

Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 3rd October 2011 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors: Mrs. M. White (Chairman), Mrs. L. Traves (Vice-Chairman), P. Coward, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell & B. Norris.

Also: Jane Batten, PCSO Gary Chambers, Mrs. Penny Deeker, Mrs. Karen Sheppard, , Ian Sheppard, Tony Taylor, Tony Traves, Dr. A. Murrison MP,

Public Session

Mrs. Karen Sheppard said that, during the public meeting last Monday, Fiona Bowles said that abstraction would affect the water levels and kept mentioning the drought in 1966. Mrs. Sheppard said that her husband, Brinley, was working in the greenhouses during that time and throughout that year the water levels were not affected. Mr. Sheppard was also disappointed that Mr. Chris Greenwell from the Environment Agency said that their investigation into restoring sustainable abstraction was closed in 2009. She said that both Wessex Water and the Environment Agency were very large organisations and they needed to do something to restore our river levels.

Jane Batten said that if the Parish Council held another meeting, she hoped they would press harder to book the school hall as so many people were unable to get into the meeting or hear the presentations. She also said that a lot of people were unimpressed with the presentations given by Wessex Water and the Environment Agency as they were based on statistics and not solutions. Jane Batten said that a facebook page had been set up for people to share their views: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Mere-Shreen-River/113573408753200>

Mr. Ian Sheppard said that he was not at the meeting on Monday but he had seen a video of the meeting and read notes and he was impressed by the attendance. M. Sheppard said that Colin Clark seemed to put doubt into just about everything that the Environment Agency and Wessex Water had to say and it did seem that Wessex Water and the Environment Agency were working hand in hand. Mr. Sheppard suggested that the matter might need to be referred to Richard Creswell, Chairman of the Environment Agency South West. Mr. Sheppard also mentioned that his wife had emailed the Duchy of Cornwall regarding the low water levels and Mr. Nick Mould had responded very sympathetically but suggested that the only people that can help us are the Environment Agency.

Mr. Tony Taylor, Chairman of Mere & District Linkscheme was also representing the fundraising arm of the Mere Literary Festival and had come along to the meeting to express the groups interest in renting the old band hut for office space, meeting venue and storage. He said that he was aware that the Parish Council was discussing the matter of taking on this building as an asset transfer from Wiltshire Council and he wanted to inform the Parish Council that they were keen to occupy the premises and would be prepared to keep it clean and tidy.

Mrs. Penny Deeker, Chairman of Mere Firework Festival Committee wanted to thank the Parish Council for its support and said that the Committee had now raised enough funds to cover the festival. They would be advertising widely in the community and wanted to make sure that those residents living around the environs of the school were well informed of the timing of fireworks. They were also liaising with the community and the police regarding the traffic/parking situation.

Mrs. Traves said that she had received complaints about the poor surface of the footpath running across the Meads. Also, yesterday she was approached by members of the public regarding the temporary fence around the cricket square and whether or not it was suitable given that children playing football may run into it. Cllr. Jeans suggested that the Cricket Club be approached and asked if they could erect their high visibility flexible fencing around the outside of the wooden/wire fence.

PCSO Gary Chambers said that he was attending the meeting, on behalf of PC Richard Salter and PCSO Jake Noble, in order to inform the Parish Council about the new nationwide number for contacting the local

police. 101 is the number to use for non emergencies and this number became operational in Wiltshire on 19th September and replaced the old Wiltshire Police number. If you dial 101 from anywhere in Wiltshire, you will be able to get through to Wiltshire Police. Other counties have adopted the number also and it is envisaged that by 2012 it will be a nationwide number for non emergencies. 999 still remains the number for emergency calls. Cllr. Jeans said that he hoped, in light of all the cutbacks, Mere would be keeping its police station. PCSO Gary Chambers said that he was not aware of any plans to close Mere police station but explained that Wiltshire Police were now operating under a hub system– there are four hubs:- Chippenham, Salisbury, Trowbridge & Swindon and a super hub at Devizes which houses all the specialist officers e.g. traffic and firearms. All police officers to be located in 4 locations only so Warminster & Amesbury have been redeployed so there is no longer 24 hour policing from those locations

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. R. Hill, R. Hughes & R. Sims

