

Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 7th February 2011 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors: E. Mitchell (Chairman), M. Hall (Vice-Chairman), P. Coward, G. Jeans, B. Norris, D. Sealy, R. Sims, S. Squires, Mrs. L. Traves, Mrs. M. White
Also: Mrs. Birch, M. Whatley, R. Potter, Mrs. Howell, M. Leahy, PCSO Jake Noble

Meeting convened at 7.33 p.m. with the Public Session.

Mr. Leahy who lives at The Copse behind the Old Police House said that he was aware that the Parish Council had objected to a planning application to build a new house at The Copse. Mr. Leahy had objected to the planning application which was supposed to have been determined by 20th October 2010 but nothing seemed to have happened. However, one of his neighbours had telephoned the planning department to be told that it would be discussed at a planning meeting to be held this week. Mr. Leahy was upset that he had not been notified about this planning meeting and wondered whether it was worth attending the meeting to state his objection.

The Clerk informed the meeting that the Parish Council had recently received a letter inviting the Parish Council to attend or provide further written representation to the planning committee meeting on Friday 11th February regarding this application (adjacent Brockhurst). The Clerk said that this letter also stated that Wiltshire Council had written in similar terms to others that had made representations. Cllr. Jeans explained that he had asked for this planning application to be decided by committee because he felt that the housing density requirements were now no longer valid and that the planning application could be rejected due to overdevelopment. Both Cllr. Jeans and Cllr. Mrs White suggested to Mr. Leahy that he should attend the meeting.

Mrs. Adrienne Howell wanted to speak about the library situation and suggested that the Parish Council should express their anger about not being informed of the proposed reduction in opening hours from 45 to 14. Mrs. Howell explained that, because of the lack of warning, it had been necessary to put representations together in a very short space of time. Mrs. Howell said that, following the meeting in Devizes when it was decided to re-evaluate the situation and open the library for 31 hours a week, it had now been revealed that the library would only be manned by library staff for 17 of these hours and 14 hours of customer service staff but the customer service staff would not be able to operate the library service. The library staff, on the other hand, were willing to operate the customer service duties during the 17 hours of their working week as well as the 14 hours of the customer service operation and, Mrs. Howell was suggesting, it would therefore seem sensible to allow them to cover both operations for 31 hours per week which would also save on travelling expenses incurred by the Customer Service staff and on the installation of electronic library booking equipment. Mrs. Howell asked the Parish Council to press to the Area Board that the whole 31 hours opening time should be manned by library staff.

Sue Place from Wincanton Community Venture (known as The Balsam Centre) attended the meeting to explain their Application to Sowing Seeds (Local Action for Rural Communities) & the Lottery for The Garland Project - to engage people who are currently 'economically inactive' for any one of a number of reasons, in developing local, traditional or land based skills that will provide opportunities for employment or community enterprise and that at the same time are beneficial to the wider community.

Sue Place explained that the Healthy living centre was set up as a charity in the late 90's and the area of benefit is a 10 mile radius of Wincanton, which includes Mere. They are seeking funding for outreach work and are applying to 'Sowing Seeds' but they need evidence of community support. We have researched what we think is the type of level of need in Mere and spoken to local key organisations and identified that skills development, including life skills training, is required. The people they were targeting would be those with long term health conditions or low level mental health problems and one medium that has proved to

be successful in the past is rural and landscape skills. The Healthy Living centre hoped to have good partners in the project and had quite a lot of experience in delivering projects, finding resources and recruiting volunteers. Mrs. Place hoped that the Parish Council would feel able to support the project.

Q. Cllr. Sims - how much funding are you asking for?

A. £60k from Sowing Seeds

Q. Cllr. Hall – have you actually talked to any of the people who you say might use the project i.e. end users?

A. No, that is the conundrum. These are the very people that tend not to become involved so are hard to reach. We carried out a random street survey and have talked to a lot of people in Mere and organisations that have funded projects in Mere. We used to be involved with the Sunshine Healthy Living Project. Having worked in quite a number of rural communities we know from experience that there is a need. The health centre, children's centre and police seem to think we would work well in partnership.

