

Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 7th July 2008 at 7.30 p.m. in the Small Lecture Hall, Salisbury Street, Mere.

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

Public Session

Mr. Whatley reported that the Public Footpath at Lordsmead is in terrible state of repair and one lady recently fell over due to the uneven surface.

Mr. Hopkins who lives at The Acorns wanted to speak regarding planning application S/2008/1075 and explained that his main objection is purely to the siting of the yard and not to the actual buildings. He stated that Policy C19 of the Local Plan actually says that agricultural buildings should be positioned so as not to cause a nuisance. Mr. Hopkins hoped that the Parish Council would agree with him and recommend refusal of the application as presented with a recommendation that the buildings are sited on the western side of the yard.

Mr. Wilbur Smith from the Old Ship Hotel explained that he was having problems with delivery vehicles for NISA store parking outside the Old Ship in Castle Street to unload. He said that one particular driver was very aggressive when he was asked to move his 40 ft lorry. Mr. Smith felt that the NISA store should seek to take deliveries in smaller lorries so that they could use their loading bay at the rear of the shop.

Apologies for absence received from County Cllr. Mrs. B. Wayman

163. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. E. Mitchell declared a personal interest in Planning Application S/2008/1112 and a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 170 f)

Cllr. Jeans declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 170a) Payments.

164. Minutes – Cllr. Sims proposed that the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 2nd June 2008 be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 2.6.08

165. 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/2008/1074 – FULL APPLICATION – EXTENSION TO FORM BEDROOM & PLAYROOM AND ENLARGE KITCHEN & ENLARGE WC

11 LONG HILL, MERE.

Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a vote of 11 for and 1 abstention (Cllr. G. Jeans).

S/2008/1075 – FULL APPLICATION – ERECT 2 AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BARNES AND ASSOCIATED HARD SURFACED YARDS

FORDS OAK FARM, LIMPERS HILL, MERE.

Cllr. Hughes said that he sympathized with Mr. Hopkins and pointed out that the land sloped down from the farmhouse at Fords Oak towards The Acorns and unless there was adequate provision to take away dirty water it would run towards the bungalow. Cllr. Hazzard felt that the buildings seemed to be rather large for 18 acres and felt that the siting of the buildings was inappropriate. Cllr. Mrs. White felt that the location

plan accompanying this application was insufficient as it did not show the surrounding area. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the application should be recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

The proposed siting of these 2 buildings on the eastern boundary of the applicant's land is considered to be inappropriate because:

- It is too close to the neighbouring bungalow known as The Acorns and will have an adverse impact on their amenities with regard to noise, smell, drainage and pollution.
- The land slopes down from the farmhouse at Ford Oak towards The Acorns and adequate drainage has not been shown. Dirty water, whether it be surface water, diesel, oil or slurry, would run towards the bungalow at The Acorns and cause significant pollution problems and environmental health problems.

It is considered that this is against Policy C19 of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan as these buildings are not sited sensitively and adequate measures have not been taken to prevent pollution and other nuisances.

The Parish Council considers that a site to the west of the farmhouse at Ford Oak would be more appropriate for the siting of the proposed buildings as there are no neighbouring properties to the west. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a vote of 11 for and 1 abstention (Cllr. Jeans).

S/2008/1112 – TO VARY CONDITION – REMOVAL OF CONDITION 2 (AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY CONDITION) IMPOSED ON PLANNING PERMISSIONS 73/WO/263/215 FOR “ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS TO THE EXISTING FARMHOUSE & CONSTRUCTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL ACCESS TO SERVE THE BEEF REARING UNIT” MAPPERTON HILL FARM, GILLINGHAM ROAD, MERE.

The Chairman proposed the following: ‘The recommendation of approval to remove the agricultural occupancy condition is a departure from policy of the Parish Council and whilst the Parish Council has no desire to set a precedent by approving this case, members felt that there were special circumstances to justify their decision. These special circumstances being:

- The reduction in acreage of land now belonging to Mapperton Hill Farm would make it unviable as an agricultural enterprise.
- The special circumstances and needs of the applicants could be met if the AOC were to be removed, thereby enabling them to continue living in the locality, continue their present education and running a local business.

This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a vote of 7 for and 4 abstentions. Cllr. Mitchell, having declared a personal interest, refrained from discussion or voting.

S/2008/1175 – FULL APPLICATION – SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION
17 CASTLE HILL CRESCENT, MERE.

