

Parish Clerk - Mrs. L. C. Wood

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 7th April 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in the Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors R. Coward (Chairman), Mrs. M. White (Vice-Chairman), P. Coward, M. Hall, C. Hazzard, R. Hughes, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, D. Sealy, R. Sims & S. Squires. Also. County Councillor Mrs. B. Wayman & District Cllr. Mrs. C. Spencer. Also R. Potter, M. Whatley, P. Button, L. Stanton, Mrs. & Mrs. Garbutt, Q. Skinner, J. Jordan, L. Stanton

Public Session

Mr. Q. Skinner from Castle Ground Farm in Lower Zeals raised his concerns about SDC's Core Strategy proposals. He felt that the proposal of anything between 250 – 500 houses to be built in the Mere area would double the population of Mere in the short term. He said that a number of these houses are to be built on land at the Brush Factory and a large majority are likely to be built on the site at Townsend Nurseries and a large employment land allocation adjacent to the A303. Mr. Skinner felt that local employment take-up should be viewed with the Solstice Business Park which lay empty and he felt that it would be disgraceful to allow a rural village such as Mere to have its population doubled. Mr. Skinner said that there had been no proper consultation on these proposals as he only heard about it 3 days ago and that other Mere residents, including the local MP, knew nothing about them. Mr. Skinner knew nothing of the public meeting held on 31st March.

District Councillor Mrs. Spencer agreed that the consultation process had been flawed and said that all residents in the district were supposed to receive letters in the post but many of them did not receive their letters until after the public exhibitions and meetings. The District Council members had applied for a 2 week extension to the consultation period. Mrs. Spencer pointed out that the figure of 250-500 houses was not just for Mere itself.

County Councillor Mrs. Wayman felt that the Core Strategy Preferred Options paper was a little 'woolly' and based on proposals for planning policies. The Strategic Housing Land Assessment document, however, was the document which suggested sites for development. Mr. P. Coward said that his company had submitted a site for development within the SHLA because they had been told by SDC that if there was any possibility that the Brush Factory would want re-development potential in the next 20 years, they would need to submit the site now or the potential would be lost.

Mr. Peter Button reported on a meeting he had attended at Dinton Village Hall entitled 'Access to AONB's'. He said that the title of the meeting was very misleading as it was a very interesting meeting, covering many aspects such as European Grants, businesses in Somerset & Dorset. Mr. Button gave an example that Dorset has been getting millions of pounds from Europe to pay for advertising and improving villages. Mr. Button advised that when such a meeting comes round again, it would be a good idea to send a councillor in order to meet the right people. Mr. Button also said that WCC has all the materials to build and repair stiles but that the parishes need to organize a team of volunteers to do the work.

Mr. Peter Garbutt spoke about the proposed traffic management scheme for Castle Street. He said that the current waiting restrictions naturally restricted speeds and allowed people to use the shops but if double-yellow lines were installed throughout the whole of Castle Street then this would increase the speed of traffic. Mr. Jordan said that he had come to talk about the same matter and felt that the proposals would do little to increase road safety in Castle Street. Mr. Jordan said he had never heard of any accidents in Castle Street and he felt that the proposals would cause traffic and parking congestion problems in Castle Hill Lane. Mrs.

Garbutt said that if people were forced to park on Castle Hill Lane then it would be very difficult for emergency vehicles to gain access along there.

George Jeans explained that this traffic scheme is not what the Parish Council had asked for and that the Parish Council had asked for the developers to contribute towards a scheme that would widen the road and provide a short length of yellow lines on the brow of Castle Street and a very short length of yellow lines either side of the junction with Castle Hill Lane. However, the Highways Authority had ruled that the Parish Council's suggestion was not feasible and had proposed the scheme that was now presented.