Mrs. Place was thanked for giving an interesting presentation and informed that the Council would debate the matter later in the meeting.

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. C. Hazzard and R. Hill.

490. To receive Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Mrs. Traves declared a personal interest in planning application No. S/2011/0059

Cllr. Jeans declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application S/2011/0128.

491. Minutes – Cllr. Squires proposed that the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 10th January 2011 be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a majority of those present on 10.1.11.

492. For newly co-opted councillor, Brett Norris, to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Councillor

Cllr. Norris signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the Chairman welcomed him as a new member of the Parish Council.

493. 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/2011/26
Location: Four Gables Hazzards Hill Mere Warminster.
Proposal: Conversion of outbuilding to provide additional bedroom and garden room

Cllr. Hall proposed that the above application is recommended for approval on condition that the converted outbuilding is tied to the main house of Four Gables so as not to be occupied, rented or sold off separately. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote in favour. (In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

Application Number: S/2011/65
Location: Whitehill Cottage, Whitehill Lane, Mere.
Proposal: Conversion and first floor extension to stables for use as one unit of self contained holiday accommodation. Incorporation of adjoining agricultural land within residential curtilage.

Cllr. P. Coward proposed that the above application is recommended for approval with the following conditions:

- 1) That the self-contained unit of holiday accommodation is tied to the main house of Whitehill Cottage so as not to be occupied (other than as short-term holiday occupation), rented or sold off separately.
- 2) As long as the incorporation of adjoining agricultural land remains within the area outlined red on the accompanied site plan and does not extend further out into the open countryside or the area outlined blue on the accompanied site plan.

Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a vote of 5 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions. (In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

Application Number: S/2011/59
Location: 8 Balmoor Close, Mere.
Proposal: The erection of a two storey side extension and a single storey front extension.

Cllr. R. Sims proposed that the above application is recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hall and carried with a vote of 7 and 2 abstentions. (Cllr. Mrs. Traves, having declared a personal interest, abstained from discussion or voting and Cllr. Jeans, in his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, abstained from voting)

Application Number: S/2011/58
Location: Rose Cottage, Water Street, Mere.
Proposal: Trees Cons. Area – 2 X Prunus fell and remove, 1 X Silver Birch trim overhanging branches.

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

Application Number: S/2011/110
Location: Whitehill House, Swainsford, Mere.
Proposal: .Orangery to side elevation.

Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the above application is recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote. (In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

Application Number: S/2011/128
Location: The Holt Water Street Mere Warminster.
Proposal: T1 and T2 Lawson Cypress and T3 Norway Spruce fell and remove

Cllr. Jeans, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above application, left the room whilst the application was discussed. Cllr. Squires proposed that the application be recommended for approval. Cllr. Sealy seconded this proposal which was carried with a unanimous vote of those present.

b) Southern Area Planning Committee Meeting – 10th February 2011 at 6.00 p.m. – invitation to attend or provide further written representation regarding planning application number: S/2010/1247/FULL – New Detached Dwelling at Brockhurst, White Road, Mere.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should make further written representation regarding overdevelopment and access.

494. Matters Arising

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – PCSO Jake Noble reported that there had been recent burglaries in the Tollard Royal & Semley areas and that the police had managed to recover a strimmer in Tollard Royal which had been returned to the owner. The merits of shed alarms were discussed. He also confirmed that the police were communicating with cross-county colleagues to gather information regarding burglaries etc. King Alfred's Tower car park had been removed from the neighbourhood policing priority list since crimes had now reduced significantly although the police would continue to monitor the area.

b) Report from Community Safety Representative – Cllr. R. Sims reported that he had received e-mail communication regarding a computer scam.

c) Report from Transport Representative – Cllr. Sims had nothing to report.

***d) Mere Parish Council's Ice & Snow Clearance Programme** – response from insurance company – members noted the response as shown in the Clerks Report.