The Clerk informed members that this planning application had just arrived and asked members whether they wanted to consider it at this meeting, call a new meeting or submit a ‘no comment’ return. Members agreed, since notice to discuss the application at this meeting had not been given on the agenda, they would either discuss it at an extra meeting (should an extra meeting be necessary in July) or submit a ‘no comment’ return.

166. Matters Arising

a) Report from County Councillor – not present

b) Report from District Councillor to include report on Western Area Committee Meetings – Cllr. Jeans reported that he had attended SWAG panel meeting where, amongst others, Mere Social club and Mere Boules & Croquet Club were offered grants. In Mere Matters he reported on the next round of LDF consultation. Cllr. Jeans also reported that anyone wanting to submit sites to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment would now have to wait until next year. The Clerk brought up the subject of advertising signs on the A303 and read out two separate minutes from the Western Area Committee Meeting held on 29th May (Minute 152 and Minute 162) which she felt reflected conflicting views in that the Western Area Committee was quite happy to serve a discontinuation notice and take enforcement action against a sign on the A303 that used to and still could support the viability of a local business yet when

another authority does likewise, it seems that the Western Area Committee takes a different view. The Parish Council agreed with the Clerks concerns and it was agreed that a letter should be sent to Salisbury District Council. It was also suggested that the Old Ship should send a letter to SDC and that it would also help if the Chamber of Trade could add weight by writing to SDC. Cllr. Jeans said that if this matter is raised again at a Western Area Committee meeting, it would really help if 20 – 30 people could attend to say that they do not want discontinuance of the site. Cllr. Hall asked about the delivery of wheelie bins and said that he was led to believe that a survey was going to be carried out to establish which properties were inappropriate for wheelie bins. Cllr. Jeans reported that a survey was carried out but he was aware that there were inaccuracies with wheelie bin deliveries for Old Hollow & Waterside.

c) Report from Transport representative – Cllr. Sims reported that the Shaftesbury & Gillingham Transport Forum had not met for the last three months and he had no indication when the next one was planned. He said that the Connect 2 Taxi/Bus continued to be supported with extra vehicles being employed as and when demand increased.

d) Report from Community Safety Representative – Cllr. Sims reported that there had been no Community Safety Meetings held recently but the Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were progressing with 16 co-ordinators now able to receive regular updates.

e) Report on meeting held with chamber of Trade + letter from Mere & District Chamber of Trade – Barbara Hewitt, Chairman of the Chamber of Trade was present at the meeting and said that they would very much support any efforts to get the sign back on the A303 for the Old Ship or other Mere businesses and had indeed written to the Parish Council about the possibility of improving the signage advertising the facilities in Mere. Mrs. Hewitt explained that the Chamber of Trade was working with the Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce and had produced a draft leaflet and organised events to try and attract membership. Cllr. Hazzard said that he and the Chairman recently attended a meeting of the Chamber of Trade and were made very welcome. Mrs. Hewitt also said that the Chamber could not always find someone to represent Mere on the Salisbury Tourism Partnership Committee. Members agreed to investigate the signage issues and find out costs etc.

f) River Cleaning – The Clerk pointed out that since the June meeting, there had been a discovery of Japanese Knotweed in and around the river at Waterside and that, following discussions with the Environment Agency, it was felt that no river cleaning should take place until the Environment Agency had completed their project in late summer. The Clerk was in discussions with Salisbury District Council about controlling the Japanese Knotweed that was growing at the rear of The Yews. Cllr. Jeans discussed a river problem at Edgebridge that he had become aware of and it was agreed that the Clerk would discuss this with him at a later date.

g) Best Kept Village Competition – The Chairman was delighted to report that Mere had come first in the Large Village Category in the South Wiltshire District Round of the Best Kept Village Competition. The judges had given Mere considerable praise in all categories and the Chairman read out some of the judges comments. Mere would now go through to the County Round of the competition which would be in the next few weeks.

h) Leisure facilities in Gillingham – the Clerk reported that she had received an e-mail response from the Chairman of the Three Rivers Partnership (Mr. Hebditch) thanking the Parish Council for their support and recognizing our frustration in having to contribute financially to Leisure facilities in Wiltshire which are difficult to access by residents of Mere. Mr. Hebditch said that he would suggest to his Partnership & Council colleagues how best to make representations to District/County Council regarding cross-border subsidies.

167. Allotments

a) Report on visit to allotment sites to assess cultivation conditions and to consider draft letter – the Clerk informed members that she and Cllr. Squires had visited the allotment sites and confirmed that there were two or three allotments at Wellhead, one at Jack Paul Close and three or four at Southbrook that were not being properly cultivated. The Clerk read out a draft letter that she had written and it was agreed that this should be sent out to those allotment tenants who did not seem to be cultivating their allotments.

168. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths & Transport

a) Jobs for Parish Steward (next visit 15 & 16 July) – The Clerk reported that the Parish Steward had carried out various jobs during his June visit but was unable to carry out the task of verge cutting along Old Hollow Road because he said this was ‘responsibility of SDC and Clarence 309721 had passed it to them’. Members asked for sinking road at Mill Lane (according to WCC’s T. Smith it was job for Parish Steward), verges at junction of Limpers Hill/Causeway Road and clearance of footpaths around Angel Lane, Churchyard, Vicarage etc. Also the footpath (Mere 66) at the rear of Lordsmead House leading south-east to the Mere-Shaftesbury Road at Clements Lane at its junction with Woodlands Road –(as reported in the public session by Mr. Whatley)

***b) Castle Street – pedestrian improvements. WCC’s Project Initiation Document** – with reference to the information in the Clerks Report, the Parish Council agreed that they should send in a letter of support for this.

c) NISA deliveries causing obstructions and safety concerns in Castle Street – Cllr. Hazzard said that the Parish Council was delighted to see the Old Ship Hotel open and that we needed to do everything we could to help the businesses in Mere. It was pointed out that, as a general rule the NISA and Co-Op delivery lorries all arrived at different times and as there was a specified loading bay area outside the Co-Op members felt that they could both use this loading bay. Cllr. Peirce said that he found it amazing that people were moaning about facilities closing down in Mere and that they needed to have a reality check and realise that these shops needed facilities and big delivery lorries. The Clerk was asked to make checks with the Highways Authority before making this recommendation to NISA.

d) Parking restrictions (double-yellow lines) in Castle Street – the Clerk informed members that she had just received information from WCC to say that the report had been considered by the Cabinet Member for Environment Transport & Economic Development who has approved that the proposal be implemented with a minor amendment to the extent of the restriction on the southern side, western end.

169. Parks & Recs, Play Areas & Open Spaces

a) White Road Gardens Play Area – The Clerk confirmed that following the transfer of the Play Area to the Parish Council, the set up and maintenance funds had been received by the Parish Council. It was unanimously agreed that Cllr. Hazzard be appointed to oversee proposals for the play area. It was also pointed out that a spring needed to be put on the gate to the play area at Huntsgate and the Recreation Ground Play Area needed some new equipment.

170. Finance & Resources

a) Payments: To approve payments as listed in payment schedule – Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the following payments be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a vote of 10 for & 1 abstention. Cllr. Jeans, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room whilst this item was discussed.

A. R. Diesels	Battery for Diahatsu	88.13
A. R. Diesels	Repairs to Diahatsu (50% discount given)	460.02
Tincknell Fuels Ltd	Gas Oil	172.20
Rutter & Rutter Solicitors	Norwich Union insurance for Husq. Ride-on mower	143.10
Cash	Carabiners for flag pole (The Gorge Outdoors)	9.99
New Forest Farm Machinery Ltd	Heavy duty padlock for machinery	37.48 already pd
New Forest Farm Machinery Ltd	Trimac P3K237 8” Roller Mower	5287.50**
Jeans	Xmas lights	701.71
Jeans	Repairs to internal lights in clock tower & clock face lighting	103.40
Allianz Cornhill	(Additional premium for amendments)	294.20 already pd

Sydenhams	Ply & hacksaw to repair broken windows to chapel	37.92 Already pd
Southern Electric	Supply for clock tower	16.20
R. V. Maidment Ltd	Skip for artificial cricket wicket waste	211.50
Playtop Ltd	Safety Surfacing at Huntsgate	3505.26***
Rochford Garden Machinery Ltd	Husqvarna 345e Chainsaw	307.00
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	161.76
Shaftesbury Garden Machinery	Repairs to Husq. Ride-on & blower machine	88.13
Salisbury District Council	Bin Bags	18.00 Already pd
A. Suter	Grounds maintenance 11.6.08 – 24.6.08	572.00 Already pd
A. Suter	Grounds maintenance 28.5.08 – 10.6.08	583.00 Already pd
Mere Fabricating & Welding Services	Repairs to gates at MUGA	136.30
Sovereign Site-works	Groundworks to Huntsgate Play Area	1509.87
Allianz Insurance plc	Additional premium for amendments	133.80
Cash	Mobile phone top-up	10.00
Scats Countrystores	'No Dogs' signs & socket set	80.24
The Lecture Hall Trust	Hire of meeting room	15.00

