

# Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at 7.30 p.m. in the Small Lecture Hall, Salisbury Street, Mere.

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

Also P. C. Richard Salter

Also Mr. L. Stanton.

## Public Session

P.C. Richard Salter said that he had nothing specific to report apart from the success of the Church Fete held last Saturday.

Mrs. Irene Snook from Long Cross, Zeals asked for the Parish Council's support for local objections to proposals for a trailer park at Long Cross, Zeals. It was agreed that this matter would be raised at the July meeting.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllr. G. Jeans

## 411. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. E. Mitchell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 418a)

Cllr. R. Sims declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 418a)

Cllr. C. Hazzard declared a personal interest in Minute No. 413 – Planning Application S/2010/678

**412. Minutes** – **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010 are approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a majority vote of those present on 10.5.10.

## 413. Planning

a) Applications:

**Application Number:** S/2010/678  
**Location:** 17 CASTLE HILL CRESCENT MERE WARMINSTER.  
**Proposal:** THE ERECTION OF A REPLACEMENT PORCH

**RESOLVED** that the above application is recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. D. Sealy and carried with a majority vote in favour. (Cllrs. Mrs. Traves abstained from voting and Cllr. C. Hazzard, having declared a personal interest, refrained from voting).

**Application Number:** S/2010/721  
**Location:** THE ACORNS BARROW STREET MERE WARMINSTER.  
**Proposal:** PROPOSED POND AND TWO SOIL BANKS

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had previously approved a similar application for this site and that the present application was to provide lower soil banks. **RESOLVED** that the above application is recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. C. Hazzard and carried with a majority vote in favour. (Cllr. Mrs. White abstained from voting).

**Application Number:** S/2010/723  
**Location:** CHURCH ALE HOUSE WATER STREET MERE WARMINSTER.  
**Proposal:** SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION

**RESOLVED** that the above application is recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. C. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. M. Hall and carried with a majority vote in favour. (Cllrs. Mrs. Traves and Mrs. White abstained from voting).

**Application Number:** S/2010/727  
**Location:** WOLLEMI PETTRIDGE LANE MERE WARMINSTER.  
**Proposal:** DEMOLITION OF EXISTING CAR PORT AND STORAGE SHED AND ERECTION OF NEW ATTACHED GARAGE

The Clerk read out a letter from Mr. Graham Avory of Little Tawny, Pettridge Lane, which was in support of this application. **RESOLVED** that the above application should be recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. M. Hall, seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

**Application Number:** S/2010/759  
**Location:** PADDOCK HOUSE, SHAFTESBURY ROAD, MERE.  
**Proposal:** ERECTION OF A REAR CONSERVATORY

**RESOLVED** that the above application should be recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. M. Hall, seconded by Cllr. D. Sealy and carried with a majority vote in favour. (Cllrs. Mrs. Traves and Mrs. White abstained from voting).

**Application Number:** S/2009/1522/FULL – **AMENDED PLANS**  
**Location:** OLD HOLLOW RISE, DOWNSIDE CLOSE, MERE WARMINSTER.  
**Proposal:** SUBSTITUTION OF HOUSE TYPES ON PLOTS 1, 2, 16-26 AND THE ADDITION OF PLOT 27 ON PREVIOUS APPROVAL S/2006/1599 FOR 26 DWELLINGS AT DOWNSIDE CLOSE, MERE.

The Clerk informed members that the Parish Council had previously raised no objection to this application other than the boundary treatment and that the Parish Council had stressed, in November 2009, that the original boundary treatment of a 2m wide mixed thorn hedge with indigenous specimen trees on the western boundary needed to be adhered to (rather than fences). Owing to the length of time in signing off this planning application, the applicant and planning authority had asked the Chairman to make an informed decision on behalf of the Parish Council as a matter of urgency. The Clerk had therefore asked the applicant to forward a signed letter assuring the Parish Council that the western boundary would consist of a 2m wide hedge with indigenous specimen trees. This has subsequently been received and the planning authority has assured the Parish Council that they will condition this letter as part of their approval.

