

Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 3rd September 2012 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors Mrs. Mary White (Chairman), Mrs. Lesley Traves (Vice-Chairman), C. Hazzard, R. Hill, D. Hope, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, B. Norris & D. Sealy.
PCSO Jake Noble from 8.00 p.m.

Public Session

Joan Sutton asked for update on the transfer of assets, in particular, whether there had been any development in the transfer of the Croquet Club from Wiltshire Council to Mere Parish Council. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council had not yet made any definitive decision as to whether it was going to ask for transfer of these assets although it had agreed to look into the matter and an agreement in principle had been made. However, there were two assets under consideration, one being the Croquet Club and the other being the old band hut in Castle Street Car Park and members had asked for a building structural survey on the old band hut to be carried out before it considered the matter further. The structural survey had not yet been carried out although the matter was in hand.

Rosemary Cox spoke about the issue of traffic and traffic speeds in The Lynch and said she had written a letter which was being discussed during the meeting tonight. She informed members that she had been knocked over although not injured. She stressed that the road is a school route for parents and there could be a tragic accident there one day. Mrs. Cox said that she did not know what the solution was although she would like to see a sign erected that shows the true width of the narrowest part of the road. Mrs. Cox also said that the junction from The Lynch onto Pettridge Lane is another hazard because of poor visibility.

Mr. Frank Legge said that he wanted to endorse all that had been said by Mrs. Cox.

Cllr. Norris said that the Landlady of the Butt of Sherry had approached him because she was aware that drivers were coming off the by-pass and turning right towards Warminster rather than turning left into Mere. It was agreed that better signage off the A303 would be placed on the next agenda.

The Clerk informed members that Mr. Tony Coombes of the Devonshire & Dorset | Regiment Association (Gillingham Branch) had written to say that their annual memorial service and parade on 8th July was most successful and enjoyable and asked for thanks to be passed on to the Chairman and members of the Parish Council for their support and warm welcome.

The Mere Children's Centre had written to say thank you to the parish council for the recent support with the camping trip and family day. The event had proved to be very successful.

Apologies for absence received from Councillors P. Coward, R. Coward, R. Hughes and R. Sims. Also from PC Richard Salter and from PCSO Jake Noble for late arrival.

148. To receive Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 156a) [recipient]

149. Minutes – to approve Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 2nd July 2012 – Cllr. Hope questioned the figure of £50,000 as having been specifically mentioned in Minute 142 f). It was agreed that the sentence should be amended to read *such a scheme was likely to cost well over tens of thousands of pounds.* With this amendment, Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the Minutes should be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a majority of those in attendance on 2.7.12

150. Casual Vacancy – to fill the casual vacancy by co-option – the Parish Council had received one formal application of interest from Ann-Marie Long and her personal statement had been distributed with the agenda papers. The Chairman asked for other nominations but none were received. Cllr. Jeans nominated Ann-Marie Long to fill the vacancy and this proposal was seconded by Cllr. Norris. Ann-Marie Long was co-opted onto the Parish Council with a unanimous vote of approval.

151. Reports

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – PCSO Jake Noble reported that crimes had been fairly quiet although there had been a number of neighbour disputes to deal with. Anti-social behaviour had been prioritised and this seems to have made a positive impact. There were no specific questions raised although the Clerk was asked to pass on details of the candidates for Wiltshire Police Commissioner to members.

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report to include report on South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting held on Wednesday, 15th August – Wiltshire Councillor Jeans reported that the South West Wiltshire Area Board had approved a grant to Mere Museum for the preservation of temperance banner. Cllr. Jeans had attended the 43rd Wessex Division Parade and thought it should be Minuted that there were two other memorial monuments – one on the summit of Rough Tor on Bodmin Moor in Bodmin and the other in Wynyard's Gap, Dorset.

152. 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/2012/1202
Location: 18 Castle Hill Crescent Mere Warminster.
Proposal: T1 Beech tree with massive limb loss, monolith to the same height as previous cuts and coronet cut, T2 Beech tree with Ustulina at the base of trunk - 20% reduction

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

Application Number: S/2012/1168
Location: Newmead, Southbrook, Mere
Proposal: Erection of conservatory

Cllr. Sealy proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hill and carried with a vote of 5 for and 4 abstentions.

