

Parish Clerk - Mrs. L. C. Wood

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 3rd November 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in the Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Parish Councillors: R. Coward (Chairman), E. Mitchell (Vice-Chairman), P. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hughes, G. Jeans, M. Peirce, D. Sealy, R. Sims, S. Squires, Mrs. L. Traves & Mrs. M. White.

Also P. C. Richard Salter, County Councillor Mrs. Bridget Wayman.
M. Whatley, R. Potter, Mr. & Mrs. Savage & L. Stanton.

Public Session

Barry Porter, Chairman of South Wiltshire Branch of CPRE, presented the Chairman with the certificate for the District round of the Best Kept Village Competition in which Mere was judged first place in recognition of the hard work and enormous achievement made by the Parish Council and the residents of Mere. Mr. Porter also handed over a cheque for £75 and presented a second certificate for coming second on the County round of the competition. Mr. Porter said the judges' comments were very encouraging and heartening, particularly as they did not find any litter in the village.

Mr. Hughes spoke on behalf of residents of Southbrook & Limpers Hill and asked the District Councillor to find out why their recycling bins had not been emptied.

Mr. Hazzard said that he had received a letter from the daughters of Ken Deveril who would like to make a donation to the Parish Council as a memorial to their parents. The letter was handed to the Clerk.

Mr. Sims said that he remained concerned about a split metal drain cover on the pavement outside Marketplace House.

P. C. Richard Salter said that he had come to the Parish Council meeting to try and answer any questions that may be relevant. Mr. Hazzard asked if anything could be done about the construction traffic that was parking along Castle Street, near the old filling station. He said this was creating traffic congestion problems along Castle Street and was a safety hazard. He also asked about the speed indicator sign that was put in on Castle Street for a few days and wondered whether it could be installed again. P. C. Salter explained that the speed indicator camera is installed in various locations around the district and that the local police have to put in a request for it. He did say, however, that the Safety Camera van would be spending more time in Castle Street in the near future.

Mr. George Savage said that the footpath along Burton was in a terrible state, the tarmac was in poor condition and it was overgrown and quite obstructed. He said that the path had been identified as high priority in the Community Area Plan and he could not understand why it was not regularly maintained.

Mr. Jeans asked P. C. Salter if something could be done to try and reduce the traffic speeds along White Road because parents often complained about this as this was their main route to get to school. P. C. Salter said that parked cars can contribute to slow traffic down but that he would take this up and try to get speed detector back.

Mr. Jeans also said that there was an amount of vandalism in The Square on Halloween Night. A lot of people were annoyed, flowers were pulled out and flower tubs were completely emptied. P. C. Salter explained that he was aware of this and enquiries were being made. P. C. Salter was thanked for attending the meeting.

Apologies for absence received from Councillors: Michael Hall and Raymond Hill.

206. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. R. Coward declared a personal interest in Planning Application S/2008/1788

207. Minutes – Cllr. Squires proposed that the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 15th September 2008 be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a unanimous vote of those councillors present on 15.9.08.

208. Planning

a) Applications: (All applications can be viewed on SDC's website www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning – application search – and type in the relevant number)

S/2008/1671 – CHANGE OF USE – CONVERSION OF OUTBUILDING TO RESIDENTIAL UNIT
LORDSMEAD HOUSE, EDGEBRIDGE, MERE.

Cllr. P. Coward proposed that the Parish Council should recommend approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. D. Sealy and carried with a vote of 9 for and 2 abstentions (Cllrs. G. Jeans and Mrs. Traves abstained)

S/2008/1691 – FULL APPLICATION – CONSTRUCTION OF EARTH BUND (RETROSPECTIVE)
THE OLD WORKSHOP, OLD NURSERIES, BURTON, MERE

The Chairman confirmed that he and Cllr. Mitchell had viewed the site and they expressed their concerns over a number of issues: it would appear that the bund has been created on land without the landowners permission or knowledge, it would appear that the kissing gate has been moved and there did not appear to be much clearance between the top of the earth bund and overhead cables which could be a safety hazard. Cllr. Mrs. White said that she, too, had viewed the site and that it was not so much an earth bund as an indiscriminately dumped pile of earth. She said that the kissing gate had been moved completely and that more land had been taken in to the garden of the property on the edge and that access and parking had been created. Cllr. Hughes said that when the applicant's cottage was sold, it was the last cottage along Burton Path to be sold by the Duchy of Cornwall and that the new owner of that cottage was also the person responsible for the maintenance of the right of way to all the other houses. Cllr. Mitchell said that an earth bund is usually put in for a purpose, to screen something but, he said, the hedge was higher than the earth bund so he could not understand the purpose for creating it.

