

# Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010 at 7.30 p.m. in the Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

**Present:** Councillors: E. Mitchell (Chairman), M. Hall (Vice-Chairman), R. Coward, C. Hazzard, G. Jeans, Mrs. R. Porter, R. Sims, S. Squires and Mrs. L. Traves.

Also PCSO Jake Noble, Mr. R. Potter, Mr. M. Whatley, Mr. Cook & Mr. Bowley

## Public Session

Mr. Whatley asked if something could be done about the state of the footpath from Lordsmead Mill to Clements Lane (opposite Walnut Tree). The Clerk pointed out that this was a tarmaced footpath and Wiltshire Councillor Jeans said that he would take this matter up and keep in contact with Mr. Whatley. Mr. Sims said that he had liaised with the owners of Linden Hill Barns who had indicated that they would be happy for a grit bin to go on the grass verge at the end of their drive in Castle Hill Lane.

PCSO Jake Noble said that he had come in to see if anyone had any questions. Mr. Coward asked if there had been any reports of illegal hare coursing on Mere Downs as several farmers in the area had reported fences being cut recently. PCSO Noble said that he was not aware of any reports in the Mere area although there had been a crack down on hare coursing in other locations in south Wiltshire. PCSO Noble reported that the Neighbourhood Watch was now active and encouraged others to join. He pointed out that it is sometimes possible to get a discount off home insurance if you are a member of Neighbourhood Watch.

**Apologies for absence** received from Councillors P. Coward, Mrs. M. White & M. Peirce.

**369. Declarations of Interest** – Cllr. Jeans declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 373 a)

**370. Minutes** – Cllr. R. Coward proposed that the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010 be approved, subject to the addition of the words *'the Council was happy to approve, in principle, investigations into the provision of a skate park in the Recreation Ground'* at the end of 368 c). Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote of those present on 18.1.10

## 371. Planning

a) Applications:

S/2010/33/FULL – FULL PLANNING – FORM NEW WALL AND ROOF OVER COURTYARD TO FORM SMALL HALL GROVE BUILDING, CHURCH STREET, MERE.

and

S/2010/34/LBC – LISTED CONSENT – FORM NEW WALL AND DROOF OVER COURTYARD TO FORM SMALL HALL GROVE BUILDING, CHURCH STREET, MERE.

Members generally felt that this was a good utilization of a courtyard that has no particular use at present. However, there were concerns because the northern (outside wall) of the proposed small hall would adjoin an existing lower wall belonging to Grove Cottage. Members felt that, although this was not a material planning consideration, it was something that the Building Regulations Department might need to be aware of and an issue that the applicant and neighbours should be aware of because they may need to enter into a Party Wall Agreement to establish how the existing wall, new wall, guttering and roof is going to be maintained. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the above applications be recommended for approval subject to an informative about the boundary walls. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hall and carried with a vote of 4 for, 3 abstentions (including Cllr. Jeans) and 1 against.

S/2010/54 – FULL PLANNING – THE ERECTION OF A POTTING SHED AND A GREENHOUSE, CONSTRUCTED ON A BRICK BASE. THE INSTALLATION OF A BUNDED FUEL TANK OF A CAPACITY OF 1399 LITRES  
ST. MATTHEW'S HOUSE, WET LANE, MERE.

Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

**b) South Wiltshire Core Strategy Examination** – Cllr. Jeans reported that he had attended the preliminary meeting and that he would be representing the Parish Council at the hearing and that, over the next few days, he and the Clerk would work on a written statement to challenge the Core Strategy Policies in relation to car parking and protecting retail sustainability in rural areas.

### 372. Matters Arising

**a) Wiltshire Councillors Report** – Cllr. Jeans reported that he had presented the Car Parking survey, conducted by the Mere & District Chamber of Trade, to the Cabinet and he reported that Wiltshire Council would be conducting a public consultation into possible changes to Wiltshire's waste and recycling collection.

**b) Report from Community Safety Representative** – Cllr. Sims reported that there had not been a meeting for some months.

**c) Report from Transport Representative** – Cllr. Sims said that it had become apparent that residents of West Knoyle were unaware that they could book the bus to take them to their surgery at Hindon and he was going to put a notice in Mere Matters to make everyone more aware of the facility and how to book it.

**d) Report from Community Area Partnership Representative** – Cllr. Hall had nothing further to report.

**e) Resistance to car parking charges** – Cllr. Hall reported that a meeting had been held with M.P. Dr. Andrew Murrison who had agreed to support the Parish Council and take the matter up with Wiltshire Council. Articles had appeared in the Wiltshire Times and Salisbury Journal, Cllr. Jeans had written an article in Mere Matters and the Parish Clerk was writing to Cllr. Richard Tonge, so the pressure was being maintained.

