

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 2nd October 2017 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW

Present: Councillors J. Jordan (Chairman), Mrs. K. Symonds (Vice-Chair), A. Colman, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill (from 7.48 p.m.), Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Ings, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, B. Norris, Mrs. L. Traves

Also: Mr. Dick Morris, Spencer Gunn & Claire Shaddick, G. Ivory, Mrs. Belcher, R. Stone & D. Stone, Pam Baldock, Mrs. Kathleen Herbert

Meeting convened at 7.31 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).

Pam Baldock of Lordsmead Road – said that she had reported a street light out (Street Light No. 325 on the footpath almost opposite the Walnut Tree Inn) after it had gone out on 15th February 2017 but it was still out. She said that it was on the steepest part of the path where it is very uneven and very slippery. She also reported that the street light opposite Beaumont building has been on 24 hours a day since February. The Clerk said that she would report these issues to Wiltshire Council for attention.

Mrs. Belcher said that she and her husband were the new owners of the Mere Methodist Church and wanted to speak in favour of the planning applications being considered tonight. She said that it was a historic building and they wanted to convert it, sensitively, into a 5-bed family home with parking around the back. The family had moved down here and children were now enrolled in local schools and she had given up work to oversee the project.

Mrs. Kathleen Herbert of Prospect Place said that her house backed onto Long Hill. She said that the garden grows up a slope and there was a hedge behind the fence belonging to the Town Council that had now grown higher than the fence with nettles amongst it. Mrs. Herbert said that she had taken steps to cut the height of the hedge because she liked to see the view of the hill and asked if she could have a bonfire. The Clerk advised Mrs. Herbert to contact the Town Council office and she would arrange for the grounds staff to come and collect the hedge cuttings and take them away.

Mr. Coltham who lives at 20 Prospect Place said that he had been a resident there since July and wanted to support what Mrs. Herbert said about the overgrown hedge along the fence line. He said that Mere Town Council arranges for cutting of the grass but not cutting the nettles and the small orchard areas were now inaccessible. He said that he had approached the Council's grounds staff who had informed him that they were not insured to cut nettles. Mr. Coltham asked if the ground staff could be instructed to make these areas more accessible.

Cllr. Mrs. Symonds pointed out that there had recently been 2 charity events held on the same weekend, both could well have been called Mere Autumn Bazaar. She said that Mere was now doubling up similar events on the same day and that, at the moment, the only way to try and stop double booking is to check the diary in the library but, she said, this is very low tech and she made the observation that an on-line activity diary might be useful. Cllr. Mrs. Symonds pointed out that even the Town Council had made an error early on in the year when it nearly closed the car park on a weekend when 3 major fundraising events were being held. Cllr. Jeans said that most of the events are either held in the Social Club, Lecture Hall or Grove Building and suggested that it might be an opportunity for the administrators of these buildings to communicate.

The Chairman said that he had received a telephone call from a member of the public who had an unfortunate experience with the goats on Castle Hill and suffered a tumble. The Chairman had already received some information from the Clerk on this issue but the resident wanted to raise two points: 1) she felt that people with dogs were not walking on the hill because of the goats and 2) not only were the goats making a mess but also didn't look very well cared for.

Cllr. Coward said that the goats were an asset on the hill and the benefits of having them on the hill in terms of keeping the weeds, saplings and shrubs under control was immense. Cllr. Coward said that, in his experience, the goats were fairly oblivious to dogs and they were fine with children.

Cllr. Mitchell said that a few months ago, he had raised car parking for Mere School on the Town Council's agenda. Today, when he wanted to come into the Town Council office, the car parking was chaos and he wondered what it was going to be like in a couple of years' time when the new developments had been built and more children would likely be attending the school. The Chairman said that at the moment there was just not sufficient funding for the school to address issues like car parking. Cllr. R. Coward suggested the idea of plastic matting laid across the grass to provide overspill parking areas.

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. P. Coward, A. Mead & R. Sims

60. 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. Jeans declared a personal interest in Minute 62a)
- Cllr. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in Minute 67a)
- Cllr. Ings declared a personal interest in planning applications 17/08714/FUL + 17/09058/LBC

61. Minutes – RESOLVED to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 4th September 2017 on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 4.9.17.