Application Number: S/2012/1224
Location: Old Forge North Street Mere Warminster.
Proposal: Divide existing dwelling into two residential units

The Clerk explained that the above application had been received since the agenda was distributed. As public notice had not been given, members agreed that this application should not be discussed this evening and that the Clerk should ask Wiltshire Council for extra consultation time in order for the planning application to be considered at the next meeting.

Application Number: S/2012/1002
Location: Unit D1 Quarryfields Industrial Estate Mere Warminster.
Proposal: Extension to workshop

NB – The Consultation has ended on the above application. The Parish Council submitted a 'no comment' return.

Application Number: S/2012/1003
Location: Manor Farm Manor Road Mere Warminster.
Proposal: Proposed change of use of redundant farm buildings to provide caravan storage

NB – The Consultation has ended on the above application. The Parish Council submitted a 'no comment' return.

Application Number: S/2012/960
Location: The Meadows Limpers Hill Mere Warminster.
Proposal: Single storey side extension

NB – The Consultation has ended on the above application. The Parish Council submitted a ‘no comment’ return.

153. Matters Arising from recent meetings:

a) Code of Conduct – to clarify understanding of extra paragraph. The Clerk reminded members that they had adopted Wiltshire Council’s template code with the addition of the relevant paragraph from the NALC template code (Paragraph 11 from their Legal Briefing L08-12) on the understanding that this will allow parish councillors to speak as a member of the public in the public session. However, the Clerk had subsequently learned that this will still not give councillors the same rights as members of the public as it only gives members the right to speak in the public session if the matter relates to a non-disclosable interest. The Clerk wanted to clarify this matter as she did not want members to be misled or given the wrong impression. Cllr. Hazzard said that Parish Councillors should not be penalised and should be offered the same rights as members of the public and he therefore proposed that the Parish Council meeting should not start until after the public session had been held and that the public session is clearly defined as not being part of the parish council meeting. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mitchell and carried with a unanimous vote of approval. The Clerk reminded members that she had not received Register of Interests from all councillors. The Clerk agreed to send email reminders to those not yet received.

b) Wiltshire & Swindon Waste Site Allocations Local Plan – Consultation on removal of site S3 (Household Recycling Employment Allocation, Mere) –the Clerk read out an email from Wiltshire Council explaining that the landowner of the ‘Employment Allocation at Mere’ site had now withdrawn consent for his site to be included in the Waste Site Allocations plan. Cllr. Jeans explained that this was the part of the site adjacent to Norwood that would have been used for household recycling waste which was now going to be removed from the Waste Site Allocations Plan altogether. Cllr. Jeans said that he was aware that a lot of people would have wanted somewhere local for household recycling and felt that this would have been an employment opportunity for Mere. Cllr. Jeans felt that the allocation should be left in the plan so that it could be taken up in the future even though it may not necessarily be on the same site. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the Parish Council should write to Wiltshire Council in support of Cllr. Jeans sentiments. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

154. Open Spaces, Play Areas, Sports Grounds, Allotments + Cemetery

a) Request from Mere Bowls Club to erect fence around compound – Defer it and ask the Bowls Club to submit a plan so that councillors can have a look before the next meeting.

b) Request from Mere Bowls Club to move and take on responsibility for flag pole – Defer it and ask the school for views.

c) Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme for Long Hill & Castle Hill – the Clerk informed members that:

- Fencing was almost completed and the water trough was now installed
- 18 Bird & Bat boxes would be erected in the coming month
- The felling licence had been approved for selected tree felling and thinning on Long Hill.
- An advertisement had been placed in the local Blackmore Vale Magazine advertising grazing on Long Hill.

d) Pond at Southbrook allotments – the Clerk informed members that the Duchy had informed her that it was unlikely that any sale of the pond at Southbrook was likely to proceed and that, whilst investigating such a proposition, it had become apparent to the Duchy that the pond was in quite a state. The Duchy was therefore prepared to arrange to have the pond cleared on the understanding that once cleared, the

clearance and upkeep of the pond would then become the responsibility of the Parish Council. Members were happy with this arrangement and asked the Clerk to thank the Duchy of Cornwall.