Mrs. Garbutt said that she was appalled at the tree felling on Long Hill. She said that whilst Castle Hill looked great now, the only place where anyone could walk in the shade was along Long Hill and she wanted to know about the advice received regarding the felling of the trees. The Chairman explained that advice had been sought from various organizations including English Heritage, Wiltshire Wildlife, English Nature and that the site was considered to be very important for chalk grassland flora and fauna. He explained that there was a management plan, created by Simon Ford, for Castle Hill & Long Hill which the Parish Council would be happy to make available.

Mary White reported that she had attended a meeting in the Lecture Hall organized by the SOS (Save Our Silton) group regarding the proposal for wind turbines. She said that only 4 people from Mere were present at the meeting but it had not been well advertised in Mere. A gentleman from the Renewable Energy Foundation had revealed that windpower was very low on the efficiency scale. The group was expecting Ecotricity to submit their plans within the next month or so and neighbouring parishes were being asked to comment on the plans. Mr. Hughes said that the road at Limpers Hill was so bad now that it would cause damage to vehicles. County Cllr. Mrs. Wayman said that she would try to get something done about this.

Mr. Squires reported pot-holes along Barton Lane and a broken manhole cover in Boar Street.

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillors Mrs. Rachel Porter, Lesley Traves + PC Richard Salter and PCSO Michael Tryhorn.

129. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs. C. Hazzard & P. Coward declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 131 b) [if there is to be any discussion on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment or specific site allocations within Mere].

Cllr. G. Jeans declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 134 a)

Cllr. Sims declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 134 a)

130. Minutes – Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 3rd March 2008 be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 3.3.08.

131. 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/2008/404 – FULL APPLICATION – CHANGE OF USE OF THE RETAIL PREMISES TO RESIDENTIAL AND THE REPLACEMENT OF THE SHOP FRONTAGE WITH MERE STONE AND TWO SASH WINDOWS TO MATCH THE ORIGINAL
10 CHURCH STREET, MERE.

Cllr. P. Coward

said that at the last meeting the Parish Council controversially voted in favour of this change of use and some members felt that it would be contradictory to change their minds. It was pointed out that the Parish Plan stated that the Parish Council should resist change of use applications from commercial to residential but Cllr. Jeans said that he understood that the viability criteria had now been met and that officers were satisfied that the premises had been commercially advertised and marketed with no take-up. Cllr. Mitchell still felt that this would result in the loss of the shop and that if the Parish Council set a precedent, where would it end? The Clerk pointed out that the Planning Application included structural changes to the shop frontage and Cllr. Jeans pointed out that under Conservation Area policies, it would be difficult to reinstate the windows once they had been changed. Cllr. Hall proposed that the Parish Council should recommend approval of the application. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Squires and carried with a vote of 4 in favour, 3 against and 3 abstentions.

S/2008/447 – FULL APPLICATION – REPLACEMENT GARAGE ROOF AND CONSTRUCTION OF CARPORT
BARNESFIELD HOUSE, PETTRIDGE LANE, MERE.

Cllr. Squires proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a majority vote of 8 for.

S/2008/487 – FULL APPLICATION – TWO STOREY AND SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION
8 CLEMENTS LANE, MERE.

Cllr. E. Mitchell proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a majority vote of 9 for.

S/2008/505 – FULL APPLICATION – SINGLE STOREY & TWO STOREY EXTENSIONS AND RAISE ROOF OF EX STABLES
WHITEHILL COTTAGE, SWAINSFORD, MERE.

Cllr. Mitchell proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a majority vote of 9 for.

S/2008/525 – TREES IN CONS. AREA – HARD COPPICE LAUREL, END WEIGHT MAJOR LIMBS TO CEDAR OVER CASTLE STREET.
BRAMLEY HOUSE RESIDENTIAL HOME, CASTLE STREET, MERE.

Cllr. Hughes proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hazzard and carried with a unanimous vote.

S/2008/544 - FULL APPLICATION – ERECT 2 STOREY SIDE EXTENSION
FURZEHILL, MILL LANE, MERE

Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a unanimous vote of 9 for.