49. To receive Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Mrs. Jane Hurd declared a personal interest in planning application S/2011/1370

Cllr. Jeans declared a personal interest in planning application S/2011/1370

Cllr. Jeans declared a personal & prejudicial interest in Minute No. 54a)

50. Minutes – Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 5th September 2011 be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a majority vote of those present on 5.9.11

51. Matters Arising

***a) Co-option of councillor to fill casual vacancy** – Members considered the personal statements for the following candidates –Mr. David Hope and Mr. Peter Mason – which had been distributed by the Parish Clerk along with the agenda papers. The Chairman called for nominations and both candidates were nominated and seconded. Members agreed that it would be fairer to carry out the voting by secret ballot rather than a show of hands. Each candidate received 4 votes (one member abstained from voting). Therefore, neither candidate had an overall majority. As there were only 9 members at the meeting, the Chairman was reluctant to use her casting vote and it was agreed that the voting process would be taken again at the next meeting.

b) Neighbourhood Policing Report – as given in public session, above.

c) Wiltshire Councillors Report - Cllr. Jeans said that he seemed to be spending a lot of time questioning planning laws. Cllr. Jeans also confirmed that, as recently publicised, Wiltshire Council's Chief Executive and one other Director would be made redundant in a Senior Management Restructure which would save further costs

d) Mere's Rivers – To formulate the Parish Council's response following the public meeting held on 26th September – The Chairman reported that since the meeting of 26th September, we have had some correspondence from the residents of Mere and she had personally received some complaints because a lot of people could not get into the meeting, could not sit down or could not hear what was being said. We did anticipate that there might be a large attendance and asked the school if we could book the school hall and, although the school was happy for us to use the hall, they would make no reduction on its charge of £98.50 + VAT for 3 hours use. The Chairman said that the parish council had previously agreed that this fee was unreasonable and she said that the schools letting policy should have within it, some clause allowing a public meeting to take place at a reduced cost because it should promote "working with the community". The Chairman said that the school is the heart of our community and she would have hoped that, for something as emotive as this issue, the school might have compromised and that it was especially difficult to comprehend when you think about the facilities that the Parish Council is happy to offer the school and how supportive we have been for the Fireworks Festival which is being held to raise funds for the school. Anyhow, we were able to book a hall in the end, thanks to the Cubs and Beavers, who kindly agreed to use the Andy Young Pavilion free of charge so that we could use the Grove Building but the attendance exceeded even our expectations as we must have had 140 people turn out for the meeting and

it was not possible to seat them all and some of them went home because they could not hear the presentations. The intensity of feeling at the meeting was very high and we have received more correspondence since the meeting. We have also received an email from Dr. Colin Clark with some suggestions for a way forward to the problem of low flows at Mere (the Chairman read out the email). Cllr. R. Coward said that felt the Environment Agency seemed a bit unconcerned although he thought that the hydrologist, Dr. Colin Clark, spoke particularly well. Cllr. Mitchell said that Wessex Water needed to revise their policy and they couldn't keep pumping us dry. Cllr. Hazzard said that the Parish Council should write to Wessex Water and Environment Agency and Offwat and all the relevant bodies saying that strength and intensity of feeling amongst our parishioners is very strong and they want the water levels in our rivers to be restored to a reasonable flow. Cllr. P. Coward proposed that the Parish Council should not lecture the Environment Agency or Wessex Water on what to do but should 'put the ball back in their court' and ask them what actions they can take to resolve the situation. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Jeans. Dr. Andrew Murrison MP thanked the Parish Council for inviting him to the meeting and agreed that Dr. Colin Clark had cast an element of doubt over the abstraction rates and effects and said that it would be good to write to the Environment Agency and Wessex Water, putting Dr. Clarks points to them. He also commended the Parish Council's approach on this matter and said that we were not in the business of offering solutions but we can point out the problems.

e) Lease for car parks & public toilets – The Clerk confirmed that the draft lease for the Salisbury Street Car Park had now been received although she had not yet had a chance to read it. It was agreed that Cllrs. George Jeans, Mary White and Lesley Traves should go through the lease and that a solicitor should be appointed to consider the leases once all three leases had been received (one each for the two car parks and one for the public toilets)

f) New paths for new cemetery – Cllr. Hazzard volunteered to arrange for a new specification so that quotations for paths and drainage could be received in time for the budget meeting.