***e) Lease for car parks & public toilets** – members noted the response that the Parish Council had sent to Wiltshire Council. The Clerk explained that this matter had been raised again because, at the last meeting, members had agreed that they wanted to enter into a two year lease with a 12 month get-out clause. However, at a further meeting held with the Chairman & Cllr. P. Coward to finalise the response, it was felt that as long as the council had a 12-month get-out clause then the term of the lease was immaterial and it was therefore felt that a longer-term lease would be preferable.

f) Wiltshire Council's Street Trading Licensing Scheme – The Clerk informed members that, having read Wiltshire Council's Street Trading Scheme consultation papers, she had sent a detailed response to Wiltshire Council explaining that this would result in excessive regulation that will hinder, obstruct and

deter the fund-raising activities and community vitality in rural towns and villages such as Mere. The Clerk had also emailed a copy of this response and alerted a large number of other parish clerks to the situation and it was now clear that very few Parish Council's were aware of this consultation. Cllr. Jeans agreed to make representation about this lack of awareness.

g) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – Cllr. Jeans had nothing further to report.

495. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Decision on weight limits for western Wiltshire –The Clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Council had approved the new Traffic Regulation Orders which would impose a weight restriction along the B3092 through Maiden Bradley and lift other weight restrictions in order for HGVs to drive along the A350, along the B3089 at Willoughby Hedge and onto the A303. However, the implementation of these TRO's would be deferred until the Highways Agency's preferred road safety scheme at the A303/A350 junction at Furze Hedge has been implemented. The implementation of the TROs would also be subject to the availability of funding.

b) Job List for Parish Steward – members identified the following:

- pothole in Salisbury Street car park.
- potholes in Mill Lane.

496. Allotments

a) Request to erect shed at Southbrook allotments – the Clerk had received a request from Mr. McAlear to erect a wooden shed, 1.8m X 2.0m, on his allotment (No. 124B) at Southbrook. Members agreed that this was acceptable.

497. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments – Cllr. Hall proposed that the following payments be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of those present.

David Harness	Site visit for tree assessment	25.85
Shaftesbury Garden Machinery	Service Husqvarna ride-on mower	197.65
Shaftesbury Garden Machinery	Service 2 X strimmers	105.60
Shaftesbury Garden Machinery	Service leaf blower & hedge cutter	100.80
J. L. Paul	Security bars and fixings to south chapel	260.00
J. L. Paul	Scaffold joining tubes for MUGA floodlight repairs (2009)	30.00
Rochford Garden Machinery	New long-reach hedgecutter + strimmer sundries	538.28
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil for January	97.00
Forge Garages	Supply & fit new wheelbarrow tyre & tube	36.00
Cash	New handle for disabled toilet in AYP	20.99
Scats Countrystores	Materials for railings along steps to Castle Hill	162.23
Imprest account Cheque Nos. 2699 - 2703	PAYE, Wages, Petty Cash & Pension	3682.53

b) To review Financial Risk Assessment - deferred

c) Removal of old garage from Duchy Manor grounds – the Clerk informed members that the Parish Council needed to remove the single sectional garage from Duchy Manor Grounds because it was not particularly stable, had received some vandalism and was surplus to requirements since the container storage had been provided. However, the garage had an asbestos cement sheet roof and the Clerk had obtained a quotation from an asbestos removal company who wanted £645 to remove it. The Clerk had, however, received authority from Wiltshire Council to take the asbestos sheeting to Hill's Waste Recycling Centre at Warminster and the Parish Council's Groundsman was prepared to remove the roofing sheets but this would require the provision of protective clothing, plastic sheeting and the writing up of a risk assessment. Members agreed that the necessary equipment should be provided.

d) Repair and maintenance works to Multi Use Games Area – the Chairman and Clerk informed members that Mr. Jeff Paul had provided the Parish Council with quotations to repair and strengthen the fencing around the Multi Use Games Area. However, the quotation received was on a price per square or per bay and it was difficult to assess how many bays needed doing or to obtain like-for-like quotations. Knowing the reputation and experience of Mr. Paul, members were happy to agree a departure from policy and to authorise him to carry out work, as quoted, to a limit of expenditure set at £1000.