62. Matters Arising

*** a) Leases for car parks and public toilets – update and reports on background work to help decide future** - The Chairman opened the discussion by saying that the Town Council needed something to guide the decision making process for the budget which will come about in November and also to guide the Clerk when she opens discussions with Wiltshire Council at the end of the lease and the options that may be open to us. He then asked Cllr. Colman to highlight the main aspects of his reports:

Cllr. Colman said that he had talked to the British Toilet Association who suggested one disabled toilet and one other public toilet and he had asked some specialist contractors to come up with a specification for this. There would be an area at the rear of the toilets for a service area and there would be room to have an extra workshop space for the grounds staff. The toilets would have automatic door closing and would lock automatically at night. He said that he had also approached local buildings but they declined to quote once they had seen the specification. Cllr. Colman said that the Town Council had no provision in its budget for refurbishment and that it would therefore need to apply for a loan from the Public Works Loan Board at a rate of 1.78% over 10 years which would cost a Band D house £7.28 per year. If we do nothing at all we need to close the toilets down, brick up windows and decommission and that will cost us £7.5k

Cllr. Symonds said she had looked at the specification and questioned how vandal-proof the toilets would be. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that whilst she could not fault the specification, she felt this was a grandiose scheme and out of the question for the Town Council's budget. Cllr. R. Coward said that he had spoken in favour of maintaining the public toilets and feels that it is essential in the interests of public health. He wondered, however, if there was a cheaper alternative and said he had noticed a second-hand refurbished toilet block being offered for sale in the Blackmore Vale magazine for £2,495 and wondered if that might be worth investigating. Cllr. Norris complimented Cllr. Colman on his work on this project but said it was an ambitious plan. He also pointed out that Cllr. Colman was wrong in his assessment of the costs to the Town Council if we did not do anything and closed the toilets because, as he pointed out, we would simply not renew the lease and the toilets would be closed and decommissioned at the cost of Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Norris did say, however, that if the Town Council was going to keep the toilets then we should charge for their use. Cllr. Ings said that he hoped to have been able to draw up a refit plan for the toilets at a considerably reduced price – under £15k - for a complete refit but he had not been able to get all the

information he needed in time for the meeting tonight. Cllr. Colman said that one other local authority in the area had just spent £126,000 on 3 toilets. Cllr. Jeans said that a coach came into the car park yesterday and all the passengers used the public toilets. He pointed out that Mere Town Council cannot be compared to other large towns and cities where there are other places for the public to use toilet facilities such as large shops, supermarkets and cafes. Mere has no alternative facilities for the public to use. Cllr. Jeans said that he was convinced that the toilets could be refurbished for less money and had made informal enquiries with a local plumber about this. Cllr. Jeans said that we had to cut our coat according to our cloth. He also said that he would be against any proposals to close the toilets at night. Cllr. Jeans suggested that the Town Council should spend some time deliberating this issue and that of the car parks and that a separate meeting should be held before the budget meeting. Cllr. Hill pointed out that if a coach came in and we only had 2 toilets, people would have to wait a long time to use them. The Chairman asked if it would be possible to gather in another level of specification or reasonably defined quotes to give the Town Council another level to choose from.

On the subject of the car parks, the Chairman thanked Cllr. Colman and the Clerk's Assistant, Sonya, for the work they had put into this which provided the Town Council with options to consider on whether we should charge for car parking and put meters in the car park. He pointed out that 2 out of the 3 companies approached by Cllr. Colman would provide us with equipment for putting metres in and would charge 50p for the first hour parking and we would end up with a gross revenue of £42,000.

Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said that the car park in Gillingham has been almost unused since charges had been introduced. She pointed out that if charges were imposed, the people who want to use it to park all day whilst working in Mere will park in the residential streets and cause congestion. She said that it should be free during the day but suggested that some measures might be taken to stop people parking in there for 24 hours. Cllr. Jeans said that the Town Council took on the car park because Wiltshire Council were going to impose charges and if the Town Council is going to charge for parking then they should hand it back to Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Hazzard said that his main concern was the Salisbury Street Car Park and said he would hate to see people being charged to go and see the doctors. Cllr. Norris said that everyone needed to understand that it is not free parking – the rate payers of Mere pay about £3.50 per annum to keep these car parks free to use and a lot of people in Mere do not have cars so they're subsidising the other users. He pointed out that any money generated from car parking charges could help with the refurbishment and upkeep of the public toilets. Cllr. Colman said that, in his proposals, there was provision for doctors' visits to be free of charge. He said that the car park is being used by a local business to store second-hand cars. Cllr. Mrs. Symonds felt that once people had put their money in for an hour's parking, there would be things that they wouldn't do in Mere because they would be worried that their parking ticket was coming to an end. Cllr. Jeans asked Cllr. Colman to withdraw his statement about the car park being used to store second-hand cars because, he pointed out, that the car dealers second-hand cars were all stored on Cllr. Jeans own property. He said that the cars that you see in the car park would belong to customers and employees and that these cars would be out on the street if they did not park in the car park. Cllr. Colman said that he would not withdraw his statement.

It was agreed to hold an extra meeting to discuss these issues – Public Toilets & Car Parks – in further detail.

63. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – The Clerk pointed out that she had received a newsletter today but had not had time to print it out and distribute. She said that she would distribute to members during the course of the week.

