

# **Mere Parish Council**

*PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD*

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

**Present:** Councillors: E Mitchell (Chairman), P. Coward, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, G. Jeans, Mrs. R. Porter, D. Sealy, R. Sims, S. Squires, Mrs. L. Traves & Mrs. M. White.

**Mr. Wayne Smith, Wiltshire Council's Customer Services Manager attended the meeting to talk about service provision in Mere for Tourist Information, & Wiltshire Council Customer Services.**

Mr. Smith stated that he had volunteered to come to talk to the Parish Council because he had received an email from the Clerk explaining that the Parish Council had concerns about the reduction in service provision. Mr. Smith explained that the number of council officers posted in Mere library to deal with council enquiries had been reduced quite significantly recently. He explained that demand capture was carried out between November 2009 & February 2010 which revealed that, although the total number of people coming into the library was quite high, the number of people coming in to access council services was between 1 & 2 people per day. Because the demand capture was carried out during the winter, another round of statistics was taken between April & May 2010 and the numbers were even less so Wiltshire Council stopped the Saturday morning service immediately and agreed a phased reduction of service from 5½ days per week to 2 days per week (Tuesday & Thursday). A telephone was installed to allow customers to ring direct to Trowbridge but there has not been a noticeable reaction from the public because there wasn't that much demand. The Tourist Information review went to cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> October where the decision to redirect tourist enquiries from Mere to Salisbury was taken because they needed to reduce costs from £790k to £550k. Mr. Smith confirmed that Wiltshire Council was currently conducting a library review.

Cllr. Mrs. White was concerned that the public and Parish Council was not made aware of the reduction in service but Mr. Smith said that the matter had been discussed with Cllr. Jeans and that signs/posters had been displayed in the library but he said that the demand was simply not there and if they felt that the reduction would have a significant impact on the local community, Wiltshire Council would have consulted but even now that the service is provided only two days a week, the number of users are still in single figures.

Cllr. Mrs. White raised concerns for the future of Mere Library and Mr. Smith said that he did not think that there were any plans to reduce Mere's library service at the moment. He said that there were some libraries in the county that are not used as much as Mere library and they may be more vulnerable.

Mr. Smith explained that the Council was looking at new ways of delivering its customer services, they could establish virtual face-to-face kiosks, send officers out to an office within the Community Area or send officers out to customers' homes. Mr. Smith was thanked for attending the meeting and explaining Wiltshire Council's position.

## **Public Session**

Mr. Hazzard said that, in these days of cut backs and recession, could the Parish Council write to the Chief Constable to tell him how much we appreciate the neighbourhood policing team in Mere, P. C. Richard Salter & PCSO Jake Noble and how their support has made such a great difference to the wellbeing of the people of Mere. It was agreed that a letter should be sent.

Mr. Coward asked if we had any method of checking how much water was extracted from Mere and the Clerk explained that she had raised this matter with the Environment Agency last year and that she was aware that a resident from Burton was currently liaising with the Environment Agency.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllr. Hall and also from P. C. Richard Salter & PCSO Jake Noble.

#### **461. To receive Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. George Jeans declared a prejudicial interest in Minute No. 466 a) – payment recipient.

Cllr. Hazzard declared a prejudicial interest in Minute No. 466 a) – payment recipient.

Cllr. R. Coward declared a personal interest in Minute No. 464 – Planning Application No. S/2010/1539

**462. Minutes** – Cllr. Squires proposed that the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a majority vote of those present on 22.9.10. Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010 be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a majority vote of those present on 4.10.10.

#### **463. Matters Arising**

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** - None

**b) Wiltshire Councillors Report** – Cllr. Jeans reported that the newly opened offices at Bourne Hill are not open to the public, unless by appointment.

**c) Report from Community Safety Representative** – Cllr. Sims reported that there had been a high number of shed burglaries recently and said that Wiltshire Police were offering good, low-cost locks for sheds.

**d) Report from Transport Representative** – nothing to report

**\*e) Car Parking Strategy**

i) Response from Jane Scott, OBE, Leader of Wiltshire Council

ii) Band 4 Car Parks – Framework for Lease

iii) Public Conveniences – Framework for Lease

Members noted the information in the Clerks Report and it was agreed that this information should be considered at the Annual Budget Meeting.

iv) Attendance for Environment Select Committee meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> November – Cllr. Jeans, the Chairman & Cllr. Squires confirmed that they would be attending the meeting tomorrow.

**f) Mere Information Centre – clarification from Wiltshire Council on service delivery** – members were grateful that Mr. Smith had come along to talk to the Parish Council and it was agreed that the Chairman should include, within his Mere Matters report, an article encouraging people to use Mere library and identifying the services available from the library.

**\*g) Casual Vacancy** – members noted the information in the Clerks Report.

#### **464. Planning**

**a) Applications:** (All applications can be viewed on Wiltshire Council's website

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/planninganddevelopment/planningapplicationssearchonline/planningsearch.htm> – and type in the relevant application number)

<b>Application Number:</b>	S/2010/1426
<b>Location:</b>	LITTLE SHOTLEY ANGEL LANE MERE WARMINSTER.
<b>Proposal:</b>	REPLACE COLLAPSED ROOF AND ADD 2 X DORMER WINDOWS (RETROSPECTIVE)

Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the above application should be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a majority vote. Cllrs. S. Squires, G. Jeans and Mrs. L. Traves abstained from voting.