e) Cemetery car park – the Clerk confirmed that the issue previously raised about a tipper truck being parked in the car park now seems to have been resolved. However, the Clerk informed members that there had been some recent problems with builders using the access from the cemetery car park to carry out building work in the Chantry and the Clerk had had cause to remind the owners of the Chantry that their access was restricted to a right of way on foot, with animals and with agricultural vehicles only.

f) Tree cutting at Duchy Manor grounds – the Clerk informed members that there had been an issue regarding a tree overhanging a property at Ivymead growing from the rear of Duchy Manor (behind the fence but on the Duchy side of the river). As this land was the responsibility of the Parish Council the Clerk had asked tree surgeons to come along and clear the tree and also to carry out some other tree clearance work to tidy up the area and prevent other overhanging issues in the near future.

g) Set date for Sports Development Meeting – It was agreed that the meeting should be held on Wednesday, October 24th

155. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Safety of users and residents of The Lynch (copy letter from Mrs. Rosemary Cox) – the Clerk read out a copy of a letter written by Rosemary Cox of Mons Calpe, The Lynch to Wiltshire Councillor George Jeans. The letter related to an incident in which Mrs. Cox was knocked over in The Lynch by a van travelling too fast. Mrs. Cox said that traffic has increased twofold over the last year and it travels at speeds which are too fast for the conditions on a single track road with no pavements. Mrs. Cox’s letter also raised the issue of the obstructed visibility splays on the junction of The Lynch and Pettridge Lane. The Chairman said that she was aware that there was a weight restriction sign in Water Street although many large vehicles were sent along The Lynch, often by Satellite Navigation systems. Cllr. Sealy said that a lot of vehicles were using Water Street and The Lynch as an alternative route to avoid the congestion in Salisbury Street. Cllr. David Hope said that Mrs. Cox’s letter had requested a 20mph speed limit and speed humps but he said that he assumed this would be unachievable because of the amount of money involved. Cllr. Jeans explained that the speed enforcement equipment is not calibrated to 20mph so it is not possible to enforce it in this. Cllr. Jeans said that he would investigate whether or not it would be possible to get a road narrowing sign. The Chairman agreed that the Parish Council would write to the owners of Clay Knapp and ask them to cut the hedge back.

b) Parking issues along Walnut Road – the Clerk read out an email from Mr. Graham Bould of Oak Lane. Cllr. Jeans said that the roundabout issues had been discussed at various CATG meetings and members and officers were aware of the problems and were taking small steps to try and help the matter. Members felt unable to prioritise double-yellow lines to be painted in Walnut Road at this present time.

c) Highway & footpath issues for parish steward + street lighting faults – The Clerk reported on the works completed by the Parish Steward during July. Cllr. Jeans pointed out that Wiltshire Council was conducting a Street Lighting Consultation and asked the Clerk to be aware of this and to email councillors with details, if it is not too late and the consultation has not already ended.

156. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments – to consider payments (as shown in the attached payment schedule) – CH propose pay. LT second.

Southern Electric	Supply to Clock Tower	£17.23 (already paid)
Orchard Street Furniture Ltd	Bench seat for new cemetery	£513.36 (net amount

		donated by parishioner)
I. V. & S. M. Thomas	Hedge trimming 2011/12	336.00
Mere School	Changing Rooms – water & Sewerage from 2.5.12 – 16.7.12	32.05
Mere School	Cricket Pitch – water from 2.5.12 – 16.7.12	33.68
Mere School	AYP & Bowling Green – water & sewerage from 2.5.12 – 16.7.12	82.32
Mere School	Changing Rooms – gas used from 2.5.12 – 16.7.12	86.62
Mere School	Changing Rooms + Office – Electricity from 2.5.12 – 16.7.12	68.41
Scats Countrystores	Sundries	3.97 (Already paid)
Shaftesbury Garden Machinery	Repairs to Husqvarna ride-on mower (as discussed)	488.24 (Already paid)
Jeans	New bulb for Castle Hill	14.99
Batsford Timber Ltd	Timber and materials for fencing Long Hill	3682.19 (Already paid)
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil for July	153.22 (Already paid)
Sydenhams	Lock for Recreation Ground gates	28.33
Tincknell Fuels Ltd	Gas Oil	196.20
Jeans	Black Refuse sacks	40.19
T. Thornley	Domain name renewal (5 years)	54.95
Cash	Reimbursement for Blackmore Vale Advert – grazing let on Long Hill	16.10
Mazars	External audit fee	660.00
Jeans	PAT testing (office, pavilion & changing rooms)	102.00
PlayQuest Adventure Play Ltd	Wobbly Balance Beam top for Walnut Road Play Area	240.00
Scats Countrystores	Sundries	8.58
Shaftesbury Garden Machinery	Repairs to Husqvarna ride-on mower	102.24
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil for August	101.02
Batsford Timber	HLS Scheme – fencing materials	96.34
The Broker Network Ltd	Motor Insurance for Diahatso & Kubota Tractor	535.14