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – Cllr. Jeans said that the Speed Indicator Device in White Road was now working and urged the Council to submit the grant application for another Speed Indicator Device from the South West Area Board Initiative.

64. 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: 17/08420/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Two bay extension and addition of 2m wide weathering canopy to existing agricultural building
At: The Old Dairy, Charnage North C304 to A303 Mere Quarry Junction, Charnage, Mere. BA12 6AR

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mitchell, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

Application Ref: 17/08466/VAR
Application for: Variation of Condition
Proposal: Variation of condition 2 of 16/12085/FUL – change of proposed roofing material from slates to double roman clay tiles.
At: Ashwell Nursery, Burton, Mere. BA12 6BR

The Chairman reminded members that the Town Council had objected to the original planning application which had subsequently been approved by Wiltshire Council. It was now in the process of being built and the Chairman said he was surprised at the size of the building. He pointed out that it was only part of the roof that was proposed to have clay tiles. The rest would be slate.

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a vote of 10 for and 2 abstentions. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

Application Ref: 17/08569/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Installation of a Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) kiosk, including two exhaust stacks with flap valves at a maximum of 4m above the roof, within existing Water Treatment Works.
At: Mere Water Treatment Works, Burton, Mere. BA12 6AU

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Hill and carried with a vote of 11 for and 1 abstention. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

Application Ref: 17/08714/FUL + 17/09058/LBC
Application for: Full Planning + Listed Building Consent
Proposal: Conversion of the former Church into a single dwelling with associated internal and external alterations, garden and parking area.
At: Mere Methodist Church, North Street, Mere. BA12 6HH

Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said that the applicants would appear to have accepted and be abiding by the recommendations made by the planning experts. RESOLVED to recommend approval on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, seconded by Cllr. Colman and carried with a vote of 10 for and 2 abstentions. (Having declared a personal interest, Cllr. Ings, abstained from voting. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

Application Ref: 17/09037/CLE
Application for: Certificate of Lawfulness – Existing Use
Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use in relation to stationing of

residential caravan

At: Swainsford Fish Farm, Woodlands Road, Mere. BA12 6BY

Cllr. Ings confirmed that a caravan was on the site 10 years ago and that it has always been used for employees live-in accommodation. RESOLVED to confirm that a residential caravan has been on the site continuously for a period of more than 10 years.

b) Neighbourhood Planning – Cllr. Norris reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Group is in the process of scheduling a meeting and it is at that stage where the Neighbourhood Plan Area needs to be clearly defined.

c) Progress update on new bungalows to be built at Bramley Hill – The Clerk reported that it had been brought to her attention that there was a couple living in a family home in Mere who were interested in putting their name forward for one of these new bungalows and thus freeing up their family home for new tenants. However, as they were under the age of 55 they had been told that they would not qualify for one of these bungalows. Cllr. Jeans said that he had made a protest about this point as he felt that the whole intention of building the bungalows was to release larger houses for families in need of a home and this particular couple were very deserving. Members agreed that the Town Council should add support to the protest being made by Cllr. Jeans.

65. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults – Cllr. Norris reported that the road name sign in Queens Road had, once again, been driven over by the refuse collection lorry. He asked if the Town Council could ask Wiltshire Council to replace the sign at their own cost.

***b) Highways Newsletter (September 2017)** - Noted

c) Construction & Operational Lorry Traffic Management Plan for Chicken Farm at Sutton Veny (see planning application: W/11/02440/FUL) – the Clerk confirmed that this planning permission had been brought to her attention by the Clerk of Upper Deverills Parish Council who welcomed the support of Mere Town Council. Members agreed to support Condition 3 of this planning permission relating to the Construction and Operational Lorry Traffic Management Plan, and also requested that measures be taken to ensure adequate signage is provided on the A303, west of Mere, to stop construction & operational traffic from turning off at Mere, before the A350 junction.

d) Letter from resident regarding locking of right of way at Boardroom House (between The Square and North Street) – Cllr. Coward said that Mrs. Pringle had approached him on the same subject. Cllr. Jeans said that he recalled that one of the reasons why they allowed the density of development at The Boardroom or nearby was because in one of the planning applications submitted by Kim Slowe, he had said that this right of way allowed people to walk into the centre of town. The Chairman said that this right of way was not listed in the Definitive Statement of Public Rights of Way. Cllr. Norris proposed that the Town Council should not get involved at this stage because we have got to support 2 parties but if either party comes to us with evidence that it has been a public right of way or not been a public right of way for the required number of years then we can consider it further. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Jordan and carried with a vote of 11 for and 2 abstentions.