S/2008/567 – FULL APPLICATION – NEW DWELLING HOUSE
SHREENWATER, WELLHEAD, MERE.

Cllr. Sealy used to live in Wellhead and informed members that the highway into Wellhead is not adopted and was paid for by residents. He therefore put forward the following proposal:

Recommend Approval with conditions:

Conditions:

1. Highway ownership and rights of vehicular access may be a legal issue for the developer to address.
2. Members are aware that part of the highway at the bottom of Wellhead is not adopted and the local residents all contributed towards the cost of creating and maintaining the highway. The Parish Council feels, therefore, that if there is any damaged caused to

the highway as a result of the construction, then the developer should be responsible for remedial works.

3. Vehicular access for existing properties at the bottom of Wellhead should be kept clear at all times.
4. The Public Footpath adjacent to the site should be kept clear.

Proposal seconded by Cllr. Squires and carried with a vote of 5 for and 5 abstentions.

S/2008/616 – FULL APPLICATION – REPLACE PORCH & CLOAKROOM TO REAR OF PROPERTY BOOT COTTAGE, SALISBURY STREET, MERE.

Cllr. Hughes proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hall and carried with a majority vote. (Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

S/2008/617 – LISTED BLDG (WKS) – REPLACEMENT PORCH, CLOAKROOM, WINDOWS & DOORS BOOT COTTAGE, SALISBURY STREET, MERE.

Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a majority vote. (Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

S/2008/622 – FULL APPLICATION – GARAGE, STORE & WORKSHOP INCLUDING BUILDOVER OF OVERFLOW SEWER

LORDSMEAD MILL, EDGEBRIDGE, MERE

Cllr. Hughes made the following proposal:

Recommend Approval with conditions

Conditions:

- That the garage, store and workshop are all tied to the property known as ‘Lordsmead Mill’ and cannot be used for conversion to residential purposes or sold off separately.
- The access to this site is shared with the access for Flax Mill Cottage - the Parish Council would therefore suggest that a condition be placed to make the developer liable for any damage caused to the driveway/access road as a result of the building works/heavy vehicles and to ensure that access to other properties is not obstructed.
- The Parish Council is aware that one of the proposed buildings will be very close to the garage of Flax Mill Cottage. The Parish Council would suggest that access for maintenance purposes of all surrounding buildings must be maintained.
- Due to the close proximity of residential dwellings, the Parish Council would suggest that working hours restrictions are applied to this development.

Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hall and carried with a vote of 5 in favour and 5 abstentions.

b) Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Preferred Options (A Plan for Salisbury & South Wiltshire 2006 – 2026)

i) Report on Public Meeting held in Mere on 31st March – Cllr. Coward felt that it was a shame that there were very few younger people at the meeting and Cllr. Mrs. White agreed, saying that it was not very well advertised and that people had received letters about the meeting 2 days after the event. Members were shocked at the number of people who thought that the school was closed and thought that there were no facilities for young people in Mere.

The Chairman ruled that the meeting should be closed in order to allow Mr. Skinner to speak: Mr. Skinner said that there is a very clear case that the public consultation has not properly taken place and therefore the council is not in a position to make any decision until such consultation has taken place. He did not think that any kind of response other than one which condemns the consultation should be given.

Meeting reconvened

Although the Clerk agreed with Mr. Skinner's comments about the inadequacy of the public consultation, she advised the Council that it may risk losing the opportunity to have its views taken into consideration if it did not respond to the consultation documents as there was no guarantee that SDC would concede.

ii) Strategic Land Availability Assessment & submitted sites – the Clerk advised that she had been informed by SDC officers that there would be other Mere sites submitted within this document and that there would be further opportunities for public consultation. The Council had no discussion on this document.