***b) Wiltshire Pension Fund – Employing Authority Discretions** – The Clerk had distributed a draft policy on individual discretions and members were happy to approve this for submission to Wiltshire Council without amendment.

c) Completion of Annual External Audit for the financial year ending 31.3.12 – 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.

The Clerk also reported that she had recently received confirmation from the Audit Commission that Grant Thornton UK LLP had been appointed external auditor to audit the annual return of Mere Parish Council for five years from 2012/13. The audit will be carried out under the Audit Commission’s limited assurance approach and a scale of audit fees (based on income/expenditure) for the years 2012/13 to 2016/17 was provided.

d) Legal work in connection with leases for Car Parks, Toilets & Office – The clerk informed members that she had received a quotation from MacLachlan Solicitors to carry out the legal work in respect of the office lease, car park leases and public toilets lease and that this would be in the region of £800 for the office lease renewal and between £2,000 - £2,500 for the two new leases for the car parks and the new lease for the public toilets. Due to concerns over the costs involved the Clerk had contacted the solicitor who had been appointed by Tisbury Parish Council in connection with their car park lease and had an appointment to meet her on Wednesday. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk should use their discretion as to the appointment of solicitors.

157. General Items

a) Proposed changes to mini recycling sites from 1.10.12 – The Clerk confirmed that she had received notification from Wiltshire Council that they would be removing the Plastic bottle and cardboard recycling containers from the Salisbury Street Car Park although the existing paper, glass and can collection containers would remain. Members raised no objection and said that the kerbside recycling collection service should be sufficient for most residents.

b) WALC training day – Funding for your community (a training course for councils looking to apply for funding for projects). Tuesday, 18th September 2012 – Devizes – venue tbc – 6.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m. (£35 for WALC members) – Cllr. Jeans said that he may attend the training day.

c) South West Wiltshire Community Blogsite – the Clerk informed members that the Area Board had set up a community blog site called ‘Out Community Matters’ which was being launched this week – see <http://southwestwilts.ourcommunitymatters.org.uk> The Chairman confirmed that she would be attending the launch event at Dinton Village Hall.

d) Mere Firework Festival - The Clerk confirmed that Penny Deeker had emailed an update on the Firework Festival arrangements: “We have now been granted the licence for the music tent which will be an open mic affair – led by the Wrongo Bongo band. I am also applying for a special event licence from the council and am applying for road closures along short stretches of roads around the site. I will send you a copy of the application form so you know what I am seeking. This year we will be selling a max of 30000 tickets so we know the max numbers that we will be dealing with. It makes me more comfortable to know that there is a limit! We are busy trying to raise as much as we can by way of sponsorship as we want to make sure that as much as possible the event is in effect “underwritten” before the date. Given the economic situation and the weather this summer we are aware that a number of festivals and events have really struggled. In the meantime we intend to use the parish council log again on our website and promotional material as a thank you for their support and use of the grounds.” The Clerk confirmed that Mrs. Deeker would be attending the October Parish Council meeting to answer any questions and provide any

further information. Members were particularly interested in having more detail on the road closures and whether there were any plans for parking restrictions.

d) Forthcoming meetings –

- 5.9.12 – from 12.30 p.m. - Dinton Village Hall – Launch event for new community blogsite
- 17.10.12 – 10 a.m. – 3.00 p.m. – Warminster Civic Centre – Wiltshire Council Flooding Event
- 12.9.12 – from 5.30 p.m. – The Corn Exchange, Devizes – Community First Annual General Meeting