g) Castle Hill & Long Hill - Higher Level Stewardship Agreement – it was confirmed that the agreement (as amended to commence on 1st October) had been signed and Cllr. R. Coward confirmed that the Parish Council would now be seeking quotations to clear the fence line on Long Hill in preparation for the erection of a new fence.

h) Transfer of Assets – Does the Parish Council want to commission a building survey on the old band hut? The Clerk confirmed that she had completed the applications for the transfer of Council assets for both the Croquet Club and the old Band Hut and had also visited the sites with officers of Wiltshire Council. However, the Clerk had concerns over the condition of the old Band Hut and felt that the Parish Council would be unwise to pursue the matter further without having a condition survey and this was an issue shared by Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Jeans asked if Mr. Tony Traves would be prepared to carry out a survey on the building and he indicated that he would do so. Members therefore unanimously agreed that Mr. Tony Traves should carry out the condition survey and report back to the Parish Council at a future date.

i) Local concerns over work being carried out at Bramley House and possible boundary issues – with reference to Minute No. 38 c), the Clerk confirmed that the Title documents had been received from the Land Registry which did show that there were certain anomalies relating to the boundaries of Bramley House and the ownership boundaries as shown on recent planning applications did not correlate to the boundaries shown on the Title. The Clerk was concerned that Bramley House could be acquiring land by adverse possession and asked the Council whether or not they wanted to pursue this matter. Cllr. Jeans felt that the matter should be pursued as the matter seemed to have raised a lot of local concern. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

52. 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)

Application Number:

S/2011/1375

Location:

Honeysuckle Cottage Dark Lane Mere Warminster.

Proposal: Fell 2 X Conifers and reduce and reshape 1 X Laburnum by up to 40%

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

Application Number: S/2011/1370

Location: Rosemary Cottage Dark Lane Mere Warminster.

Proposal: 1 X Willow to re pollard

Cllr. Mrs Traves proposed that the above application should be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a majority vote. (Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, having declared a personal interest, abstained from voting).

Application Number: S/2011/1341

Location: Land adjacent to Downs View Southbrook Mere Warminster.

Proposal: Erect two dwellings and double garage, form new access and alter hedge line for access visibility splay

Cllr. Mrs. Traves confirmed that she had visited the site and felt that one decent sized house would sit better in the land than two smaller houses. She also expressed concerns about the fact that the application is proposing only one single garage per house and any off-road turning space is very small so she was concerned about access onto the highway. Cllr. Mitchell said that two smaller houses would be more affordable than one large house. Cllr R. Coward said that the Parish Council had approved some very cramped developments and he did not think that this example was nay worse. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a vote of 6 for and 2 abstentions. In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans refrained from discussion and voting.

Application Number: S/2011/1317

Location: Oakhaven Woodlands Road Mere Warminster.

Proposal: Replacement dwelling

Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the above application should be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a majority vote. . In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans refrained from discussion and voting.

Application Number: S/2011/1324

Location: Sunnybank, Shaftesbury Road, Mere.

Proposal: Construct a side and forward single storey extension

Cllr. Norris proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote. . In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans refrained from discussion and voting.

***b) Draft National Planning Policy Framework: Consultation** (report prepared by Mr. David Hope , drafted as though they were the Parish Council’s own response is attached) – Members noted the report prepared by Mr. David Hope but not all members were in unanimous agreement with every point that Mr. Hope had made. It was resolved that the Parish Council should submit a formal response and it was therefore agreed that Cllrs. Norris, Mrs. Traves, George Jeans, R. Coward and Mrs. White be delegated authority to prepare, amongst themselves, the parish council’s response to the consultation document.

53. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Double yellow lines in Salisbury Street – Following the approval of the Traffic Order, Cllr. Jeans confirmed that the contractors had marked the lines wrongly (they were too long) and that they would be coming back to rectify the matter.

54. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments: Cllr. R. Coward proposed that the following payments be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves. (Cllr. Jeans, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room whilst this matter was discussed).

