

Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 1st September 2014 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors B. Norris (Vice-Chairman), M. Cassidy, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, J. Jordan, E. Mitchell & R. Sims

Also: Mrs. K. Symonds, D. Stone, R. Stone, Rev. Carol Wilson-Barker, L. Stanton + S. Gunn

Meeting convened at 7.32 p.m. with Public Session

The Chairman will re-convene the Parish Council meeting after the public session (please note that members of the public are no longer permitted to speak unless invited to do so by the Chairman).

Rev Carol Wilson-Barker said that she had come along to introduce herself to the Parish Council and said that she prayed for our work and wished the Parish Council well. She said that from what she had seen of the work done by the Parish Council, members obviously had Mere at their heart. She had been in Mere for 2 years now and thought it was a lovely place to live and beautifully cared for and well kept.

Mr. Jordan said that there was a recent incident when an ambulance came to treat someone at Barnes Place but couldn't get up the road because it was obstructed with parked cars. He had heard that there had been problems where residents of Barnes Place could not get their refuse bins collected due to similar problems with parked cars. Cllr. Jeans said that, to his knowledge, Barnes Place was not an adopted road and that any double yellow lines put down there would be unenforceable. Mr. Jordan said that he was under the impression that traffic was controlled along Barnes Place. It was agreed that the Clerk would look into enforceable issues and adoption of road issues in this location.

Mr. Sims asked if the Parish Council could purchase a new watering can for the cemetery as the existing one was leaking.

The Clerk read a letter out from Mrs. Brett of 45 Lynch Close: 'Please accept my thanks to you and the Council Members for the swift resolution of the trip hazard, caused by a telegraph pole cable, on the corner of Lynch Close and Water Street. The addition of the yellow foam has meant that it is much easier for pedestrians to navigate round. I would also like to pass on my thanks for the repainting of the zebra crossing in Salisbury Street. Crossing this road, which at times can be very busy, feels less hazardous now that the crossing is more conspicuous.'

Cllr. B. Norris in The Chair

Apologies for absence received from Cllr. P. Coward & Cllr. Mrs. Traves. Also apologies sent from PC Richard Salter & PCSO Peter Tscherniawsky

182. To receive declarations of interest from members and to consider requests for new DPI dispensations.

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Mere Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

- Cllr. E. Mitchell declared a personal interest in planning application 14/07536/FUL
- Cllr. G. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 190a)
- Cllr. M. Cassidy declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 185e) and a personal interest in Minute No. 185c)

183. Minutes – **RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of Parish Council meetings held on Monday, 30th June 2014 and Monday, 11th August 2014 on proposal made by Cllr. R. Sims, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a majority vote of those present on 30.6.14 & 11.8.14

***184. Casual Vacancies – to fill the two casual vacancies by co-option** – Members considered the personal statements for the following candidates - Nick Beale, Clive Duncan, Annie Harris, John Symes & Kate Symonds – which had been distributed by the Parish Clerk along with the agenda papers. Members agreed that it would

be fairer to carry out the voting by secret ballot rather than show of hands. In the first round of voting Mr. Nick Beale received an overall majority of 8 votes and was therefore duly co-opted to fill one of the vacancies. In the second round of voting Kate Symonds received an overall majority of 11 votes and was therefore duly co-opted to fill the second vacancy. The Clerk was asked to write and thank all candidates for applying and it was pointed out that Mere Parish Council was very fortunate to have such interest as many Parish & Town Council's struggled to find new members.

185. Matters Arising

a) Banner requests for clock tower to advertise community events (see Minute 170a) – further clarification on numbers/decisions and timings – the Clerk said that Cllr. Mrs. Hurd had asked for this to be discussed again but the Clerk also wanted further clarification on the numbers, decisions and timings as she was finding this issue rather confusing. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that she felt that the decision to restrict the granting of banners for 3 community/charity events per year was a bit arbitrary and that these banners would help to make Mere look like it was a thriving town. Cllr. Hazzard said that he felt three was a stingy number and that if the signs were made to look respectable, the Parish Council should allow more. Cllr. Mitchell said that he thought 3 banners in a year was plenty and that the Clock Tower, as a prominent feature building in the town, should not be draped with banners. He said that there were other walls within the town which were far more suitable and pointed out that Cllr. Jeans had one on the entrance to the car park which he was happy for people to use. Cllr. Hill said that 3 banners advertising 3 events on the Clock Tower was too many on a prominent building in the heart of the conservation area. Cllr. Jeans said that his understanding of the law was that you are able to use your property for other purposes for 28 days a year and so if we increased it to 4 banners for a maximum of 7 days then we would be within the law. Cllr. Hazzard therefore proposed the following:

That the Parish Council would grant permission for 4 community/charity event banners per year for a duration of 8 nights (7 days) each. The year to run from 1st January to 31st December. The banners should be 8ft X 2ft maximum and letters should be no more than 9" (225cm) high. Banner is to be on the eastern elevation of the clock tower and the Parish Council will erect the banner. This is to be advertised in the November edition of Mere Matters and the decision will be made by the Parish Council at the December meeting.

Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a vote of 6 for, 4 against and 2 abstentions.

b) Clock Tower repairs (see Minute 166c) – Cllr. Norris said that he had contacted another company of builders who were happy to come along, have a look at the Clock Tower and give a day rate to carry out repair works necessary. He was hoping to organise this within the next two or three weeks. It was also agreed that the Clerk would try and arrange for the Clock Company to come and get the clock working in the meantime.

c) Cleaning of Andy Young Pavilion (see Minute 148e) – the Clerk confirmed that she had asked someone to look at the pavilion who had advised that it would be possible to carry out the cleaning in 2 hours and that the average cost of a cleaner was £8.00 per hour. This would cost £832 per year. The Parish Council has spent an average of £185 per year, over the last three years, on an annual deep clean. If we deduce the £185 it will leave us with an extra spend of £647.00. The Clerk therefore suggested that the Parish Council should ask the Cricket Club, Youth Football Club and Bowls Club if they would be prepared to contribute £200 each per year to make up the difference. Cllr. Jeans proposed that the Parish Council should agree to allocate £500 towards the cleaning of the pavilion which would allow for it to be cleaned every other week. If the Sports Groups want to make contributions to increase the frequency of cleaning then they could do so. It was agreed that this suggestion/question be put to the sports groups at the next Sports Development meeting. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd seconded this proposal which was carried with a vote of 11 in favour. Cllr. M. Cassidy, having declared a personal interest, refrained from discussion or voting.

d) Legionella Risk Assessment – The Clerk confirmed that Mr. Paul Biscombe, the Water Hygiene Contracts Manager from Wessex HVAC & Plumbing had carried out the risk assessment for the changing rooms which had identified some 'high' and 'medium' risks and had recommended some Legionella Awareness Training and a Water Hygiene Regime for the Parish Council's staff and Wessex staff to carry out. The training, which can be carried out in the Parish Council office for up to 10 members of staff/councillors would take approximately 3 hours and would cost £295.00 + VAT. The Clerk said that she would attend with the grounds staff and possibly the Chairman & Vice-Chairman but wondered whether it would be a good idea to ask neighbouring Town & Parish Councils whether they would like to participate and share the costs. Members thought that this was an excellent idea. The Clerk had also asked Wessex HVAC & Plumbing to provide a quotation to carry out a risk

assessment on the Andy Young Pavilion and public toilets and this had been received at £125 + VAT for each. It was agreed to ask Wessex to proceed with these risk assessments.

e) The Mere Skate Park Competition and Family Fun Day (see Minute 179) – The Clerk said that members and guests should now have received the official invitations to the skate park event & family fun day on Sunday 7th September. Since the last meeting, the Parish Council's insurance company has said that, as long as the Parish Council is organising the event, then it will fall under our insurance schedule at no extra cost. The Clerk had therefore taken a more proactive role in organising the first aid and carrying out the risk assessments etc. The Mere Fire Service has agreed to attend, with the fire engine for display purposes but they may get called out on an emergency so back up medical cover is necessary. The First Aid medical cover will be provided by Foxtech Medical who are a private ambulance company and they have offered to provide this service at a reduced cost of £100. The Parish Clerk has agreed that the Parish Council would pay this fee. The Clerk has also assumed that the Parish Council would pay for the refreshments for the invited guests – funders and Wiltshire Area Board Councillors – the Walnut Tree has quoted £5.00 per head to provide sandwiches and cake and it is anticipated that the number of guests will be in the region of 20 – 30. Mr. Oliver Hewitt, a resident of Mere, has agreed for his business (The Home Company in Gillingham) to sponsor the fliers and advertising for the event. Zoe Smith has organised all the attractions for the day which include:

displays and tumble track organised by Gymbuds

- Facepainting
- Bouncy Castle
- Beat the Goalie Competition
- Refreshments
- Possible Climbing Wall
- Slacklines workshop & demo team

Zoe has also managed to procure a vast number of prizes and donations for the competition winners, including a scooter, BMX parts, tee shirts etc.