Cllr. Mitchell proposed that the application should be recommended for refusal for the following reasons: Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a majority vote of 9 in favour. (Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

Reasons

Members feel that there is no purpose to be gained in creating an earth bund in this vicinity. This application is retrospective and upon site inspection, members feel that this is not so much an earth bund but more an indiscriminately dumped pile of earth. The bund does not provide any screening from anything since the surrounding hedges are higher than the bund itself.

Members have also noticed that there are overhead cables and the creation of this earth mound means that there is now a shorter clearance distance between the ground and the overhead cables. The Parish Council raised concerns that this could be a safety hazard. There are further local concerns in that, in creating this earth bund, the applicant has repositioned a kissing gate that stopped vehicles from travelling along Burton Path. The kissing gate remains in its repositioned location and now vehicles are regularly accessing areas that previously did not have vehicular access.

Informative:

The Parish Council is aware that the owner of the land to which this application relates, was not aware of the planning application until 3rd November 2008 and is not in agreement with an earth bund on his property.

Cllr. E. Mitchell in The Chair.

S/2008/1788 – FULL APPLICATION – DEMOLISH EXISTING BARN & ERECTION OF REPLACEMENT CHETCOMBE FARM, MERE.

Cllr. Hughes proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. D. Sealy and carried with a majority vote of 8 for. (Cllrs. R. Coward, having declared a personal interest refrained from voting and Cllr. G. Jeans abstained from voting).

Cllr. R. Coward in The Chair

S/2008/1825 – TREES IN CONS. AREA – FELL 1 X ORNAMENTAL CHERRY TREE
LITTLE SHOTLEY, ANGEL LANE, MERE.

Cllr. Squires proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote (9 in favour).

S/2008/1826 – FULL APPLICATION – SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION TO SOUTHERN ELEVATION HOLLY COTTAGE, NORTH ROAD, MERE.

The above application had not been publicised on the agenda. However, as the Parish Council had recently approved a larger extension for this property, it was agreed that the application should be considered at the meeting.

Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a majority vote of 9 in favour. (Cllr. Mrs. Traves and Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

209. Matters Arising

a) County Councillors Report- included in discussion on advertising signs.

b) District Councillors Report to include report on Western Area Committee meeting –
Cllr. Jeans reported that Mere Football Club had been put forward to receive a grant of £3,700 and that this was to be decided by Cabinet on Wednesday. Also, with reference to Salisbury City Centre, the District Council were proposing a scheme whereby if more than 50% of people agree to pay 1% it will go on their rates to improve businesses.

c) Advertising signs – action and correspondence following complaint about removal of advertising signs e-mail from Jane Scott. County Cllr. Bridget Wayman read out the e-mail response from Jane Scott and from Mr. Button. It was pointed out that 10 ‘A’ frame signs within 20 yards of County Hall in Trowbridge had recently been seen. Cllr. Jeans said that we needed some support to get something done. He had received a letter from our MP regarding West Wiltshire District Council’s proposal to remove pub signs from the A303 on the basis that it would encourage drink-driving. The Chairman felt that the Parish Council needed to get support from other councillors and the Chamber of Trade. It was agreed that the Clerk should write a letter to all the District Councillors represented on the Western Area Committee and also to write to the Wessex Association of Chamber of Commerce for support..

d) Correspondence from the Duchy of Cornwall regarding new lease arrangements and other issues – the Clerk read out correspondence and members agreed and noted the following:

Land adjacent to Jack Paul Close –The Parish Council is quite happy for this small triangle of land to be excluded from the new lease.

River along Waterside – The Parish Council noted the Duchy’s ownership boundaries and assumed that the riparian ownership responsibilities for the river must belong to the properties either side.