The Chairman informed members that a planning application for Change of use of land to extension of residential curtilage, demolition of outbuilding and erection of building to provide additional accommodation at Mapperton Hill Farm, Gillingham Road, Mere, had been received. The Chairman stated that the planning application would be discussed at the July Parish Council meeting but urged members to view the plans and visit the site beforehand.

**b) South Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Notice of possible Major Changes to submitted Development Plan Document** – owing to the absence of Wiltshire Cllr. Jeans, it was agreed to defer this matter.

**\*c) Gillingham Town Plan** – with reference to the information in the Clerks Report, it was agreed to send a copy of the Mere Parish Plan and to raise the Parish Council's concerns relating to the railway station car parking and whether or not there is potential to increase car parking provision for the railway station in view of the fact that any increase in development in the locality is likely to increase demand.

#### **414. Matters Arising**

**a) Resistance to car parking charges** – Cllr. Hall reported that he had written to Cllr. Tonge (Wiltshire Council's Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport) and also, on advice of Jane Scott, asked him to come and visit us. Cllr. Hall reported that Cllr. Tonge had replied but that his response was disappointing and unsatisfactory and said that he would contact him again to ask for answers to the questions raised.

**b) Wiltshire Councillors Report** - deferred

**c) Report from Community Safety Representative** – Cllr. Sims said that there was nothing new to report locally but he would be attending a meeting tomorrow night convened by the Neighbourhood Watch in Tisbury

**d) Report from Transport Representative** – Cllr. Sims said that there was nothing new to report other than the progress of the Connect 2, which was carrying 250 passengers every week, including school children.

**e) Suggestion for reducing street lights or reduced lighting times** – Members discussed the pending consultation/liaison on the reduction of street lighting and asked the Clerk to gather for further information, specifically:

- Can light sensors be altered so that they come on later in the evening or go off earlier in the morning?
- In places where there are numerous street lights, can every other light be switched off or staggered lights on either side of the road be switched off?
- Do we have crime prevention responsibilities – in other words, if we suggest that a certain street light is switched off and the neighbourhood suffers burglaries as a consequence, do we have any liability?
- What are the cost saving implications? If one street light is switched off, how much money is saved?

**\*f) Copy of petition and letter regarding safety concerns for pedestrians using The Lynch** – The Clerk had copied the letter in the Clerks Report which was noted by members who said that the Parish Council should write a letter to Wiltshire Council indicating our support for the petition. However, members also felt that, given Wiltshire Council's current financial constraints, finding the money to carry out these works would be problematic.

**g) Providing litter sticks for community use** – The Clerk reminded members that at the Annual Parish Meeting held in April, it was suggested that the Parish Council might provide litter picking sticks and litter bags for members of the community to use. Parishioners could then adopt certain areas of Mere and volunteer to collect litter from these areas on a regular basis. It was agreed that the Clerk should put a notice in Mere Matters to gauge the level of interest from volunteers. Cllr. P. Coward said that if there were a dozen volunteers then he would donate the equipment.

**h) Forging closer links with the National Trust and Stourhead** – update from Cllr. C. Hazzard – Cllr. Hazzard reported that he had spoken to Simon Ford and that he would be pursuing this matter further in the near future. He explained that he wanted to involve the Chamber of Trade in this matter also.

**i) Insurance quotations – update from Cllr. Michael Hall** – Cllr. Hall reported that he and the Clerk had compared the insurance quotations from Aon and from Came and Co. and that, whilst the insurance quotation from Came and Co. seemed cheaper initially, there were optional add ons which would bring it more or less in line with the renewal quotation from Aon. However, Came & Co. were offering a higher level of public liability cover. That said, Cllr. Hall & the Clerk had felt it better to renew the existing insurance from Aon and, in the next year or so, the Clerk would try and ascertain the experiences of other Clerks and Councils that may have switched over to Came & Co. Members were happy with the decision that had been made.

**j) Report on Jane Scott, the Leader of Wiltshire Council's visit to Mere** – Cllr. Hall reported on the visit which took place on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> May and he said the meeting went very well. He and the Chairman showed Mrs. Scott around Mere, paying particular attention to the sports facilities, the cemetery and around the town. They discussed concerns about the loss of shops and retail premises and, of course, the issue of possible car parking charges. Cllr. Hall felt that Mrs. Scott had a good understanding of our concerns as she was not a councilor for an urban seat and used to be a farmer and indeed, at one time, lived in Mere.