### 373. Finance & Resources

**a) Payments:** To approve payments as listed in payment schedule – Cllr. Jeans, having declared an interest, left the room whilst this matter was discussed. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the payments be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote in favour.

Electech	To service and fit Xmas lights to Mere Town Clock	695.00
T. F. Builders Ltd	Hire of Youngman boards for scaffold tower at MUGA	175.78
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil for January	88.79
MacLachlan Solicitors	Legal services in carrying out the registration of Lease relating to Allotment Land at Mere	94.00
Office 365	Bin Liners (Street Cleaning)	51.04
Raymac	Safety & Warning signs	91.71
Imprest Account (cheque Nos. 2636 - 2639)	PAYE, salaries, pensions and petty cash	3486.49
United Heating	Annual Service for Heating Boilers	217.38

**b) Internal Audit – Report from internal auditor** – The Clerk read out Mr. Wilson's written report dated 28.1.10 'I have carried out an interim internal audit of the Mere Parish Council Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2010. In my opinion the Council has maintained proper accounting records and the financial statements have been properly prepared. It is noted that the Council accepted the recommendations made in my last audit report of 15 July 2009. The Clerk and I reviewed the depreciation rates on the Asset Register and made amendments where we thought appropriate. One item on which I am required to report is whether the Council's insurance arrangements are appropriate and adequate. I understand that a review of the Council's insurance and health and safety arrangements is included on the agenda for the March meeting of the Council, together with a review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The aim should be to complete these reviews

before the financial year end. I would take this opportunity to repeat a comment that I made in my report of July 2009, in that I understand that discussions are being held on what, if any, further assets and responsibilities the Council might take on consequent upon the establishment of Wiltshire Council as an Unitary authority. It is important when considering such proposals that 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, as always, everything ready to hand and in such good order.'

**c) To set date and members for meeting to consider review of insurance arrangements, risk assessment, standing orders and financial regulations** – it was agreed that the meeting should be held on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> February in the Parish Council Office at 7.00 p.m. and that those members who attended the Budget Meeting should be asked to attend.

**d) Delegation to Town & Parish Councils and transfer of Community Assets – report on meeting of Wiltshire Market Towns held at County Hall on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January** – The Clerk reported that the Chairman, Cllr. Sims and herself had attended a meeting of Wiltshire Market Towns held in Trowbridge last Wednesday. One of the agenda items discussed was Area Boards and it was fairly evident that most town council's experience of Area Boards so far is disappointing. There is a lack of dialogue and many of the town and parish councils are left feeling that they are not being recognized as key partners. Also discussed Performance Reward Grants where the 17 Area Boards can put in bids totaling £250k each quarter. Again, the experience of town councils in this matter was disappointing. **Community Asset Transfer** –there is a new policy, adopted by Wiltshire Council who will consider the transfer of community assets as long as the transferee can demonstrate that what they are offering will be of benefit to the community. This policy applies to other community groups – not just Parish & Town Councils.

**Delegation** – The Neighbourhood Services Department will be presented a report to Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. It is likely that they will favour an option to pilot schemes with selected Town Councils. Area Boards will play a part in monitoring delegated service standards. This sparked a debate about whether finance would follow function and the issue of double-taxation. Some town councils were asking whether they would receive funds for the management of their local cemetery if they decided to take on that service but it was pointed out to them that other town councils, who already run their own cemeteries, do not receive funding from Wiltshire Council and that there should be a level playing field for all town councils. The Area Boards will play a part in monitoring delegated service standards. The Clerk finished off by suggesting that the Parish Council should register an interest with the Neighbourhood Services Department for Street Cleaning, Public Toilets and Car Parking

**e) Office Lease** – the Clerk confirmed that, following a meeting held between herself, Cllr. Hazzard and Mr. John Price of Wiltshire Council, she had now received an email from Mr. Price confirming that Wiltshire Council would be happy to grant a 10 year lease, would be prepared to pick up the cost of removing the office from the heating system, would be prepared to pick up the cost of connecting the office electricity supply to that of the changing rooms supply (to ensure that all our electrics come directly from the school) and that Wiltshire Council would also provide extra sockets in the office as part of the job. There were still issues relating to the business rates and water bills that needed to be discussed/resolved.

**374. Clerks Report** – Cllr. Hall proposed that the Clerks Report be confirmed and adopted. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

### **375. Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity**

**a) Approval of Annual Return to Charity Commission** – The Clerk presented members with the figures for the 2008/2009 Annual Return to the Charity Commission which showed the Income as £9800 and Expenses as £9610.62. The Parish Council, as Trustees of the Charity, unanimously agreed that these figures should be forwarded to the Charity Commission.

Meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.