

Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 9th January 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), P. Coward, R. Hill, D. Hope, R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, D. Sealy & R. Sims.

Also PC Richard Salter, L. Stanton, R. Potter, M. Whatley, R. Cleal, Mr. & Mrs. Armishaw, Mr. Stone

Public Session

Pete Downs, Chairman of Mere Town Football Club spoke in relation to their request for a barrier around the football pitch and explained that Mere Town Football Club had progressed quite quickly over the last couple of years and in order for them to move on up through the leagues they now needed to provide a permanent barrier around the football pitch. He explained that the barrier would be made of tubular steel and would be a distance of about 5 – 6ft from the edge of the pitch.

Mr. Armishaw had presented members with a detailed submission relating to his proposal to stop up public vehicular rights on the highway to Lower Mere Park Farm. He stressed to members that their objective is only to stop vehicular access, not pedestrians or riders. If the road is not closed and the gate has to be removed we will have to fence all along the side of the highway.

Cllr. Sims pointed out that there is a shrub obstructing the footpath outside the garden of No. 4 Long Hill and the Clerk said that she would ask the Parish Steward to deal with this issue.

Apologies for absence received from Councillors R. Coward, C. Hazzard & B. Norris

76. To receive Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Mrs. Jane Hurd declared a personal interest in Planning Application – S/2011/1878

Cllr. George Jeans declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 82a) Payments

77. Minutes – Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 5th December 2011 be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of approval from those members present. Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the Minutes of Annual Budget Meeting held on Wednesday, 14th December 2011 be approved as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote of approval from those members present on 14.12.11.

78. Matters Arising

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report + Report on Neighbourhood Task Group meeting – PC Salter reported that Xmas and New Year had been relatively quiet with very little criminal activity and only a few minor traffic accidents. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd asked if there had been any more domestic heating oil thefts and PC Salter confirmed that these thefts were exclusively in the Tisbury area although he had recently had a meeting with colleagues from Gillingham where they had also encountered thefts of domestic heating oil.

b) Wiltshire Councillors Report – Cllr. Jeans reported that a large number of people had been caught out by bin collections which were made on a bank holiday and he informed members that bin collections would be made on a bank holidays in future in order to conform with the fortnightly bin collection service and so that people did not have to wait more than a fortnight. Cllr. Jeans confirmed that he had asked for three quotations for the skate park project and was hoping to submit an Area Board Grant Application. He congratulated the police on the new neighbourhood police website and felt that this could be utilised for providing emergency information. Cllr. Jeans confirmed that the xmas lights had been removed from the clock tower today but that the ropes had been left in place so that they could be used to erect bunting for the Queens Jubilee Celebrations.

c) Mere's Rivers & River Maintenance – the Chairman confirmed that she had presented Mere's concerns to the South West Wiltshire Area Board on 7th December and that the Area Board had agreed to send in letters of support. The Clerk stated that she had received a telephone call and email from Christopher Greenwell of the Environment Agency confirming that a meeting had been held on 2nd December attended by representatives of the Environment Agency, Wessex Water and the local MP, Dr. Andrew Murrison to discuss local concerns over the state of the watercourses in Mere. At this meeting, Wessex Water offered to trial a reduction in abstraction to meet local needs only, but this would have to happen during a year with appropriate winter recharge and spring/summer rainfall, so as to demonstrate more clearly the response of the groundwater and river flow to both climate and pumping. Whether this would be feasible in 2012 would depend partly on whether the aquifer recharges sufficiently over the winter/spring period. Such a trial would be assisted by local demand reductions, perhaps through metering and the promotion of water efficiency which could be implemented within the water supply area supplied by the Mere source. Wessex Water and the Environment Agency will now start discussions over identifying suitable conditions/triggers for the trial and the proposals will be discussed further with the parish council to allow local views and suggestions to be incorporated and it may also be possible that residents at Mere could assist in any such trial and an independent third party may also be invited to review any final proposals. The Clerk said that she had also opened up fresh correspondence with Wiltshire Council in an effort to identify riparian ownership along the western boundary of the river along Waterside. Members were reminded about the meeting, arranged by the residents of Mere, with Julie Girling MEP, to be held in the afternoon of Friday, 3rd February.