158. Information Items

a) Public Access Defibrillator – the Clerk confirmed that the Defibrillator is now installed and registered with the ambulance computer system. A local resident Mrs. Judith Thompson of Grove Cottage, Barton Lane, has agreed to carry out the weekly checks. Members expressed their gratitude to Mrs. Thompson for carrying out these weekly checks and to Mr. & Mrs. Gillard for allowing the use of their electricity supply and also to Councillor George Jeans for installing the defibrillator free of charge.

b) Wiltshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning Portal has now gone 'live' and should be a great help in fielding any questions and giving information. Please see:

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment/planningpolicy/neighbourhoodplanning.htm

c) Consultation Documents - Payments by parish and community councils and charter trustees – A consultation paper from the Department for Communities and Local Government . The proposals relate to the repeal of legislation placing restrictions on parish councils in England and community councils in Wales when making payments, and the repeal of similar legislation relating to Charter Trustees. The consultation ends on Tuesday, 11th September.

159. Staff issues

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's groundsman, Mr. Suter, is still on indefinite sick leave. However, his treatment is going well and will end this week. If all goes to plan, he should be back at work around mid October but it is anticipated that he may have to come back part-time and on light duties and gradually build things back up to full time. Mr. Thorpe has indicated that he will accept another 6-month fixed term contract to work full time starting from 10th October (his current fixed term contract expires on 10th October). We were unsuccessful in securing any contractor to help him during the summer – all contractors we contacted were either very busy or did not have insurance etc. Consequently, we are behind with grass cutting and particularly behind with other routine work (hedge cutting and strimming). Bearing in mind that we have had the wettest summer for 100 years and the fact that Mr. Thorpe has had to take on far more than was originally anticipated when he was taken on in April, the Chairman asked members whether they were happy to offer Mr. Thorpe a further 6-month fixed term contract to work full time. Members felt that this was a good solution to the short-term staffing problem on the understanding that a second short term fixed contract would not bind the Parish Council into offering a permanent position. Cllr. Mitchell proposed that the Parish Council should offer Mr. Thorpe a further 6 month fixed term contract to end on 5th April 2013 but that the situation should be reviewed again in 3 months time.

Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity

a) Keyholders – The Clerk explained that the Parish Council currently had one resident keyholder for the Recreation Ground although there were other general keyholders i.e. youth club, parish clerk, Cllr. Jeans, groundsman, fire station. The Clerk had received an enquiry about the need for further resident keyholders in case of illness or absence, but the Clerk also expressed concern that more resident keyholders may create further problems with unauthorised parking at night etc. It was agreed that, as no-one was aware of any current or ongoing issues, the present keyholder situation should remain for the time being.

b) Speed ramp for entrance to Recreation Ground – the Clerk pointed out that following the request for traffic calming (Minutes of June meeting), the Clerk confirmed that the police raised no objections to some kind of speed hump in the entrance to the Recreation Ground and the Clerk also confirmed that a local resident, Mr. Peter Down

of Kingsmere Surfacing, had volunteered to put in a speed ramp free of charge. Members agreed that this offer should be gratefully accepted and the Clerk was asked to investigate legalities/health & safety requirements.

c) Recent events with gypsies & travellers – The Clerk confirmed that a situation occurred on the night of Sunday, 5th August when Irish Gypsies cut the chain and lock into the Recreation Ground, pulled out one of the bollards and set up their caravans in the ground (about 3 caravans, 3 cars and 1 camper van). The gypsies were confronted by a resident, Mrs. Sandra Catley, when they were about to cut the lock on the gates but they proceeded in any case. Fortunately, Mrs. Catley called the police who subsequently stopped further vehicles from gaining access. The Parish council was fortunate that Mrs. Catley had reacted in the way that she did and we were also fortunate that the police wanted to take one of the occupants in for questioning in relation to a crime committed the previous day. The police Inspector was prepared to serve an eviction notice (they could only do this because the gypsies had caused damage to the property/land) under Section 61 of the criminal Justice Public Order Act 1994. The Chairman and Clerk accompanied the police and the eviction notice was served and the gypsies did leave the premises at around lunch time the next day but unfortunately they did leave rather a lot of rubbish and mess behind them. The Clerk confirmed that she had now written up a report giving contact telephone numbers of Wiltshire Council's Traveller & Gypsy liaison officer and information on the eviction of gypsies and travellers by local authorities. Members of the Parish Council expressed their gratitude to residents and the police for swift action.