reinstatement of a lantern within a listed wall.
At: The Chantry, Church Street, Mere. BA12 6DS

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

262. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Report on meeting with Local Highway Engineer regarding CATG issues: The Clerk reported that she and the Chairman had met with the Highway Engineer, Julie Watts, on 20th March and walked around the three areas that we have current CATG issues in:

- Visibility for pedestrians crossing Gillingham Corner junction – Cllr. Philip Coward has confirmed that the landowner of the field is the granddaughter of an old landowner in Mere but she is apparently not well and her affairs are being looked after by another relative who has said that it will be fine to cut the hedge back – however, we are unlikely to get this in writing. The Highway Engineer has confirmed that their legal team would insist on something in writing from the landowners. Would you like the Town Council to cut the hedge back so as to improve visibility for pedestrians when crossing the road at this junction? RESOLVED that the Town Council’s grounds staff cut off the hedge at chest height and cut it back so as to improve visibility on proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Ings and carried with a unanimous vote.

- Width restriction along The Lynch – The Highway Engineer says that she has been considering the signage for Water Street/The Lynch and rather than try to introduce another restriction (i.e. the width restriction), we should try to enhance the existing restriction. Her initial suggestion is shown on the plan distributed – there would be a “weight limit Water Street 120 yards sign” on the corner of the junction with Hazzards Hill and the lane that leads up to Mere Social Club, there would be HGV direction sign markings on the road at the Water Street junction near Yapp Brothers and there would be a narrow road sign ‘Unsuitable for HGVs’ on the verge by Broadview (where Water Street becomes The Lynch). Cllr. Norris said that he would agree with the point made during the public session that the ‘width restriction’ sign should be in a different location. Cllr. Mead felt that anything to alleviate the problem would be a bonus. **RESOLVED** to support the suggestions but request that the ‘width restriction’ sign is resited to a different location by the main Yapp Brothers junction (Hazzards Hill & Water Street) and request another one the same at the Ivymead & Springfield Road junction with Water Street on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mitchell and carried with a unanimous vote.
- Wall and footpath along The Lynch - whilst in this location the Clerk asked the Highways Engineer if she could provide her with a highways ownership map and this she did. The map clearly shows that the footpath going over The Lynch, in front of houses 1 – 4 The Lynch is actually owned by the Highway Authority and therefore so is the wall. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries as to how to get the wall repaired and hedge cut back as a matter of urgency.
- Dropped kerbs along Clements Lane – request for us to provide some money for dropped kerbs. The Chairman reported that C. G Fry & Son would be adding 3 pairs of dropped kerbs in the area of the new development but two new dropped kerbs either side of the road leading to FP 66/10 will supplement this and make the footpath accessible. The Highways Engineer had confirmed that she had checked the utilities and there does not seem to be any reason why dropped kerbs cannot be located as requested and so she will put these on the agenda for the next SWW CATG. The Clerk pointed out that if successful, this request was likely to require a contribution from the Town Council. **RESOLVED** to support the request for the two dropped kerbs in principle.

b) Blocked ‘footpath’ at White Road – Cllr. A. Colman spoke to the housing office who has written to the people concerned and told them to remove the padlock and chain. Cllr. Mead confirmed that these footpaths are not Public Rights of Way and are access paths for the people who live in the buildings along White Road and not for members of the public.

***c) Letter to Environment Agency as requested by Mere Rivers Group** – With reference to the request to write a letter to the Environment Agency along the lines of draft notes provided by the Mere Rivers Group which had been distributed to members prior to the meeting, it was **RESOLVED** to support the Mere Rivers Group and write a letter to the Environment Agency officially asking them to reduce the abstraction licence issued to Wessex Water from 9 million litres per day (mld) to 4 mld on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.

d) Notice of Temporary Road Closure of The Lynch (part) from 13th May and will be required until 3rd June – the Clerk reported that she had received Notice that Wiltshire Council had made an order to temporarily close The Lynch to all traffic from its junction with Pettridge Lane for a distance of approximately 10 metres in a northerly direction to enable SGN to replace a gas mains pipe. The order will come into operation on 13th May and the closure will be required until 3rd June 2019. Members requested that this be reported in the next issue of Mere Matters.

e) Report from ‘Parking in Mere’ working group on meeting held on 19th March – Cllr. Alan Mead reported that the group had met and decided to concentrate their efforts on an area by area basis, the first area being Castle Hill Crescent and the parking congestion problems occurring in that area. The group felt that it should be possible to take 1.5m away from the grass area in order to provide off-street parking on the opposite side of the road to the bungalows and also to remove the grass amenity areas further up the Crescent to provide more on-street parking. The group had agreed to look at this in more detail and consult with residents on these suggestions

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

Cllr. Sims said that he had noticed some graves in the cemetery were very uneven and thought that they needed attention. Cllr. Hill explained that the newer graves take some time to settle and the ground sinks gradually after which the Town Council staff fill them in and level them off. However, the older graves would be the responsibility of the grave owners to tend and look after. Cllr. R. Coward said that he understood Cllr. Sims comments and felt that 2 or 3 of the newer graves did need levelling.