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

***a) Policy on smoking/vaping at Duchy Manor Grounds** – A draft copy of a policy compiled by the Clerk had been distributed to members. Cllr. Colman said that he thought it was very lightweight and did not include everything the Council should be looking at, for example, it did not take into account a ban on smoking or vaping outside council owned property. Cllr. Norris said that if you ban smoking and vaping outside then you will antagonise people who will still do it anyway and it will be very difficult to police. RESOLVED to adopt the policy as drafted by the Clerk on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Ings and carried with a vote of 7 for, 4 against and 1 abstention. Cllr. Hazzard wished it to be recorded that he had voted against purely because of the proximity of some grounds to the school.

b) Maintenance of Public Toilets (drainage) – As reported last month, the Clerk said that M. J. Abbott & Co came out to jet the drains outside the public toilets because they were repeatedly blocking up and because

Wessex Water had reported that the problem was limescale. The jetting job was a much bigger job than was anticipated – M. J. Abbott said that they managed to jet quite a few metres of the drain but when they came to the last section it wouldn't clear and on pulling some of the blockage out, it looked as though it was grouting or cement based product. (M. J. Abbott wondered if the contractors who had refurbished the public toilets some 10 years ago, had actually poured the grouting and cement down the drain). Anyhow, in order to get this cleared it will involve digging up the tarmac and clearing the blockage which will involve a S. 50 Street Works licence. M. J. Abbotts are going to send a quotation for this work.

***c) Listing of Mere War Memorial** – email from Historic England - noted

d) 150th Anniversary of Mere Clock Tower – Cllr Hazzard said that he wondered if anyone had any suggestions as to how this should be celebrated. A children's painting competition was suggested. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd wondered if there was any record of an event taking place when it was opened 150 years ago. The Chairman wondered if the Town Council could find an interested party to lead on this. It was agreed to give Cllr. Hazzard the contact details of the Duchy of Cornwall offices so that they could have an input with suggestions etc.

e) Report on Annual RoSPA Play Area Inspection - deferred

67 Finance, Policy & Resources

***a) Payments** – **RFESOLVED** to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a vote of 11 for and 1 abstention. (Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room whilst this matter was considered).

b) CIL & S.106 update – Cllr. A. Colman reported that he had been investigating avenues as to where he could get funds for the public toilets and had wondered if CIL or Policy R2 funds could be transferred for this purpose. In his research he discovered that these funds could not be transferred but he had also discovered that £109,616 had been set aside for the provision of youth and adult open space and leisure in the area to serve the development at of the old Brush Factory site, Woodlands Road. The Clerk said that she would investigate these funds and report back to the Council.

c) To set date, venue and membership for Annual Budget Meeting – Wednesday, 22nd November – members: Cllrs. A. Colman, P. Coward (if available), R. Coward, C. Hazzard, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, J. Jordan, B. Norris, Mrs. K. Symonds and Mrs. L. Traves.

68. General Items & Consultations

a) Housing Needs Survey – The Clerk said that she had raised this due to the impending affordable housing provision within the Woodlands Road development and she pointed out that Mere Parish Council had done a similar housing needs survey many years previously whereby the Council had posted a notice in the parish magazine, asking those interested in housing to contact the Clerk & complete a questionnaire. This information was then passed on to the Housing Authority or Housing Association and had proved to be fairly successful. Cllr. Norris felt that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee would need to do something very similar as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process and that this could be encompassed within that.

***b) Mere Fire & Rescue Services update** – Cllr. A. Colman had prepared a report which had been distributed to all members. Cllr. Mrs Symonds said that she wanted to make a general observation about reports and hoped that councillors would make an effort to condense reports for internal consumption so that less paper was required.

c) Timing of distribution of papers for Town Council Agendas – Cllr. A. Colman said that he would like agenda papers to go out 11 days before the meeting. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that the current situation had never been a problem for her and pointed out that if the agendas and papers were sent out too far in advance, there would be things left off which had consultation deadlines which would result in extra meetings being held. **RESOLVED** to continue with current practice on proposal made by Cllr. Mitchell, seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a vote of 10 for, 1 against and 1 abstention.

d) Future organisation of Moviola Film Screenings in Mere – The Chairman reported that Rosie Jordan-Barr has met with Mary White and will be taking on responsibility for the management of the Moviola (Mere Films) so that it will continue. The Chairman said that official copious thank-you's had gone to Mary White

69. Forthcoming meetings/events

- South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting, Wednesday, 11th October at 6.30 p.m. at Nadder Centre, Tisbury

70. Future agenda items

- Website
- Issues with on-street car parking in Salisbury Street and Boar Street

It was agreed that the extra Council meeting to discuss car parks and public toilets would be held on Monday, 23rd October in Andy Young Pavilion at 7.30 pm

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 at 9.42 p.m.

The Fire Alarm in the Andy Young Pavilion was tested and in working order.

MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No. 1093497

RESOLVED to approve the following payment on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Hill and carried with a unanimous vote.

Water2business	Standing charge to water meter by old cricket club	12.19
----------------	--	-------