iii) To consider Parish Council's consultation response to documents – Cllr. Hughes said that something needed to be done about the infrastructure before anyone could consider putting 20% more houses in the Mere area. Cllr. Mrs. White pointed out that the state of the A303 needed to be addressed and Cllr. P. Coward said that the number of cars packed along the A303 on a Friday and Sunday caused heavy pollution problems and that he knew of businesses that did not want to move to the area because of the state of the A303. It was also pointed out that when the new Unitary Authority came into place, it could be that this whole LDF process would need to be started all over again. It was agreed that the Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman would formulate a draft response based on 1) Mere Parish Plan, 2) the Parish Council's previous LDF document responses and 3) the recommendations of the LDF Working Group meeting which had been approved by the Council in March 2008. The draft response would be submitted to members for comment before submission.

132. Matters Arising

a) Report from County Councillor – Bridget Wayman reported that the Highways Agency were expecting the receipt of their Safety Study report in the next few weeks and she was hoping that this would be released in a month's time.

b) Report from District Councillor to include report on Western Area Committee Meetings – George Jeans had nothing specific to report.

c) Report from Transport representative – Cllr. Sims had nothing to report on the Shaftesbury & District Transport Forum or the Connect 2 Service. He did, however, report that those entitled to bus passes should have received them by now and could now travel by bus anywhere in England free of charge (except in London).

d) Report from Community Safety Representative – Cllr. Sims said that there was now a new mobile telephone number of PCSO Michael Tryhorn – 07980701606. There had been recent local thefts of staddlestones from various gardens and the police were recommending that garden items be marked with UV markers. The library would now be the local contact point for the police and this scheme was being introduced throughout the country.

e) Siting of Christmas Tree - deferred

f) Bus shelter in The Square - deferred

g) 2008 Best Kept Village Fiftieth Anniversary Competition & Calor Village of the Year Competition 2008/09 – Cllr. Hazzard reported that the entry form had been submitted.

h) Formal consultation on proposed electoral divisions for new Unitary Wiltshire Council – Two options were being presented for consultation – Option 1 was for a Mere unitary division based on a population of 3828, incorporating the parishes of Maiden Bradley with Yarnfield, Kilmington, Stourton with Gasper, Zeals and Mere. Option 2 was for a Mere unitary division based on a population of 3947 and including those parishes mentioned above but also with the inclusion of West Knoyle. Cllr. P. Coward proposed that the Parish Council should submit Option 2 as their preferred option on the basis that Mere has an affinity and association with West Knoyle for various reasons: West Knoyle & Mere share the same parish magazine, vicar etc. and also share a common interest in matters relating to the A303

and often support each other when dealing with associated problems. It was also felt that the six parishes in Option 2 have similarities in community identity. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

***i) Report on meeting held with Chamber of Trade + letter from Mere & District Chamber of Trade - deferred**

133. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths & Transport

a) Jobs for Parish Steward – it was agreed that the Clerk would ask the Parish Steward to look into the problems at Barton Lane and Boar Street (as mentioned by S. Squires in public session)

***b) Traffic Management Scheme for Castle Street (Condition 14 of planning application for former Castle Hill Garage) – Draft Copy of proposed Order & plans** – Cllr. Hazzard said that, even though this was not the scheme that the Parish Council had hoped for, it was the only one that we were going to be offered. He pointed out that the proposal was not for parking restrictions along the whole length of Castle Street but in areas where it was considered unsafe for cars to be parked or in areas where it would provide a ‘passing place’ for traffic. He therefore proposed that the proposals should be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a vote of 7 for and 3 against.

***c) Traffic Speeds on entrances to Mere** – With reference to the information in the Clerks Report, Cllr. Sealy said that it would be helpful to have some kind of speed detection device along the Shaftesbury Road because traffic is often speeding along there. Members felt that Speed Indicator Devices had been effective in reducing speeds but wondered if there could be some actual record of whether or not it had made a difference.

d) Invitation to Annual Highway maintenance Meeting – 28th April 2008 at Wilton – Cllr Sims said that he would attend the meeting..