***d) Application to stop up highway between Lower Mere Park Farm and Lower Park Cottages, Mere)** - members noted the information in the Clerks Report and Mr. Armishaw had distributed a submission for each member. However, the Clerk informed members that Mr. Gale, Wiltshire Council's Senior Legal Executive, had requested that a final decision be deferred for a month in order to enable him to obtain instructions and to respond fully to issues raised. Members agreed that the matter should be deferred until next month.

e) Xmas Lights – Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that it had fallen upon her to judge the Xmas Lights and she wanted to say how festive Jill Christie's shop had looked but the prize for the best Xmas lights had been awarded to No. 5, Denes Avenue.

79. 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)

S/2011/1878/FULL – FULL PLANNING – CONVERSION OF BARN OUTBUILDING TO DWELLING WITH EXISTING ACCESS

WHEELWRIGHT COTTAGE, BURTON, MERE.

It was confirmed that the vehicular access for the building would cross the public footpath but members felt that this was not, in itself, an issue as there were plenty of instances where vehicular accesses crossed footpaths and Cllr. Mitchell proposed that the application should be recommended for approval. Cllr. D. Hope felt that the application should be recommended for refusal for the following reasons: the previous planning permission, granted in 1987, was not implemented, has lapsed and has been overtaken by subsequent national and local planning policies, the proposal is contrary to current planning policies, the need to preserve this building is questionable, the barn outbuilding appears incapable of conversion to a dwelling without substantial reconstruction, the scope of the works could render the public footpath difficult to use for the duration. Cllr. Sealy said that this was an old barn which was falling down and someone was prepared to convert it into a dwelling and he felt that this application should be approved. Members were reminded that a proposal to recommend approval of the planning application had been received and Cllr. Sealy seconded that proposal which was carried with a vote of 7 for, 1 against, and 3 abstentions. In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans refrained from comment or voting. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, having declared a personal interest, refrained from discussion or voting.

S/2011/1881/TCA – TREES CONS. AREA – FELL x1 SILVER BIRCH
10 CHURCH STREET, MERE.

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

S/2011/1892/FULL – FULL PLANNING – ERECTION OF TRACTOR SHED AND FIELD SHELTER WITH STORE
LORDSMEAD HOUSE, EDGEBRIDGE, MERE.

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

80. Open Spaces, Recreation Grounds, Play Areas & Sports Grounds

a) *Proposals to create hard standing and provide barriers around football pitch in Recreation Ground – see letter in Clerks Report from Mere Town Football Club – after questioning the representatives from the football club, it was revealed that there could be between 40 – 50 spectators on a good day and it would be preferable for the barrier to be permanent. The width of the hardstanding would be about 2m and the hardstanding + barrier would increase the size of the football pitch by about 3-4m either side. Mere Town Football Club has achieved Charter Standard which means that it meets the FA criteria and in the Senior League they could get away with a rope barrier or temporary barrier for one year only as the FA allows 3 years to achieve permanent barriers. The hardstanding was also a mandatory league requirement although it would be possible to use paving slabs instead of concrete. Football has been chosen as one of the participation sports and there is Olympic grant money and lottery grant money available and the Football Club is prepared to apply for these grants and raise funds. Cllr. P. Coward said that Mere was fortunate enough to have a very large amount of open space and I would have thought that the people of this town would recognise this and I think we should recognise the achievements made by the football club and support their request. Cllr. Jeans said he supported the idea and agreed in principle but felt that it may be necessary for the Football Club to be flexible in their chosen location as there are plans for a skate park in the Recreation Ground and it is important that we try and accommodate everyone. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that there was no question at all that the club is doing very well and she was very much in favour of these proposals but she wondered whether this might be a suitable subject for the Annual Parish Meeting so that the people of Mere could have an opportunity to be consulted on this. The Chairman asked members if they felt that some sort of public consultation should be offered on this issue. Cllr. P. Coward felt that it was unnecessary to go to public consultation on this issue as the usage fell within the remit of the Mere Peace Memorial Sports and Recreation Ground Charity and he propose that the Parish Council should support these proposals on condition that if the club folds it is their responsibility to remove the barriers and hardstanding. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Jane Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of approval. Those present were reminded that this motion would be presented as a recommendation to the Trustees of the Mere Peace Memorial Sports and Recreation Ground Charity.