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

**a) Parish Steward –job list for next visit** – Cllr. Squires reported that he had seen the Parish Steward remove the Walnut Tree Inn's 'A' frame advertising sign from the island in the centre of town and put it in his van. Members agreed that this sign was not causing an obstruction and that its removal was unsupportive of local businesses. Cllr. Hall suggested that this should be mentioned to Cllr. Mrs. Jane Scott who, on her visit to Mere, said that she was sympathetic to the plight of rural businesses. It was agreed that the Parish Steward should be asked to cut the verges in Mill Lane and cut back various overgrown footpaths around the parish.

**b) Community Flooding Information & Flooding questionnaire** – The Clerk reported that Wiltshire Council were conducting a flooding survey and had sent round a questionnaire and maps. It was agreed that the Clerk and Chairman should complete the questionnaire but members raised awareness about the flooding on the A303 around the bypass bridge, on the bend by Burton Grange and on Limpers Hill.

#### 416. Allotments

**a) Concerns regarding state of Wellhead allotment car parking area** – The Clerk said that there was nothing to report at this stage as she had not yet met with residents.

#### 417. Grounds, Open Spaces, Sports Facilities

**a) Issues relating to septic drainage at Andy Young Pavilion and water leak to Bowling Green** – The Clerk informed members that there had been a problem with the tank drainage at the pavilion and that the tank had needed to be emptied in order for Jeans Electricals to assess the problem. It turned out to be a problem with the pumps which had now been resolved. However, at the same time there had also been a considerable water leak on the irrigation system for the bowling green .

#### 418. Finance & Resources

**a) Payments:** Resolved to approve the payments as listed below on proposition made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a majority vote. (Cllrs. E. Mitchell and R. Sims, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, refrained from voting or discussion).

Roy Sims	Expenses for attending meeting 14.5.10 at Salisbury City Hall	20.10
D & H Pengelly	Farm Environment Plan & HLS Application Advice	131.48
E. J. Mitchell	Chairman's Expenses for 2009/10	262.50
Cash	Mobile phone top-up fee	£10.00
Wessex Waste Disposal	Empty septic chamber (AYP)	£100.00
Tincknell Fuels	Gas Oil	£182.96
Rutter & Rutter Solicitors	Insurance renewal – Husqvarna Ride-on mower	157.77
Jeans	To test and re-set septic tank pumps (AYP maintenance)	70.50
Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity	Donation to pay for expenses incurred	9500.00
G. McCann	Repairs to cemetery walls	270.00
A McCann	Repairs to cemetery walls	226.00
A McCann	Repairs to cemetery walls	243.00
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil for May	178.00
South West Regional Board	Affiliate & Associate Membership of the South West Provincial Employers and the South West Provincial Council 2010/11	293.75
Community First	Annual Membership 2010/11	36.00
Imprest account – cheque Nos. 2657 - 2661	PAYE, wages, pension, petty cash	3625.32

**b) To review effectiveness of internal controls (bank reconciliations, budget/expenditure reports, financial regulations, standing orders, internal audit etc)** – members considered that their internal controls were

effective and that the internal audit provided the Parish Council with a reliable assurance about the council's internal controls and its management of risk.

**\*c) To approve Budget/Expenditure Report – RESOLVED** that the Budget/Expenditure report for the period ending 31.3.10 be approved on proposition made by Cllr. Hall, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

**d) To consider Internal Auditor's end of year financial report and adopt/approve recommendations therein –** the Clerk read out the Internal Auditor's report as follows:

*I have carried out an internal audit of the Mere Parish Council Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. In my opinion the Council has maintained proper accounting records and the financial statements have been properly prepared. However there are three items which I consider merit particular mention, namely:*

**1. Asset Register**

*I have agreed with the Clerk the principles to be used for valuing buildings in the Asset Register. However such values, especially those relating to old buildings, often can only be a matter for subjective judgment. The Council therefore may wish to review the values currently allotted to those items on the Asset Register.*