** To be reimbursed from Policy R2 Developer's Contributions

*** SWAG Grant received to cover this amount.

***b) To approve Budget/Expenditure Report at 31.3.08 and verify bank balances** – Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the report be approved and thanked the Clerk for preparing the figures. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.

c) To consider internal auditor's report on accounts and supporting statements for year ending 31.3.08 – The Clerk read out Mr. Wilson's report:

'I have carried out an internal audit of the Mere Parish Council Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2008 in accordance with the instructions included with your letter of appointment dated 3 June 2008. In my opinion the Council has maintained proper accounting records and the financial statements have been properly prepared. Specific matters which merit further consideration are:

- At present the cashbook is balanced only once at the end of the financial year. It is suggested that consideration be given to more frequent balancing exercises, if only on a simplified basis, so as to make the detection of any errors easier and more timely.
- The Council should receive on at least a quarterly basis a report on financial actual versus budgeted performance highlighting any significant variances. This is especially important at a time when the Council is having to finance substantial unexpected expenses.
- The Asset Register should contain details of all the groundsman's tools and equipment with a minimum individual value of, say, £25 – the Council should determine the threshold figure. This would include items such as spades, forks, shears, secateurs, etc. but not revenue items such as strimmer cable.

It is understood that discussions are being held on what, if any, further responsibilities the council might take on consequent upon the current re-structuring of local government. It is important that when considering such proposals the Council bear in mind the effect of such decisions on the structure, management and costs of the Council's "back office" facilities. In other words, can everything be managed by the Clerk alone?

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the assistance I have received from the Clerk, Lindsey Wood. She certainly made this task easier by having everything ready to hand and in such good order.'

The Council agreed that Mr. Wilson's recommendations should be implemented even though this would result in more administrative work. The Council acknowledged the amount of work and time given by Mr. Wilson in carrying out these internal audit controls and a vote of thanks was proposed.

d) To approve Accounts and supporting statements for year ending 31.3.08 – the accounts and supporting papers, having been prepared by the Clerk and distributed to members, were unanimously approved.

e) To complete Annual Return and Statement of Assurance for year ending 31.3.08 - the Chairman read through the Annual Return and Statement of Assurance. Members agreed that they should answer 'yes' to all statements in the Statement of Assurance. The Annual Return and Statement of Assurance were signed by the Chairman in the presence of the Council.

f) Offers received for sale of assets – Cllr. Mitchell, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room whilst this matter was being discussed. Members were informed that the Parish Council had been offered money for the sale of the felled timber on Castle Hill and for the sale of the gang mowers. Members felt that they were not in a position to judge the value of these assets and that as the offer for the gang mowers had been submitted by a councillor, it may be unfair to accept this offer since members of the public were unaware that they were for sale. It was therefore agreed that both these assets should be advertised in the Blackmore Vale Magazine as being open to the highest offer and that the Clerk and Chairman should be delegated authority to accept the highest offer.

171. General Items

a) Wiltshire PCT super-surgery plans – The Chairman stated that following an article in Salisbury Journal in which it stated that local GP surgeries may close in favour of super surgeries, he had spoken to the local GPs. Dr. Price did not think that the Mere Surgery was under immediate threat but was concerned at the possibility of Mere Surgery losing its dispensary which helped to supplement their finances. The Parish Council agreed that we should add support for the local surgery and it was agreed that we should write to our MP expressing our concern.

b) Parish Elections – 2009 or 2013? – the Council had received correspondence from WCC regarding proposals for the next Parish Elections in relation to the District/County Council reorganization and asked the question whether Parish Councils' would prefer elections in 2009 or 2013. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the Parish Council should indicate a preference for 2013. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a majority vote of 10 for and 2 abstentions.

c) Annual 43rd (Wessex) Division Memorial Service & Parade – The Chairman reminded members that the Parade would be held on Sunday, 13th July

d) Parish & Town Councillors Training Seminar – the Clerk informed members that SDC were holding a training seminar on Friday, 18th July (9.00 – 16.00) at Salisbury City Hall. There were no members able to attend.

172. Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground – nothing discussed

173. Clerks Report - The Clerks Report was confirmed and adopted.

Agenda Items for next meeting – fencing for Duchy Grounds (C. Hazzard)

*Further information on these items contained in Clerks Report.

Payment Schedule for Parish Council Meeting – 7.7.08