81. Cemetery

a) *Approval for works proposed by Mr. David Chalke of Breezlands, Pettridge Lane, Mere* – Cllr. Jeans said that Mr. David Chalke had approached him to ask if the Parish Council might support a proposal to remove the fencing between the cemetery and his property and replace it with a wrought iron fence and he also wants to have a gate to come into the cemetery. Cllr. Jeans said that Mr. Chalke would need to pay a license for the gate so that he did not obtain prescriptive rights into the cemetery but asked the Council for their opinion on these proposals in principle. Cllr. Hill felt that if the whole length of the fence were to be replaced then he would agreeable but he felt that just to replace one section of the fencing may look a bit odd. It was agreed that, without prejudice, members should invite Mr. Chalke to submit some plans or drawings but to inform him that there is some concern that replacement of some of the fencing on the eastern boundary of the cemetery may make the rest of the fencing look a bit odd.

82. Finance:

a) Payments – Cllr. Sims proposed that the following accounts be approved for payment. Proposal seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote of those present. Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, Cllr. Jeans left the room whilst this matter was discussed.

Jeans	Sundries and labour to erect xmas lights on town clock	168.00
Jeans	Bulbs	16.36
Mere School	Changing Rooms – Water & Sewerage – 20.9.11 – 5.12.11	54.89
Mere School	Andy Young Pavilion + Bowling Green – Water & Sewerage – 20.9.11 – 5.12.11	27.97
Mere School	Changing Rooms + Office – electricity from 20.9.11 – 5.12.11	196.34
Mere School	Changing Rooms – Gas from 20.9.11 – 5.12.11	124.96
D & H Pengelly	Farm Environment Plan + HLS Application Advice	79.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	Membership Subscription Renewal	175.00
Sydenhams	Silicone & Mastic Gun	7.85
Southern Electric	Unmetered electricity supply (Mere Town clock Tower)	17.10
Jeans	Repairs to floodlight on Castle Hill	36.00
Jeans	Cable ties for xmas lights	36.00
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil for December	85.00
Cash	Internet Security 2012	39.99
Imprest Account Cheque Nos. 2755 -2760	Salary, PAYE, Petty Cash, Pension etc.	6125.05

b) To approve recommendations made by Annual Budget Meeting as set out in Minutes (attached) – Cllr. Jeans said that he came away from the meeting feeling that the Council had done the best that it could possibly do and that parishioners may have been expecting a higher rise in the parish council tax. Cllr. P. Coward said that he thought the Budget outcome was good considering the extra work that the Parish Council had taken on and The Chairman said that she echoed these sentiments.

c) To approve Precept upon Wiltshire Council for 2012/13 - Cllr. Jeans proposed that the Parish Council should approve the Precept of £90,000 (Ninety thousand pounds) upon Wiltshire Council for 2012/13. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hughes and carried with a unanimous vote of approval. The Chairman signed the Precept Form accordingly.

***d) Excessive rises in Council Tax and the application of a local Referendum** – members noted the information in the Clerks Report.

83. General Items

a) National campaign to reduce war memorial theft – the Clerk informed members about an initiative to reduce war memorial theft by registering war memorials and using SmartWater to offer greater protection. Members agreed that the Clerk should register the memorials and that SmartWater should be used on metalwork and metal ware where appropriate.

b) Invitation to a neighbourhood planning meeting to be held in Gillingham Community Office on Wednesday, 11th January at 7.30 p.m. – Cllr. Hope agreed to attend the meeting and report back to members.

c) Invitation to Wiltshire Council's Budget Consultation meeting – it was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk and possible Vice-Chairman would attend the Salisbury meeting.

d) Clerks Report – Cllr. P. Coward proposed that the Clerks Report should be adopted. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Hill and carried with a unanimous vote. It was agreed that the Queens Jubilee would be raised as a discussion item for the next agenda.

Parish Council meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity

a) Proposals to create hard standing and provide barriers around football pitch in Recreation Ground – see letter in Clerks Report from Mere Town Football Club.

Trustees agreed that they should grant permission for the Football Club to provide barriers and a hardstanding around the football pitch as long as it was within the legal parameters of the Charity Commission and on the understanding that paving slabs would be preferable to concrete because at least they could be taken up again with ease. Cllr. Mitchell said that he was concerned about the maintenance of the football pitch once the barrier was erected but the Football Club said that they would carry out the cutting and rolling of the pitch.

b) Submission of Annual Return to Charity Commission – deferred.