

Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 5th September 2011 at 7.30 p.m. in Duchy Manor Reception Area, Springfield Road, Mere.

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

Also: Mrs. A. Howell, E. Henson, Mrs. D. Riddick, Mrs. J. Sutton, Mr. & Mrs. C. Woods, Lt. Col. Botsford, I. Sheppard, Mr. Ken Holland.

Public Session

Mr. Ian Sheppard and a number of residents had attended the meeting to reiterate their concerns about the lack of water in the streams at Waterside and Ashfield. Mr. Sheppard said that he had called the Environment Agency's emergency number this week and their staff had turned up within three hours to help him catch buckets of fish to relocate further downstream. Mr. Sheppard also said that the residents had been very successful in generating publicity and an article in the Blackmore Vale Magazine had sparked interest from newspapers, radio and television. A professional hydrologist had also been in contact with him who thought that Mere had a very strong case against Wessex Water and he was willing to help the residents but needed more information from Wessex Water, which, he said, would be easier to obtain by the Parish Council than by residents as individuals. The Chairman said that the Parish Council would be happy to help out and it was agreed that Mr. Sheppard should liaise with the Clerk as to the request to Wessex Water for data information.

Mrs. A. Howell said that she had noticed that the agenda item is listed as communication with Wessex Water & the Environment Agency whereas she had expected that the Parish Council would be outlining its policy on how it would support the residents of Mere. Mrs. Howell said that Wessex Water's claims that the rivers are winterbournes is nonsense and felt that Wessex Water should have been challenged about the state of the river and the pond at Burton before it got to this state. Mrs. Howell said that there are still problems over the Parish Council's expectations of riparian owners because their responsibilities only cover half of the river although she would particularly like to thank Cllr. Rodney Coward for his help and support. Mrs. Howell said that the Environment Agency had offered to give advice on how to organise a volunteer group and she would like to see a Town Civic Society that would provide volunteer help that could hopefully raise funds for various causes.

Mr. Ken Holland who lives in Frome explained that he had come to the meeting because he had lived in Mere for 15 years from 1963 – 1978, and noticed that the water levels were becoming lower and lower. He explained, however, that the problem was not restricted to Mere but also spread to the River Kennett, River Wylye and other areas. Mr. Holland added that proposals to build a further 2,500 homes in the Swindon area and another town to be built near Exeter would add to the problems and that the water boards were looking at proposals for a desalination plant at Christchurch and another pipeline to Swindon from a reservoir on the Oxfordshire border. Mr. Holland suggested that the water boards should stop pumping for 2 months and then we would see a difference in our river levels.

Mr. Rodney Coward said that the state of the river Shreen through Mere is a disaster

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. E. Mitchell & R. Sims. Also PC Richard Salter & PCSO Jake Noble.

40. To receive Declarations of Interest

Cllr. R. Coward declared a personal interest in Planning Application No. S/2011/1118 & Planning Application No. S/2011/1173

Cllr. C. Hazzard declared a personal interest in Planning Application No. S/2011/1173

Cllr. R. Hughes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 46 a) – Finance (recipient)

41. Minutes

Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th July 2011 be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 4.7.11. Cllr. R. Coward proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st August 2011 be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 1.8.11.

42. Planning

a) Applications:

Parish or Ward: MERE
Application Number: S/2011/1228
Location: Dairy Cottage Lower Mere Park Farm Mere Park Mere Warminster.
Proposal: Alterations and extensions to re-establish existing cottage to two dwellings with access and parking from new track to north

Cllr. Norris proposed that the above application should be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hughes and carried with a vote of 8 for and 2 abstentions. In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans refrained from discussion or voting.

Parish or Ward: MERE
Application Number: S/2011/1173
Location: Greenacres Castle Street Mere Warminster.
Proposal: T1 - Acacia - Deadwood all accessible limbs/branches that overhang 21 Long Hill, reduce outreach of three limbs.
T2 - Beech - Reduce two limbs on NE face to boundary, and lightly trim the lower canopy.

Cllr. Hill proposed that the above application is recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a vote of 7 for and 3 abstentions. (Cllrs. C. Hazzard & R. Coward, having declared a personal interest, abstained from voting).

Parish or Ward: MERE
Application Number: S/2011/1118
Location: The Hollies Manor Road Mere Warminster.
Proposal: Erection of 3 bedroom dwelling house
Applicant Details: Mrs Jukes The Hollies Manor Road Mere Warminster BA126HZ.

Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that she thought the government was directing planning authorities to be circumspect about garden grabbing and felt that the proposed house would be extremely close to The Hollies and was only half the width of The Hollies. Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the application be recommended for refusal on the basis of bulk, mass and overdevelopment of the site. There was no seconded for this proposal. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a vote of 5 for, 2 against and 2 abstentions. (Cllr. R. Coward, having declared a personal interest, abstained from voting). In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans refrained from discussion or voting.