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| D & H Pengelly | Farm Environment Plan & HLS Application Advice | 168.26 |
| Playquest Adventure Play Ltd | Poles to repair clatterbridge at Walnut Road play area | 114.00 Already pd. |

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| The Broker Network Ltd (Came & Co) | Farm Motor Insurance Policy Diahatsu Fourtrack + Kubota Tractor | 535.14 Already pd. |
| Mere Matters | S.137 donation | 600.00 |
| Mere School | Changing Rooms & Office – electricity - 16.6.11 – 20.9.11 | 58.70 |
| Mere School | Changing Rooms – gas – 16.6.11 – 20.9.11 | 138.64 |
| Mere School | Changing Rooms – water – 16.6.11 – 20.9.11 | 52.95 |
| Mere School | Andy Young Pavilion – water – 16.6.11 – 20.9.11 | 59.44 |
| Mere School | Swimming Pool – water – 16.6.11 – 20.9.11 | 356.62 |
| Mere School | Swimming Pool – electricity – 16.6.11 – 20.9.11 | 191.42 |
| Jeans | Bulb + repairs to light on Castle Hill | 45.42 |
| Sydenhams | Tarpaulin + coach bolts & nuts | 29.76 |
| Duchy of Cornwall | Allotment rent 25.3.11 – 28.9.11 | 322.06 |
| Duchy of Cornwall | Castle Hill – rent – 29.9.10 – 28.9.11 | 15.00 |
| Cash | Reimbursement of travel expenses to Salisbury 5.9.11 | 21.57 |
| Cash | Reimbursement for printer cartridge | 57.45 |
| Forge Garages | Fuel & Oil | 110.00 |
| Imprest account – cheque Nos. 2740 - 2744 | Wages, PAYE, Pension & Petty Cash | 5982.62 |
| Southern Electric | Supply to Clock Tower | 16.85 |

55. General Items

a) The 2013 Review of Parliamentary constituencies in England – Dr. Andrew Murrison MP was invited to speak about the review and said that the proposals were to reduce the number of MPs by 50 in order to reduce the cost of politics and also to address the disparity between the number of voters per MP. The proposals are to lose 2 MPs in this area, from Dorset and Wiltshire and the replacement MPs will need to cross county boundaries. Dr. Murrison felt that for Mere, the proposals would be slightly less of an issue because Mere would be right in the middle of the new Warminster and Shaftesbury constituency which runs from Westbury to Blandford and the two towns that Mere is most closely related to, namely Warminster & Gillingham, are also in the middle of the constituency. Dr. Murrison said that controversy lies elsewhere: Tisbury will be taken from the current Westbury division and put into Salisbury. These proposals are only provisional and the commissioner is minded to take the views of Parish & Town Councils on board so Dr. Murrison recommended that the Parish Council should respond to the consultation which is open until 5th December. Parliament will vote on final document at the end of 2013. The next election of 2015, we will have the new boundaries in place. Dr. Murrison was thanked for explaining the proposals and Cllr. Jeans proposed that we respond to the consultation supporting the commissioner's recommendations. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

b) Interest in purchasing Mere Stone? – The Clerk informed members that Mr. Peter Mason had a quantity of Mere Stone that he was looking to sell but did not know how much he had or how much it might be worth and wondered whether the Parish Council may be interested in purchasing it. Cllr. R. Coward

proposed that we should ask Cllr. Hill to go and look at it and assess the quantity/value before deciding whether or not the Parish Council would be interested in purchasing the stone.

c) Invitation to WALC's Annual General Meeting to be held at Chippenham Town Hall on 28th October 2011 from 11.30 a.m. – the Chairman indicated that she would attend the meeting.

56. Clerks Report – Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the Clerks Report be confirmed and adopted. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd.

It was agreed that the 'Diamond Jubilee' should be raised on the next agenda.

Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity

a) To consider quotations for tree felling as recommended by tree assessment

The Clerk reminded members that this tree work (2 beech trees to be felled and 1 beech tree to be reduced) involved climbing and section felling which involved seeking specialist tree surgeons. She had asked three local tree surgeons for quotations but had only received prices from two, as follows:

Mr. David Harness - £1225.00 + VAT

Mr. G. Thomson (Thomson Tree Services Ltd) - £1700 + VAT

Members agreed that Mr. David Harness should be asked to carry out the work.

b) Skate Park - deferred

* Further information on these items in Clerks Report