264. Finance, Policy & Resources

Emergency Item – Boiler in Andy Young Pavilion – The Clerk informed members that the boiler in the pavilion had developed a fault and she had called out Britchards (service engineers) who had estimated a figure of approximately £500 to repair. Given that the Town Council had spent over £1600 on repairs to this boiler last year, she wondered whether the Town Council may feel it was time to replace the boiler. RESOLVED to get quotations to replace the boiler with a long term guarantee and delegate decision to Chairman on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a majority vote. (The Chairman abstained from voting).

***a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

b) Update on ‘ring-fencing’ available Policy R2 funds – The Clerk informed members that she had received confirmation from Wiltshire Council that the available Policy R2 funds had been ‘ring-fenced’ and allocated to the outdoor gym area for the old swimming pool site.

***c) Update on car park pledges/sponsorship** – The Clerk said: ‘Following on from my last report to you at the April 2019 meeting, a spreadsheet showing the amount of funding pledged and received has been distributed to you. Given the level of attendance at our October 2017 meeting and the strength of feeling amongst the community, this is a very disappointing result and you will see from our payment sheets for this month, that the total annual amount pledged will not even cover the rates on the two car parks.’ The Clerk confirmed that the two sponsorship signs (one for each of the car parks) have been updated and replaced to reflect the new business sponsors.

d) Does the Town Council want to renew service contract on Wallgate wall units in public toilets? – The Clerk said that she was unsure whether or not to renew the service contract since the Council had received no news on the lease renewal from Wiltshire Council and thereby could give no likely date for refurbishment proposals to commence. The Clerk pointed out that the renewal of the service contract to run from the period 1.4.19 – 31.3.20 would cost £232 per unit, giving an annual cost of £464 for the two units. RESOLVED to renew contract on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Colman and carried with a unanimous vote.

e) Report on allotment rent audit – the Clerk reported that the Ladyday Allotment rent collection took place last Wednesday. This is the first year that we have offered online payment as an option and 35 allotment holders opted to pay by online transfer and 37 allotment holders opted to call into the office and pay direct so the split was fairly even. Overall we have received £1418.51 in allotment receipts in the last week and at today’s date we have 9 non-payers, 1 vacant allotment at Wellhead and 4 vacant allotments at Southbrook.

265. General Items & Consultations/Briefing Notes

a) Annual Town Meeting – venue booked for Wednesday, 24th April 2019. To discuss requested change of format – The Chairman said that intended to have a slide show running, based on the lovely slide show that was made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds for the 150th anniversary of the clock tower event held last year. He would add some more photographs and have the slide show running so there is something to look at throughout the meeting. He also intended to stick to a strict timetable and inform everyone that they must adhere to 3 minutes. Cllr. Norris said he was concerned about asking certain people to only given a written report as he felt it may cause offence and also they may not turn up at all. Members agreed that giving a written report should be optional and if they wish to give a written report they can do so but they must come and hand it in at the meeting and allow us to acknowledge them.

b) Date of Annual Town Council Meeting – 13th May 2019

c) Support for Community Group Litter Picks – The Chairman and Cllr. Norris agreed to organise a Community Litter Pick event.

Briefing Notes:

***Councillor Briefing Note No. 19-007 – Retail Rate Relief for the High Street** – Cllr. Norris said that this is a national problem.

266. Forthcoming meetings/events

South West Wiltshire Area Board Community Area Transport Group Meeting – 12.00 noon – 2.00 p.m., 1st May 2019 at The Nadder Centre, Weaveland Road, Tisbury

The Chairman said that he would attend this meeting. He pointed out that he had complained that councillors are fed up with going to Nadder Centre and the new organiser did take that on board.

267. Future agenda items

None

Meeting closed at 20.55

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

MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No. 1093497

a) Mere Youth Centre - Update on renewal of lease for building and Seeds4Success – The Clerk said that the quotations to prepare the new lease had already been received and that she had held a meeting with Jaki Farrell who had agreed that it would be more sensible to renew the lease for 6 years and 364 days (the previous lease was for a period of 5 years only). RESOLVED to renew the lease for 6 years and 364 days on the same terms and conditions as before.

b) Payments: RESOLVED to approve the following payments

Wiltshire Council – National Non-Domestic Rates	Tennis Courts	£378.00 less 80% Mandatory Relief (Sports Club) and 20% Discretionary Relief Top Up (Sports Club) £0.00
BWBSL (Wessex Water)	Water supply to old cricket pavilion (standing charge only 13.9.18 – 12.3.19)	12.39

Meeting closed at 20.57