134. Finance & Resources

a) Payments: Cllr. Hall proposed that the following payments be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a majority vote. (Cllrs. G. Jeans and R. Sims, having declared an interest, left the room whilst this item was discussed). The Clerk explained that she was unable to give the Imprest Account details (payroll) information for next month because she had been unable to complete the 2007/08 end of year summary at this stage. She would therefore report this information to the council at the next meeting.

End of Financial Year 2007/08

Wessex Water	Supply to recreation ground	24.46
Wessex Water	Supply to new cemetery	82.05
Wessex Water	Supply to old cricket ground (Recreation Ground)	7.89
Cash	Reimburse groundsman for mobile phone top-up	10.00
Cash	Reimbursement for advertisement	29.44
Cash (Crookers)	Reimbursement for key cutting	13.00
Scats Countrystores plc	H & S – First Aid Kits	23.98
R. Sims	Travel expenses	35.20
G. Jeans	Reimbursement of expenditure on flag pole	12.00
M. Sansam Welding Ltd	Litter bin for Recreation Ground	434.75
Orchard Street Furniture	New bench seat for Castle Hill	475.87
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	103.03

Imprest account (cheques ??? - ???)	Payroll, petty cash reimbursement etc.	???
Gordon Gill Fine Turf Maintenance Ltd	Soil sample analysis for cricket wicket	249.10
Southern Electric	Cock Tower supply	16.47
Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity	Donation 2007/08	???
Start of Financial Year 2008/09		
Salisbury District Council	Non-Domestic Rate Bill for Duchy Grounds & premises	1640.10
Salisbury District Council	Non-Domestic Rate Bill for Cemetery & premises	358.05
Grove Buildings	Hire of Hall for Annual Parish Meeting	15.00
Wiltshire County Council	Lease of land and changing rooms at Duchy Manor	200.00
Wiltshire County Council	Lease of Office at Duchy Manor	500.00
Wessex Water	Cemetery supply	68.88
NALC	Local Council Review subscription	13.50

b) Staff matters – due to the potential disclosure of personal information relating to staff, it was agreed that this should be discussed at the end of the meeting, under Confidential Business.

c) To report on allotment rent audit held on 26th March – The Clerk confirmed that the allotment rents had been collected and, apart from one or two late-payers, she had no cause for concern. However, the allotment rent audit had not yet been completed. The Clerk also reported that there had been complaints about the state of the allotments at Wellhead, particularly relating to the general untidy and ramshackle appearance of the area. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Squires and Clerk would arrange a site meeting and report back to the Council.

135. General Items

***a) Collection of Recycling Black Boxes** – With reference to the information in the Clerks Report, Cllr. Jeans informed members that he was collecting information from householders who were having difficulties or problems. It was noted that residents from Waterside required black boxes for recycling and would be willing to put this in a central collection location.

***b) 43 Bde Memorial March** – members noted the information in the Clerks Report

c) General Community Fund – information from SDC on new grant scheme – deferred

d) Unitary Wiltshire Council - Letter from SDC's Chief Executive regarding Area Boards and delegated powers to Town & Parish Councils – The letter was volunteering to collate information from Parish & Town Councils in order to present to WALC. County Cllr. Mrs. Wayman felt that SDC's CEO was trying to be helpful in this matter.

e) Annual Parish Meeting – it was confirmed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Wednesday, 23rd April in the Grove Building .

136. Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground

To approve the following payment:

Mere Parish Council – expenses for running & maintenance of Recreation Ground for 2007/08 ???

As the Clerk had been unable to complete the income/expenditure report, it was agreed to defer this item.

137. Clerks Report – It was unanimously resolved that the Clerks Report be confirmed and adopted.

Minute No. 134 b) Staff Matters – Confidential Business
Please see addendum (attached for Councillors only)

*Further information on these items in Clerks Report