43. Matters Arising

a) *Neighbourhood Policing Report* - deferred

b) *Communication with Wessex Water & Environment Agency regarding river water levels – The Clerk had distributed a summary of correspondence with Wessex Water & the Environment Agency which had taken place over the last month. Cllr. R. Coward felt that a good start had been made but that it was necessary to keep up the pressure and he wanted to know how large the area is that Mere's water supplies and how it is proposed to supply water to the new homes at Shaftesbury etc. Cllr. Coward said that Wood Farm had received communication from

Wessex Water to say that they are considering building a pipeline from the Bournemouth area - the letter was very vague but stated that there would be further communication with a view to a meeting with Wessex Water representatives in the future and he wondered whether this was something to do with the suggested desalination plant proposals from Christchurch. The Chairman congratulated the residents and campaigners of Waterside on generating such a lot of interest and publicity on the plight of our rivers and confirmed that both Wessex Water and the Environment Agency had now agreed to attend a public meeting in Mere which had now been set for Monday, 26th September (venue yet to be decided). Cllr. Jeans said that he had spoken to the Area Board Chairman about this issue who had confirmed that other villages, such as Teffont, were also complaining about low river levels. Cllr. R. Coward asked Mr. & Mrs. Wood if, as fish farmers, they had any concerns. Mr. Wood said that in the short term they have seen flows fairly low before but if it became a regular year-on-year occurrence, then after about 10 years they would have to close the fish farm. Cllr. Hazzard said that the Parish Council needed to inform the media about the public meeting and needed to ensure that our MP is there and we needed a clear and concise presentation. Cllr. P. Coward agreed that Wessex Water needed to provide a solution but pointed out that they were now a privatised company and that it would be necessary to get the government on side. He pointed out that it took a very long time for water to get through and build up the aquifer levels and because everywhere now is so well drained, the water does not go into the ground but straight into the river and out to sea. It was agreed that the Clerk and Chairman would liaise with Mrs. Howell & Mr. Sheppard in order to structure the public meeting

c) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – Cllr. Jeans said that he had published a report in Mere Matters which contained information on planning advice, footpaths & car parking charges in Salisbury. Cllr. Jeans confirmed that at the August Area Board Meeting there had been a presentation about Wiltshire's Older Peoples Accommodation Strategy which proposed:

- A 45 unit extra care scheme to meet nursing needs in Mere – A site for this development is still to be determined.
 - A Community extra care scheme in Tisbury.
 - Timescale – Tisbury should be operational within the next 2 years and Mere between 2016 and 2018.
- There was also a presentation on the 'Help to Live at Home' scheme and the 'Wiltshire Good Neighbour Scheme' and Mere Snooker Club was awarded an Area Board Grant of £336 for emergency lighting.

d) Lease for car parks & public toilets – the Clerk reported that there had been no news from Wiltshire Council, although she had heard that both Tisbury & Wilton had now received their draft leases.

e) Street Trading Scheme – Draft Final Consultation – The Clerk informed members that she had received the revised Draft Harmonised Street Trading Scheme and had agreed that it was a much better and workable scheme and could not find anything much to be concerned about from the Parish Council's point of view. Cllr. Jeans confirmed that the scheme would be considered by the full council at a meeting on 7th September.

f) Community orchard for Kingsmere – grant funding – The Clerk confirmed that the Tree Council would be running a Community Trees Fund grant scheme from November but that the criteria for the grant stated that apple and pear trees on selected root stocks were the only fruit trees eligible for funding and planting must take place during National Tree Week. Cllr. R. Coward said that he had viewed the site with Cllr. Hughes and both had agreed that alternative fruit trees would be more suitable and enough young trees could be purchased and planted for approximately £200. The Parish Council agreed that they would prefer to plant trees of their own choice.

g) New paths for new cemetery - deferred

***h) Emergency Support Project – Heroes Helping Out** – Lt. Col. Botsford had prepared a report which was distributed to members prior to the meeting (copy of report attached). He also made a brief summary of the report at the meeting, stating that he envisaged a small committee of about 3 or 5. It was pointed out that West Knoyle was a separate parish with a separate parish council and so the matter should be presented to them before assuming that they would want to be involved. The Clerk asked if the Parish Council's website could be used rather than creating a new website and Col. Botsford said that he did not

now think that a website would be necessary. Members unanimously agreed that these proposals should be supported.

i) Local concerns over work being carried out at Bramley House and possible boundary issues - deferred

44. Open Spaces, Parks, Recreation & Sports

***a) Higher Level Stewardship Agreement** – A copy of the Higher Level Stewardship Agreement had been distributed for members, prior to the meeting and members were asked to consider the agreement carefully before the meeting as this was a 10-year agreement. It was also pointed out that the agreement would be amended to start on 1st October and other dates and deadlines within the agreement would be adjusted pro rata, thus ending on 30th September 2021. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the Chairman should sign the amended agreement with was seconded by Cllr. Norris. Proposal carried with a vote of 9 for and 1 abstention.

45. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths & Transport

a) Irresponsible parking in Mere – Cllr. R. Hill said that he had asked for this to be raised because Mere had become dreadful and people were avoiding Mere because of the irresponsible parking. He pointed out that he had recently found it necessary to collect a delivery from the car park because the small lorry was unable to get along Water Street to deliver it to his home. Cllr. Hill said that people park outside the bank to go to the cashpoint, they park on the zebra crossing hatchings, on junctions and are just generally irresponsible. It was agreed that the Parish Council should publish a plea in Mere Matters and ask if the matter can be discussed at the next Neighbourhood Task Group meeting.

46. Policy & Resources

a) Finance: Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the following payments be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a vote of 9 for. Cllr. Hughes, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room whilst the matter was discussed.

Scats	Tools & sundries	60.73
T. Thornley	Renewal of domain name merewilts.org	10.79
R. Hughes	Spraying paths in cemetery and repairs to gate at Castle Hill Play Area	250.00
Mazars	External Audit fee	660.00
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	205.00
Bourton Fencing	Replacement fencing in Recreation Ground	2750.40 (To be reclaimed from Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity)
A. Wood	Tree felling in Duchy Manor	£ 140.00
Rochford Garden Machinery	Spark plugs & strimmer sundries	£ 23.19
Land Registry	Copies of Register & Title for Bramley House	£16.00 Already Pd.
Tincknell Fuels	Fuel & Oil	193.72 Already Pd.
Imprest Account – cheque Nos. 2735 - 2739	Wages, PAYE, Pension + Petty Cash	3728.22

Cash	Mobile Phone – Top-Up fee	£20.00
Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground	Donation to cover expenses	£ 500.00

b) Completion of Annual External Audit for the financial year ending 31.3.11 – the Clerk confirmed that the external audit had been completed and returned with the following external auditor’s report: ‘on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.’ The Clerk confirmed members that a notice would now be displayed, informing parishioners that the annual return would now be made available for inspection/copy to any parishioner, upon request.

c) Casual Vacancy – the Clerk confirmed that, due to the resignation of Cllr. Sam Squires, a Notice of Vacancy had been displayed. If, by 9th September, a request for an election to fill the vacancy is made in writing to the Returning Officer by TEN electors from the parish, an election will be held to fill the vacancy. Otherwise the vacancy will be filled by co-option. It was agreed that, if an election is not requested, the Clerk should display advertisement notices, inviting interested candidates to submit a personal statement before the next parish council meeting.

d) Quotations to replace glass in pavilion – the Clerk informed members that Tim Messenger from 4 Counties Window Repair had quoted £772.20 to replace the window with Laminate K glass which is the glass currently in the windows. Alternatively, the window could be replaced with 6ml toughened K glass for £536. The difference is that, if broken, the laminated glass would not shatter where as the toughened glass would shatter like a windscreen. Members agreed that, as long as the window would not look any different, the Parish Council should replace the window with the cheaper glass.

47. General Items

a) WALC’s New Councillor Training Day – Dinton Village Hall – 0.9.30 – 15.30 17th September - £55 – members noted.

***b) Open Public Services White Paper** – with reference to the information in the Clerks Report, the Clerk confirmed that she had printed off the document which was open for consultation until the end of September.

c) ‘Salisbury Vision’ proposals to cut down trees in Salisbury Central Car Park – concerns expressed by Mr. Ted Henson – Mr. Henson explained that the overall plan, which included the removal of the 34 trees in the Market Square car park, could be read in the Salisbury Vision website. He said that the strong feeling in Salisbury is that this was a waste of public money in the current climate and had resulted in a petition containing at least 10,000 signatures. The Clerk confirmed that she had asked Salisbury City Council about this matter who had confirmed that some of the trees were in poor condition, some had caused damage to underground drains and others were causing trip hazards in the car park. The Clerk also confirmed that the Salisbury Vision project was to be jointly funded by Salisbury City Council and Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Sealy said that there was nothing wrong with the trees and that the plans for the Market Square were a complete waste of money and totally disagreeable to residents, traders and users. Cllr. Hill was unsure that the matter had anything to do with Mere. However, Cllr. Jeans said that whilst he usually focuses on Mere issues, he was aware that Mere residents were also unhappy about these proposals and he was also aware that Salisbury was a hub city for the Mere residents and that funding would come from Wiltshire ratepayers as a whole. Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the Parish Council should write to Wiltshire Council (not Salisbury City Council) passing on the concerns of the Parish Council and local

residents regarding the expenditure that will be incurred to cut down these trees under the present economic climate when we are facing public spending cuts. Also to put a notice in Mere Matters informing residents that we have written. Cllr. Jeans said that he would also take the matter up with Wiltshire Councillors at the Full Council meeting. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Jane Hurd and carried with a vote of 9 for and 1 abstention (Brett Norris).

d) Diamond Jubilee – the Chairman reminded members that the country would be celebrating the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee next year and asked members to put forward suggestions as to how the parish and/or parish council should mark the event.

48. Clerks Report – the Clerks Report was confirmed and adopted.

Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity

Trustees approved the following payments:

Astill Tree Care	Inspection & Assessment of 3 Beech Trees at Mere Recreation Ground	£339.00
A. Wood	Tree felling in Recreation Ground	£140.00