**Application Number:** S/2010/1488  
**Location:** ANAHIEM SOUTHBROOK MERE WARMINSTER.  
**Proposal:** PROPOSED REAR CONSERVATORY EXTENTION

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

**Application Number:** S/2010/1515  
**Location:** BROOK COTTAGE SOUTHBROOK MERE WARMINSTER.  
**Proposal:** VARY CONDITION 2 OF S/2002/0876 (THE MATERIALS TO BE USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTERNAL SURFACES OF THE EXTENSION HEREBY PERMITTED SHALL MATCH THOSE USED IN THE EXISTING BUILDING) TO CHANGE THE EXTERNAL MATERIALS OF THE WEST ELEVATION, NORTH GABLE END AND ROOF OF THE EXTENSION FROM MATCHING NATURAL STONE AND TILES TO SMOOTH RENDER ABOVE DAMP PROOF MEMBRANE, AND PAINTED (ABOVE AND BELOW THE DAMP PROOF MEMBRANE IN DULUX WEATHERSHEILD MASONRY PAINT IN ASH WHITE, OR AN ALTERNATIVE COLOUR TO BE AGREED BY THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY) AND SLATE ROOF (PART RETROSPECTIVE)

Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a vote of 9 for and 1 against. In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting.

**Application Number:** S/2010/1539  
**Location:** SANDS COTTAGE MANOR ROAD MERE WARMINSTER.  
**Proposal:** PROPOSED TWO STOREY EXTENSION TO NORTH WEST ELEVATION, SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION TO SOUTH WEST ELEVATION, DEMOLITION OF EXISTING OUTBUILDINGS, ERECTION OF DETACHED TWO STOREY GARAGE AND WORKSHOP WITH FIRST FLOOR GYM/GAMES ROOM

Cllr. Sealy proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hazzard and carried with a vote of 5 for and 1 against. Cllrs. G. Jeans, Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Traves and R. Sims abstained from voting.

## **465. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths & Transport**

### **a) Parish Steward Scheme**

**i) Update on scheme** – the Clerk informed members that she had met with various Area Highway officers to discuss the new Parish Steward Scheme. Wiltshire Council wants to make the scheme more proactive. At the present time the Parish Stewards react to faults and issues reported to Clarence and jobs identified by Parish & Town Councils. However, the Parish Stewards want to be more proactive in identifying jobs that they can do themselves on a “find and fix” basis and identifying jobs for other resources which are available to the divisional office, where he is unable to carry out a repair himself. They would like the Parish Contacts to contact the Parish Steward direct, rather than go through the main office, and the preferred method is email or, in emergencies, by mobile phone. They would also like Parish & Town Councils to identify seasonal or regular jobs that the parish steward can deal with on a seasonal basis.

#### **ii) Job list for Parish Steward:**

- Overgrown hedges are obstructing pavement between Edgebridge and Walnut Tree Public House
- Overgrown hedges are obstructing footpath at end of Mill Lane (outside the old gas works)
- Overgrown hedges are obstructing footpath that runs between Butt’s Paddock & Ashgrove

#### 466. Finance

**a) Payments:** Cllr. Hill said that, whilst he was not opposed to paying the fees & related expenses for the groundsman's chainsaw courses, he did question whether or not the Parish Council was getting value for money. Members understood Cllr. Hill's questioning but felt that the Parish Council had no option. Cllr. Hill proposed that all payments be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a majority vote in favour. (Cllrs. Jeans and Hazzard, having declared a prejudicial interest, left the room whilst the matter was considered and refrained from voting).

Mere School	Proportion of costs to clear out storm drains on site	27.50
D & H Pengelly	Farm Environment Plan & HLS Application Advice	43.36
E. G. Coles & Son	Kubota Tractor – repair	70.55
E. G. Coles & Son	Kubota Tractor – service	296.61
Rochford Garden Machinery	Chainsaw equipment – clothing, boots, tools	260.10
Rochford Garden Machinery	Chainsaw & helmet	279.00
Newlands Training	Chainsaw course for NPTC and assessment	895.63
Jeans	Lighting repairs ?????	23.26
CPRE	Subscription Renewal	29.00
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	199.42
Imprest Account Cheque Nos. 2683 - 2687	Wages, PAYE, Pension, Petty Cash	3685.62
North Street Nurseries	Winter planting of tubs & floral display areas	613.35
The Cumbria Clock Company	Service of Clock Tower Clock	217.38

**\*b) To consider Budget/Expenditure Report and verify bank reconciliation** – Members approved the Budget/Expenditure report and Cllr. Hazzard asked for the capital expenditure for the Parish Council's computer to be ring fenced. Cllr. Sealy verified the bank reconciliation to bank statements.

**c) To review Standing Orders & Financial Regulations** - deferred

**d) To review Financial Risk Assessment** - deferred

#### 467. General Items

**a) Invitation to Wiltshire Association of Local Councils AGM**, Devizes Town Hall, 16<sup>th</sup> November from 6.30 p.m. This year's meeting will be followed with a presentation from the National Association of Local Councils' Head of Policy and Development, looking at the present and future of local councils – as this meeting overlapped with the Council's Annual Budget meeting, there were no councillors able to attend.

#### 468. Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity

**a) To consider having water meters temporarily disconnected** – the Clerk read out a letter from Wessex Water stating 'I confirm that metered standing charges include the costs of providing a metered billing service. For supply customers the standing charges also recover the costs of meter reading, meter maintenance and replacement. For sewerage customers the standing charge also includes the costs of dealing with surface water run-off from properties and highway drainage. I am therefore unable to

withdraw the standing charges from your bill. You may wish to consider having the meter temporarily disconnected. The fee to reconnect the meter when the service is needed would be £50.00 plus VAT.' Members had always assumed that it would cost much more to reconnect the water meter and unanimously agreed that both meters in the Recreation Ground should be temporarily disconnected.

#### **469. Clerks Report**

Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the Clerks Report be confirmed and adopted. Proposal seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote in favour.

\* Further information on these items in Clerks Report.