The Slacklines (workshop and demo team) have agreed to attend at a cost of £375 + VAT and The Home Company in Gillingham has agreed to pay £200 towards this. Zoe Smith, Roland Heming and the Clerk had all agreed to make a financial contribution towards this but there was a small shortfall. Other members of the Parish Council agreed to make a contribution towards the slacklines and the Parish Council agreed to fund the shortfall.

186. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report - None

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – Cllr. Jeans reported that he had cleaned the tourist sign at Willoughby Hedge on behalf of the Chamber of Trade but thought that a new fingerpost sign should be provided for Clements Lane and said that he was happy to arrange for a grant on the understanding that the Parish Council would need to make a financial contribution of £50. Parish Council members were happy to allow Cllr. Jeans to arrange the fingerpost grant application and agreed the contribution of £50.00. Cllr. Jeans also explained the concerns and dissatisfaction of a number of residents of the Oval Homes development at Downside Close which related to the large retaining wall adjacent to the A303, the adoption of the roads and enforcement of planning conditions. He emphasised that the Parish Council was not the enforcing authority but said that there was work going on behind the scenes to put pressure on the developers to get the roads to a suitable standard for adoption. There was also concern about covenants on the deeds of the properties that say they need to pay into a management company. Cllr. Jeans explained that Wiltshire Council was legally required to give the Parish Council 3 months notice to hand back the Youth Club building. Cllr. Jeans also said that Wiltshire Council was conducting a public consultation on bus passes.

***c) The future of Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Service – Public Consultation (expires 20th October 2014)** – the Clerk explained that there was still time to discuss this at the next meeting. It was agreed to put a notice in Mere Matters, informing the public about the consultation and to ask Mere Fire Station Chief, Richard Pester, if he had any comments that he would like the Parish Council to consider.

187. Planning

a) Applications: (All applications can be viewed on Wiltshire Council's website

<http://planning.wiltshire.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/ApplicationSearch.aspx> – and type in the relevant application number)

Application Ref: 14/07536/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Single storey extension on north elevation

At: 4 Southbrook Gardens, Mere, Wiltshire. BA12 6BE

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a vote of 10 for. Cllr. Mitchell declared a personal interest in the above application and refrained from discussion or voting. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

Application Ref: 14/07673/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Erect 4 bed detached house with garage and access

At: Land adjoining Shreenwater, Wellhead, Mere. BA12 6EH

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mitchell, seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a vote of 10 for and 1 abstention. . In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

***b) Draft proposals for Revised Settlement Boundaries** – RESOLVED that an extra meeting should be called, within the consultation deadline, to discuss this matter.

***c) Government consulting on making Neighbourhood Planning easier** – members noted the information in the Clerks Report.

188. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults – none reported

b) Rivers – lack of action by riparian owners – Cllr. Norris said that most riparian owners have done well.

However, there were two or three properties that were not carrying out their duties as riparian owners and it was RESOLVED that the Parish Council should write to those riparian owners reminding them to assess and cut the weed back in the rivers so that they are prepared for winter and possible high water levels. Proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mitchell and carried with a unanimous vote.

c) Results from Metro Count carried out in The Lynch, Mere – the Clerk pointed out that there were 105 4-axled and 9 5-axled lorries that crossed The Lynch in just under a week. The Area Board Manager had been in correspondence with Mrs. Rosemary Cox regarding the metro count data and Mrs. Cox had suggested that Wiltshire Council should install width restrictions at the top and bottom of The Lynch to prevent the lorries from embarking on the road but with a lockable gate so that dustcarts and emergency service can still gain access. The Area Board Manager was asking for the Parish Council's view on Mrs. Cox's suggestions. Cllr. Jeans said that he thought the new signage had reduced the number of HGVs and then there was a discussion on the overgrown hedgerows along the narrow part of The Lynch. Cllr. Mrs Symonds said that all the signs in the world would not prevent the satnavs from directing the HGVs along The Lynch. It was agreed that the Parish Council should write to Andrew Murrison, MP, asking him if there was anything that could be done to ensure that HGVs use the proper HGV satnavs and not the cheaper ones bought for private cars. Also to ask Wiltshire Council if a sign could be erected near the Lynch Close junction pointing out that there is a width restriction along The Lynch. Also to ask Lee Haine to see if he could make arrangements to get the hedge cut either side of The Lynch. Also to do a Land Registry search on the footpath and hedges in front of properties 1 – 4 The Lynch and also to write a standard letter to other residents along The Lynch asking them to cut their hedges back.

d) Report from Footpath Group on Community Payback Scheme – Cllr. Jordan reported that the tarmac across the whole width of the footpath had now been exposed and that it was now possible for two people to walk along the footpath side-by-side. The outcome of the scheme had been a significant improvement which had not cost any money. The footpath group had thanked the volunteers and workers involved.