498. General Items

a) Mere Library – proposals to reduce opening hours – Cllr. Jeans said that it had been confirmed by Cllr. John Thomson (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Services) that the revised opening hours of 31 would be maintained by Library staffing for 17 hours and Customer Services staffing for 14 hours and that these opening hours could only be maintained in the long-term by volunteers. Cllr. Jeans confirmed that he would be meeting with the Portfolio Holder before the Area Board meeting to be held on Wednesday and that he had also persuaded the Area Board Manager, Mr. Richard Munro to come to work in Mere library for 4 hours a week in an effort to try and keep the library open longer. Cllr. Jeans said that volunteers would be necessary to keep the library open in the evenings so that school pupils and students could use the computers. Cllr. Jeans was hoping that as many people as possible would attend the Area Board meeting which was to be held in Mere. Cllr. Jeans also wanted to praise Mrs. Rachel Hyde who had given a very good 5-minute presentation at the meeting in Devizes. The Clerk explained that she had attended a meeting, along with Cllr. Jeans, in Salisbury City Hall on Tuesday, 18th January which was hosted by the Leader of Wiltshire Council to discuss budget cuts. The threat of any library cuts was not mentioned at that meeting and yet only 2 days later, the Parish Council was made aware, through a local newspaper, that there were proposals to cut the library opening hours from 45 to 14. Cllr. Mrs. White said that she felt that the handling of this situation was appalling. She said that there was a great deal of relief in the community when they heard that the situation had been re-evaluated and the opening hours were only going to be reduced by 14 and there was nothing to indicate, at that stage, that it would only be manned by library staff for 17 of those 31 hours. Cllr. Mrs. White said that Mrs. Howell's suggestion that the library staff should take on the customer service staffing was a good one and one which, she could confirm, the library staff were willing to do. It was agreed that the Parish Council would press for Mere Library to be operated by library staff for 31 hours per week and the Chairman agreed to speak at the Area Board meeting.

b) Public participation during Parish Council meetings – Cllr. Jeans stated that at a recent Wiltshire Council cabinet meeting, the Leader of the Council, Jane Scott, had allowed public participation quite freely throughout the meeting and Cllr. Jeans felt that there were certain situations during Parish Council meetings where this could be beneficial and appreciated by the public. The Clerk pointed out that the Parish Council was legally required to close the meeting to allow public participation outside the public session and therefore any request to participate, either by members of the public or by the parish council, needed to go through the Chair as is the current practice.

c) Nomination for a place at the Queens Garden Party on the 19th of July 2011 – The Clerk informed members that the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils would be allocated three councillors and their partners or companions to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Parties on July 11th. Members unanimously agreed that the Chairman and his wife should be nominated for a place to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Parties.

d) *The Garland Project's application to Sowing Seeds* – With regard to the presentation made at the beginning of the meeting by Sue Place, Cllr. Hall said that he was sure no-one would disagree that there is a need, within the community, to help people who are currently 'economically inactive'. However, he felt that the project was aspirational and that there was not enough evidence to support claims that the project would meet objectives and create opportunities for 150 people in the Mere area. It was also noted that a high percentage of the grant funding would be spent on staffing costs for three years and some members felt that this was inappropriate given the level of anger and upset amongst parishioners over threatened cuts to services and increasing demands and needs placed on volunteer support. It was regrettably resolved, therefore, that a letter of support could not be sent for this project on a vote of 4 for and 5 abstentions. (Cllr. Sims asked for his abstention to be recorded).

e) *'Great Poppy Party Weekend'* – The Clerk informed members that the Royal British Legion would be celebrating its 90th Anniversary and to celebrate, it was arranging The Great Poppy Party Weekend on 10th, 11th & 12th June 2011. If anyone wanted to organise a party they could register on the website and obtain an information pack.

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

500. Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity

a) *Submission of Annual Return* – the Clerk informed members that the Annual Return had been submitted before the required deadline of 31st January using details previously approved by the Parish Council and the Charity Commission had now asked the Clerk to provide a copy of the accounts.

b) *Enquiry relating to incorporation of car parks* – deferred.

Meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

* Further information on these items in Clerks Report