Woodlands/scrub adjacent to the A303 – The Clerk read out an extract from a letter sent by the Duchy dated 16.8.1993 regarding Old Quarry at Ashwell – ‘I have taken advice from the Duchy Solicitor who confirms that this land was granted to the Duchy by the Great Charter of 1337 and has remained so until this day. It is covered by the Duchy Caution at the Land Registry. Registration under the Commons Registration Act is registration of a right of common over land – achieved by the Parish Council in 1969. Registration of title to the land itself is quite separate, this is governed by the Land Registry. In summary, therefore, whereas the Duchy still has title to the land itself, the Parish Council has Commoners Rights for taking stone, chalk and gravel.’ In view of this information, the Parish Council was therefore happy for this small area of land to be excluded from the new lease.

Allotments & new lease - The Parish Council was happy with points 5 and 6 as outlined in the letter and the revised rental figure of £536.76 + VAT per annum.

e) Report from Community Safety Representative – Cllr. Sims reported that the Neighbourhood Watch newsletters are now being sent out on a regular basis. Vans have recently been targeted by thieves, mainly looking for electrical items and laptops.

f) Report from Transport Representative – Cllr. Sims reported that Shaftesbury & Gillingham Transport Forum meeting was held on 16th September in Gillingham Town Hall where it was reported that £100,000 is to be spent on improvements to Gillingham Railway Station over the next four years but that the station would eventually become unmanned. The Connect 2 bus is still being well used with the last 12 months’ figures showing a monthly average of 877 passengers.

g) One Council for Wiltshire – The Chairman and Clerk reported on discussion meeting held at Wilton on 13th October.

210. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths & Transport

a) Parish Steward – Members identified the following jobs for the next visit (11th & 12th November)

- Trim back hedges from footpath to Burton
- Fill in dips in Mill Lane
- Assess pot-holes at Pimperleaze Lane

b) Highways Agency meetings? – The Clerk informed members that the Highways Agency had contacted her, some time ago, with a view to booking the Andy Young Pavilion on 5th November. The Clerk had not heard anything further so contacted the Highways Agency to see if they still wanted to make the booking. The Clerk was then told that it was no longer necessary to book the pavilion because they needed a bigger venue and had booked Wincanton Racecourse. The Clerk, assuming that the meeting was about the weight limit proposals, had asked why Mere Parish Council had not been invited to the meeting and was told that a representative was welcome to come along. County Cllr. Bridget Wayman confirmed that she had not received an invitation to the meeting and was unable to attend. There were no parish councillors able to attend and so the Clerk volunteered to attend for a couple of hours.

211. Finance & Resources

a) Payments: Cllr. P. Coward proposed that the following payments be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a unanimous vote.

Cash	Reimbursement for mobile phone top-up (A. Suter - Groundsman)	10.00
Mazars	Audit fees	646.25
The Croquet Association	Croquet equipment	508.00
Scats Countrystores	No Dogs signs	60.25
CPRE	Annual membership	28.00
Sydenhams	Tools & sundries	110.47
Imprest account (cheque Nos. 2519 – 2525)	Wages, PAYE, Petty Cash, Pension	1712.62
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	143.24
Cash	Reimbursement for new office phone	49.98
Salisbury District Council	Bin bags	18.00
1. Suter	Ground maintenance 15/10/08 – 28/10/08	594.00

b) Audit for the year ended 31st March 2008 – External auditors certificate and opinion – The Clerk confirmed that the External Auditor’s certificate and opinion for the completion of the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2008 had been received. The External auditor’s report stated that ‘on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information contained in the annual return is in accordance with the Audit Commission’s requirements and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.’

c) Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Right to Inspect the Annual Return - The Clerk also confirmed that the ‘Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Right to Inspect the Annual Return’ was put on display on the Parish Council noticeboard along with a copy of the certified Annual Return.

212. General Items

a) Invitation to the South West Wiltshire Area Board Steering Group (7.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 5th November 2008 at Nadder Hall, Tisbury) –the Chairman and Clerk agreed to attend the meeting.

b) Invitation to pre-launch briefing on the Tisbury & Parishes Community Area Partnership – the Clerk agreed to attend the meeting

c) Invitation to attend a meeting with Keith Robinson and Richard Munro of WCC on Wednesday, 12th November at 10.30 a.m. at Corsham Town Hall to discuss special issues relating to Market Towns of Wiltshire – Cllr. R. Sims agreed to attend the meeting and Cllr. Jeans said that he would also try to attend.

d) Consultation Paper- Communities in control: Real people, real power: Codes of conduct for local authority members and employees – A consultation - noted

e) Freedom of Information Act – New Model Publication Scheme – members resolved to adopt the Model Publication Scheme as issued by the Information Commissioner’s Office.