**2. Sport England Grant – possible write-off**

*There is still about £2700 due to the Council from Sport England in respect of the £50,000 grant relating to the sports ground facilities. Sport England state that before this money can be paid the Council must submit further detailed information including a Deed of Dedication. The Clerk is of the view that the time and cost involved in putting together all this information could exceed the amount of the outstanding contribution. I have advised that my view is that more information is needed about the actual costs and possible consequences of not submitting this information before the Council decides whether or not to pursue this outstanding grant contribution.*

*The Clerk intends to raise this matter at the next Council meeting.*

**3. Relationship with Mere Recreation Ground Charity**

*The fact that the Parish Councillors are also the Trustees of the Mere Recreation Charity can lead to a 'blurring' of their responsibilities. It is important to recognize that the Parish Council and the Charity are separate legal entities.*

*This point has arisen because, though there is nothing wrong with the present allocation of costs in relation to such matters as maintenance of the Recreation Ground, there is no management letter between the two bodies detailing the method of cost apportionment. At present the responsibility for deciding the apportionment of costs is with the Clerk. For her guidance and that of her successors it is strongly recommended that a management letter between the two entities is put in place – it need not be long, just one side of A4.*

*If the Council and/or the Clerk wish me to advise further on any of these matters then I am available to help. 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.*

*J. M. Wilson, Internal Auditor*

Members were very appreciative of the work carried out by Mr. Wilson and of the comments above. On his points above, the Parish Council agreed:

- 1. Asset Register – The Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman would meet in order to review the values currently allotted to items on the Asset Register.**
- 2. Sport England Grant – The Parish Clerk to enter into further communication with Sport England and obtain quotations from solicitors to try and resolve this situation.**
- 3. Relationship with Mere Recreation Ground Charity – The Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman would meet to draft a management/policy letter.**

Members asked for their thanks to John Wilson for his diligent work as internal auditor, to be recorded.

**\*f) To approve accounts and supporting papers for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 (as attached) – RESOLVED** that the accounts and supporting papers for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 be approved on proposal made by Cllr. C. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Hall and carried with a unanimous vote.

**g) To complete and sign Annual Return and Statement of Assurances for the year ending 31.3.10 for submission to external auditors** - 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.

**h) To note public rights to view accounts** – The Clerk reminded members that the Annual Return and other documents such as accounts books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them are to be made available for inspection by any person interested at a convenient place fixed by the Parish Council on reasonable notice and that the Parish Council must display a notice containing this information. Parishioners also have a right to question the auditor about the accounts and to make objections to the auditor. The Clerk confirmed that a proforma notice, containing all this information would be displayed on the Parish Council's noticeboard outside the Lecture Hall.

#### **419. General Items**

**a) Invitation to Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Annual forum** to be held at Dinton Village Hall on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.) – Cllr. Sims said that he may be able to attend.

**b) Annual 43<sup>rd</sup> (Wessex) Division Memorial Service & Parade – Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2010** – The Clerk was asked to order a wreath for both the Chairman and Cllr. Jeans to lay at the memorial.

**c) Film Shows** – Cllr. Mrs. White reported that Moviola has obtained extra funding which will change the way they operate and they have presented us with three different options. However, due to the time involved and the fact that the Mere Film shows are run by a small team of volunteers, they felt that they should continue operating with one film a month. The Parish Council agreed with this decision and expressed their gratitude to the volunteers who arrange the film shows. Cllr. Mrs. White also informed members that the volunteers would like to hold over funds from this year until next year so that there is more to distribute and confirmed that the accounts would be presented to the Parish Council for the September meeting.

**d) Notice of Wiltshire Council's intention to pass a resolution applying to statutory provisions with respect to the naming of streets** – The Clerk informed members that she had received a copy of the statutory notice and explained that the statutory provisions referred to in the notice are required following Unitary to enable the Council to undertake its street naming and numbering powers.

**e) Community Heartbeat – defibrillator** - deferred

**420. Clerks Report** – **RESOLVED** to adopt the Clerks Report on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote. Cllr. Hazzard asked for 'A' frame advertising boards to be raised on the next agenda.

\* Further information on these items in Clerks Report.

Members were reminded that they should now be acting in their capacity as Trustees of the Charity and not as Parish Councillors.

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

**Payment:** Donation to Mere Parish Council for expenses incurred throughout 2009/10 £9387.19

**RESOLVED** that the above payment be approved on proposal made by Cllr. Hall, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.