189. Buildings, Open Spaces, Play Areas, Sports Grounds, Allotments, Car Parks & Cemeteries

a) Re-painting of disabled parking space in Salisbury Street Car Park – The Clerk confirmed that she had received an email from the Mere Surgery Practice Manager to say that the disabled parking bays in Salisbury Street Car Park were no longer visible and that at peak times there was no disabled parking due to people not realising they were parking on a designated space. The Clerk explained that there was only one designated disabled parking space which was near the doctors surgery. Cllr. Jeans confirmed that he had met with the doctors who were asking for another one of the existing parking bays to be allocated as a disabled parking bay (making two in total). Cllr. Hazzard said that he fully supported repainting the existing disabled bay but pointed out that the whole car park needed to be reconfigured to provide additional spaces. Cllr. Jeans said that he would make enquiries about finding someone that would draw up a reconfiguration scheme for car parking spaces in the Salisbury Street Car Park for the Parish Council. Cllr. Jeans pointed out that he had repaired the seat outside Hayley's hairdressers and he was thanked for this work.

b) Request from Mere Garden Club to enhance Jubilee Gardens with planting scheme – as the Garden Club members had previously explained, the late Richard Smith, had left some money in his will to buy gardening equipment for the new garden at Mere School and provide a Cup to be presented to the pupil with the highest number of points in their Garden Show. Richard's family was keen for the Garden Club to use the remaining money and it had been suggested the money could be used towards enhancing Jubilee Gardens with some attractive planting. The proposals were for two semi-circular beds behind the benches and plants had been chosen that would provide colour year round, were low maintenance and attractive to birds and bees. The proposals also included 2 trees, one of which could replace the dying thorn in the lower corner. Initially there will be maintenance required at least twice a year and the Garden Club was happy to undertake the necessary maintenance work. Cllr. Sims proposed that the Parish Council should thank the Garden Club very much and accept their generous offer on the undertaking that they are happy to carry out the maintenance work. Proposal seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a vote of 9 for.

c) HLS Scheme & Fencing of Castle Hill for grazing of goats

- Update on application to English Heritage – the Clerk confirmed that she had submitted an application to English Heritage for the fencing around Castle Hill and they had confirmed that the Secretary of State is agreeable for the works to proceed providing the Parish Council is prepared to meet various conditions one of which was 'No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by English Heritage'. English Heritage wanted to know if the Parish Council was happy to meet these conditions. Members agreed that the conditions would be met.
- Update on application to Natural England for inclusion in HLS Scheme – the Clerk and Cllr. Rodney Coward had met with Margaret Feneley of the Wiltshire Conservation Team at Natural England and Helen Pengelly of Canopy Land Use to explain the Parish Council's proposals for grazing goats on Castle Hill and to see if the HLS Scheme could be amended to incorporate this. The Clerk confirmed that the HLS Scheme had been amended and the Chairman was authorised to sign the documents accordingly.
- Update on capital works grants – the Clerk confirmed that Natural England would provide a Capital Works Grant of approximately £2500 towards the fencing, gates and water trough for Castle Hill. However, the Clerk did not think that this would meet the costs to the Parish Council and so she had applied for an Area Board Grant to help meet some of the shortfall.
- Update on tenders/quotations – specifications had been sent out to three companies to provide the fencing and gates. However, Bourton Fencing had already declined to submit a quotation as they were too busy to commit to such a project. The Clerk had requested that quotations be received by 12th September.
- HLS Scheme Year 4 2014/15 works to carry out – the Clerk pointed out that the Year 4 works involved mostly tree felling and it was agreed that a specification for quotations should be prepared and sent out.

d) Quotations for Play Equipment for Castle Hill Play Area (to be funded from Policy R2 Developers Funds) – the Clerk's Assistant had obtained quotations for the play equipment and the Clerk had received confirmation from Wiltshire Council that this project could be funded from Policy R2 funds. It was agreed that the decision on the appropriate play equipment should be delegated to the Chairman & Vice-Chairman.

e) Use of Andy Young Pavilion for Fitness Classes - The Clerk informed members that she had been contacted by a parishioner, Lisa Butler, who wanted to run early morning and evening fitness classes in Mere and was asking about the availability and cost of hiring the Andy Young Pavilion. The Clerk explained that this was a commercial venture and that the Parish Council did not have a policy on hiring the pavilion out for these purposes. Lisa had confirmed, by email, that she would have her own public liability and indemnity insurance, would carry out relevant risk assessments and ensure that the pavilion was left in good order. RESOLVED to allow the use of the pavilion for these fitness classes, on the basis of the information outlined in Lisa's email, at a rate of £7.00 per hour subject to there being no conflicts with other sports groups/users.

190. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments – the following payments were approved and cheques duly signed. Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room whilst this matter was discussed.

Jeans	Repair & replace fittings & lights in public toilets	289.96
Mirage Signs Ltd	No Ball Games & Clean Up after your Dog signs	72.00
Sydenhams Ltd	Staples & nails for fencing around Castle Hill Play Area + drill bit	105.16
Mole Valley Farmers	Tools, fencing equipment & cleaning products	184.80
Eon Energy	Electricity supply to public toilets	46.23 Paid by DD on 27.8.14
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil for August	216.50
Imprest Account – cheques 2984 - 2992	Wages, Petty Cash, PAYE & Pension	4637.83
Wessex Water	Water & Sewerage Service for Band Hut 1.5.14 – 31.3.15	114.94
Rochfords	Strimmer Line & head	58.45
Cash	Travel Expenses (Clerk to briefing session at Salisbury Guildhall 26.7.14)	16.00

b) Report on External Audit of Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2014 – The Clerk reported that the External Audit had been completed on 14th August with the External Auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, returning the Annual Return and reporting '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. Other matters not affecting our opinion which we wish to draw to the attention of Mere Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2014 is:

Internal Financial Controls

Whilst the Parish Council does follow internal control measures, it has not documents its internal controls. It is good practice for the Parish Council to fully document and periodically review the specific day to day procedures it undertakes to implement its system of internal control.

The Clerk said that this matter had now been attended to and pointed out to the Parish Council that because the Council's income had exceeded £200,000 the Council had been subjected to an intermediate audit which necessitated the submission of more information to the auditors and had also increased the external audit fee. The clerk confirmed that a Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been placed on the noticeboard informing parish electors that they may obtain, inspect or take a copy of the Statement of Accounts and Auditor's Certificate and Report by arrangement with the Clerk.

c) To approve Budget/Expenditure Report for quarter ending 30.6.14 (attached) – the Clerk thanked Cllr. Jordan for his help and tutorials in changing the formats for the reports and explained that there was now a % difference column to help identify the main variations or changes that have occurred or that the Clerk has applied at the end of the quarter. Reviewing the budget against actual expenditure regularly gives members early warning about the likelihood of a shortfall (or surplus) and helps them to decide what responsive action to take. The Clerk informed members that she had made notes on the variations + or – 25% and members agreed to contact the Clerk if they wanted further information.

d) Community Public Access Defibrillator for Duchy Manor –the Clerk explained that a letter had been sent out to all the sports groups using Duchy Manor and donations had been received from all the sports groups except cricket and both archery clubs. Cllr. Cassidy said that he was aware that the Cricket Club had agreed to send a donation of £100. The Clerk was confident that the remaining money would be achieved via a donation from the Mere Dental Surgery and so it was agreed to proceed with ordering the defibrillator as soon as possible.

e) Repeal of s.150 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 – Implementation (England): For the Council to consider moving to electronic payments and adopting new Financial Regulations or to remain with cheque payments – the Clerk confirmed that she had read all the relevant paperwork and had also passed it on to Mr. John Wilson, the Parish Council’s internal auditor. Both Mr. Wilson and the Clerk felt that the new measures necessary to move to electronic payments were very prescriptive and felt that it may be best to leave this matter in abeyance, continue with cheque payments for the time being but for the Clerk to bring the matter up at any Clerks meetings to see how other Council’s were coping with the new measures & procedures for electronic payments. Members were happy to go along with the advice of the Clerk and internal auditor.

f) Parish Council Strategy to identify items intended to fund through CIL receipts - deferred

191. General Items

a) To set date for Sports Development Meeting - deferred

***b) Community Signboards in Mere and at Willoughby Hedge** – letter from Mere & District Chamber of Trade – with reference to the information in the Clerks Report, members were happy to offer their support to the Chamber of Trade for this work.

It was further agreed that the signs erected in the car parks should be amended and wording included to show that the Parish Council also contributed towards keeping the car parks free.

c) Staff issues – the Clerk confirmed that Mr. James Suter had been employed by the Parish Council as groundsman’s assistant and had started work today. Mr. Tim Cussen would be leaving at the end of the week.

192. Forthcoming meetings

193. Clerks Report – to approve and adopt Clerks Report and request future agenda items.

Cllr. Hazzard asked for ‘action by riparian owners on rivers’ to be discussed on the agenda so that the Parish Council could assess whether or not the letters had made any difference.

*Further information on these items in Clerks Report

Note: Members are reminded that the Parish Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.