

Mere Parish Council

PARISH CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 3rd March 2014 at 7.30 p.m. in Duchy Manor, Springfield Road, Mere.

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

Also: Mr. S. Gulliver, Mr. S. Gunn, Miss J. Ings, Clare Shaddick & Mr. L. Stanton.

Public Session

Mr. Gulliver explained that he had submitted a planning application for an annex to be built at his parents house. He said that by building this annex it will allow him to look after his elderly parents and also enable him and his family to remain living in Mere.

Mr. Sims reported that a fire hydrant sign in Bramley Hill had been knocked over. He also explained that the Mere Cancer Research Committee was looking for the Parish Council's support for the Mere May Fayre in aid of Cancer Research. The committee are proposing a road closure for Church Street. The committee had also received interest from the Town Crier of Gillingham. The Parish Council offered their support for this event.

Mr. Hazzard reported that there was a good turnout for the Carnival Emergency meeting on 11th February with over 50 people attending. Volunteers came forward to join the committee with others willing to help with fundraising and events as well as on Carnival Day itself.

Mr. Hazzard said that there was still a broken gutter/drain hopper outside Lou's It hair salon in Salisbury Street. Mr. Sims reported that he had attended a Shaftesbury & Gillingham Transport Forum meeting this week where a 'Wheels to Work' initiative was discussed.

Apologies for absence received from Cllr. Ann-Marie Long.

107. 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.

- L. Traves – Prejudicial – Minute No. 111 a) – Planning Application Ref: 14/01257/FUL
- J. Hurd – Personal – Minute No. 111 a) – Planning Application Ref: 14/01257/FUL
- G. Jeans – Prejudicial – Minute No. 114a) – Payment recipient
- D. Hope – Prejudicial – Minute No. 114a) – Payment recipient

108. Minutes – RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 3rd February 2014 as a correct record of proceedings. Proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. J. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 3.2.14

109. Matters Arising

a) Band Hut – update on proceedings (Minute 98a) – The Clerk reported that the floor to the left of the main entrance of the band hut was removed about 10 days ago and that Timberwise had been appointed to carry out the survey work and had reported that this would be done tomorrow (4th March).

***b) SWW Area Board – Public Rights of Way (RoW) Improvement Programme – Recommendations for a Mere Submission (Minute 98d)** – With reference to the information in the Clerks Report, Cllr. Jordan explained that the submission would meet the criteria of the SWW Area Board and the improvement of the footpath to Burton was at the heart of their submission. The footpath group were also hoping to recreate the 'Mere Scenic Walks' booklet that had proved to be so popular in the past. Cllr. Jordan explained that by 9th March, when the submission needs to be made to the Area Board Manager, the Footpath Group will have audited all of the footpaths in Mere and they will point out, in their submission, that the footpath group had recently replaced 12 stiles and improved access to a number of footpaths within the parish. Cllr. Jordan did add that there had been no indication from the Area Board of how much money could be spent, nor were the footpath group aware of how much these proposals may cost but once the submission had been made, it would then, presumably, be assessed for viability and funding. RESOLVED on proposal made by Cllr. Jordan, that the Parish Council fully support this submission with the addition of the re-creation of an updated 'Scenic Walks' booklet. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hope and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

c) Rivers – responsibilities and Registering interest with Land Registry (Minute 101a) – the Clerk reported that this was proving to be rather difficult and there was currently no progress to report on the matter. However, she would keep pursuing the matter. Cllr. Norris reported that the Rivers Group would be holding a meeting on 14th March and the Environment Agency would be attending the meeting so Cllr. Norris was hoping to enlist their help with this matter.

d) Wiltshire Council's Countryside Access Improvement Plan Consultation (Minute 101b) – Cllr. Jordan reported that this was a very detailed document describing an action plan and set of objectives. He said that it was hard to find fault with the Plan as it was commendable and praiseworthy. However, there was no mention of where the funding would come from to implement the actions and objectives within the plan. **RESOLVED** to respond to the consultation document stating that the Parish Council felt that funding should be made available to implement the actions and objectives within the plan.

e) Mere Post Office (Minute 82b)

- i) Response from Chief Executive Officer
- ii) Decision to close Mere Mail Room

The Clerk reported that the Chief Executive Officer of Royal Mail, Moya Greene, had responded stating that 'it is imperative that we become more efficient and the centralisation of the delivery operation for the BA postcode is vital to our success. Whilst the decision to close a Delivery Office is not subject to public consultation (as this is a business decision), we always consult our staff and the Union. In relation to Mere Delivery Office, I must stress the proposal is to centralise the delivery operation only and no closure of the Post Office is being considered. Any mail we are unable to deliver will be held for collection from the Post Office. Travel to the Warminster Delivery Office will not be necessary and customers should see no change to their daily deliveries. When a final decision has been made, any customers affected by the changes will be notified closer to the time. This will include information about timescales, collection and redelivery arrangements.' Cllr. Jeans reported that Royal Mail had made the decision to close the mail room at the beginning of April.

110. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – Cllr. Sims reported that there were some people claiming to be tree surgeons calling at peoples houses and then inflating prices for carrying out unprofessional work. The police had stopped these people on one occasion. There were also some people travelling around in an orange coloured car, shouting abuse at members of the public.

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – Cllr. Jeans reported that Wiltshire Council had £2m to spend on council housing in Wiltshire. He had submitted a bid for housing in Mere but this would only be in the region of 4 houses and any new ones would be aimed at older people but those, in turn, may release other housing for younger people or young families. Those that can claim 100% relief on their Council Tax may now only find that they can get 80% relief.

***c) Youth Activities Review - Programme Consultation (10 week consultation runs from 3.2.14 – 14.4.14)** - Cllr. Jeans confirmed that Wiltshire Council was consulting on a review of the Youth Services – as outlined in the Clerks Report. He stated that Wiltshire Council is only responsible for positive leisure activities for young people and it has no statutory duty to provide Youth Clubs and that, apparently, many counties have no youth club services at all. Wiltshire Council was originally proposing to cut the existing £1.3 million budget for youth services by £500k but, owing to much opposition, it was now proposed to cut the budget by £250k. This review could result in the possible demise of youth activities in Mere. Cllr. Jeans said that we have a Youth Club building, owned by the Parish Council, but leased to Wiltshire Council on a very low rent and we are fortunate to have Jaki Farrell, one of the best youth workers in the whole of Wiltshire, operating from the Mere Youth Centre. Jaki has set up a charity and so it may still be possible to run some youth development services in Mere. Members were informed that this would be one of the main topics for discussion at the Area Board meeting which would be held in The Grove Building in Mere on Wednesday, 27th March at 6.30 p.m. and members were encouraged to attend.

111. 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: 13/06180/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Erection of 1 bed detached self contained annex
At: Cobblers Cottage, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JF

Cllr. Hope said that he was concerned that, in approving this application, the Parish Council would be establishing a precedent by allowing development in the historic plots behind Castle Street which is in a Conservation Area. Cllr. Jeans said that he thought it fair to point out that he had asked for this application to be called in to committee as he was aware that this development would be providing additional housing for a family in Mere who would otherwise have to move out of the town they had lived in all their lives. Cllr. Jeans pointed out that the annex was only 38sq metres and was definitely subservient to the main dwelling. Cllr. Norris said that, having visited the site, the whole area at the back of Castle Street is a complete shambles with odd buildings, sheds and garages some of which are in various states of disrepair and he doesn't think it would be fair to argue that this annex would be out of keeping with the character of the area. Cllr. Norris said that Mere has a serious housing problem and this application would help to solve a housing problem for a family in Mere. RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on condition that the proposed annex shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Cobblers Cottage and shall not be sold of separately. Proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mitchell and carried with a vote of 8 for, 1 against and 3 abstentions. In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting.

Application Ref: 14/00920/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Install stove-enamelled matt black wood-burner flue
At: Burton Grange Barn, Burton, Mere. BA12 6BR

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

Application Ref: 14/01217/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in Cons. Area
Proposal: Fell 1 X Beech
At: Treganhawke, Castle Hill Lane, Mere. BA12 6JB

(As the deadline for comments was 25th February and there were no public consultation responses online, I submitted a "no comment" response to this application on 25.2.14)

Application Ref: 14/01888/TCA
Application for: Work to trees in Cons. Area
Proposal: Fell 1 X Lawson Cypress
At: Lander House, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JF

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. R. Hill, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

Cllr. Brett Norris in The Chair

Application Ref: 14/01257/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: 2 storey side extension
At: Littlecot, North Street, Mere. BA12 6HH

Cllr. Hope said that he would like to suggest that the Parish Council approve the application subject to Wiltshire Council re-negotiating with the applicant to reduce the disproportionate size and prominence of the proposed side extension in relation to the original dwelling. The Clerk pointed out that the Parish Council was being asked to consider the proposal as submitted and that if Cllr. Hope wanted to see the extension reduced in size, the application would need to be recommended for a refusal on the grounds that it was too large. RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on condition that 2 off-street parking places for Littlecot remain within the ownership curtilage and remain accessible. Proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Hughes and carried with a vote of 8 for, 2 against and 2 abstentions. Having declared a pecuniary interest in this application, Cllr. Mrs. Traves refrained from discussion or voting during the consideration of this application. Having declared a personal interest in this application, Cllr. Mrs. Hurd refrained from discussion or voting during consideration of this application. In his capacity as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting.

Cllr. Mrs. Lesley Traves in The Chair

****b) Report on Wiltshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning Workshop 'Selecting sustainable sites for development'***
—Members noted the report prepared by Cllr. Hope and copied in the Clerks Report. Cllr. Hope said that he thought it was good that Wiltshire Council was putting on these workshops and added that unlike the Mere Parish Plan, a

neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Core Strategy Framework but in order to get to this status it needs to confirm to the strategic policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy Framework, have regard to national planning policy, be compatible with EU obligations and Human Rights Requirements, meet independent qualified checks (paid for by the Parish Council) and then be approved by local referendum (paid for by the Parish Council).

112. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

113. Buildings, Open Spaces

a) Clock Tower Repairs – Cllr. R. Hill – defer to next meeting.

b) Issues with MUGA/lights/anti-social behaviour – the Clerk informed members that there had been several incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour in and around the MUGA and Duchy Grounds. The electrical cables had been pulled out of one of the boxes of the floodlights which is an extreme worry since they carry high voltage electricity. The cables have been made safe for the time being. The cricket club's roller was found inside the MUGA, there had been human faeces inside the MUGA and the bench outside the Andy Young Pavilion had been smashed to pieces. The Clerk had informed the police about these incidents and they had confirmed that they were patrolling the area but unless they catch someone in the act of causing criminal damage there was little they could do. Members discussed whether there might be any possibility in either providing independent CCTV or funding an extension into the School's CCTV. The Clerk asked members what they wanted to do about repairing the MUGA floodlights because there was now only one working and it would cost approx. £1000 to get two more of them working. Members agreed that, as the lighter evenings would soon be upon us, this should wait until September.

114. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments – RESOLVED to approve the following payments on proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote of those present. Cllrs. D. Hope & G. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room whilst the matter was discussed and voted upon.

Jeans	New heater for office	89.99 – already paid
Jeans	VAT on work to Clock Tower (Clerk omitted from February invoice list)	48.81 – already paid
Scats Countrystores	Public Toilets – Cleaning materials	23.52 – already paid
J. H. Rose & Sons	Shingle for cemetery footpaths	132.77 – already paid
T. Thornley	Computer, Monitor & Printer for office	804.43
David Harness	Attend to wind damaged beech tree at Long Hill	120.00
Cllr. Hope	Travel expenses to Neighbourhood Planning Workshop at Trowbridge (3.2.14)	16.00
Maverick Industries Ltd	Skate Park – First Stage Payment	£15,964 less 5% Retention + VAT = £18198.96
Sydenhams	Barrier tape, padlock & bags tarmac	95.95
Hygiene Supplies Direct Ltd	Sanitary Bins & Liners	62.61
Cash (Reimbursement for Staples & Copy Shop & Waltons Newsagents)	Stationery, files & archive boxes	167.37
EON Energy	Electricity for public toilets 10.1.14 – 18.2.14	93.97 (Paid by Direct Debit)
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	45.66
Imprest Account – cheque Nos. 2936 - 2941	Petty Cash, Wages, PAYE & Pension	3115.73
N. Maitland	Scrub Clearance work on Long Hill	3450.00
Scats Countrystores	Play equipment repairs &	43.62

	machinery maintenance sundries	
United Mechanical	Repairs for boiler in changing rooms	617.74
Duchy of Cornwall	Half yearly rental for allotments 29.9.13 – 24.3.14	322.06
G. C. Meare	Remove rotten timber floor from Band Hut	400.00
New Forest Farm Machinery	Blades & parts for Trimax roller mower	59.64
Rochford Garden Machinery	Spray nozzle	18.16

***b) Precept Capping – latest news from Local Government Association** – members noted the information in the Clerks Report.

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

d) Advertising for Groundsman's Assistant – members were informed that Mr. Ryan Morse had ceased carrying out any groundwork for the Council and that it was now necessary to recruit a groundsman's assistant as previously agreed. The Clerk asked members if they were in agreement with using the services of Octopus Personnel again, under the same terms as previously agreed. RESOLVED on proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd that the Parish Council should use the services of Octopus Personnel to recruit a groundsman's assistant.

115. General Items

a) First World War Centenary – suggestions for commemoration – Cllr. Jeans said that he had received some enquiries about this and had asked if it would be possible to plant up the tubs and flower beds with poppies. The Clerk pointed out that Wiltshire Council was inviting communities in Wiltshire to a county-wide commemorative event which would be held on Wednesday, 30th July (venue tbc) and to contribute to the event by joining in with research and remembrance of the impact the war had on the people in their community. Each community area is invited to commemorate those who fell from their parishes by 1) finding names on the war memorial and 2) finding out more about the people named. RESOLVED that Cllr. Jeans, C. Hazzard, J. Jordan and Mrs. J. Hurd meet to discuss WW1 commemoration and invite Jenny Wilding and others that may be interested before reporting back to the Parish Council. It was further agreed that poppies would be planted in the tubs and flower beds around the town.

b) To fix date, venue & agenda items for Annual Parish Meeting – The Clerk informed members that the Grove Building had been pre-booked last year for 23rd April. It was agreed that Swimming Pool, Dogs in Recreation Ground, Potholes and Neighbourhood Planning would be raised on the agenda.

c) To fix date, venue & membership for Annual Risk Management & Insurance meeting (April 2014) – it was agreed that the clerk should arrange for the meeting to be held during the month of April with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman & Cllr. Jeans.

d) NALC Policy Consultation – Local Audit and Accountability Act – Openness of Local Government Bodies Draft Regulations – the Clerk said that NALC had submitted the policy consultation as the government had invited comment on the draft regulations which covers filming and the use of social media at council meetings and the recording of decisions taken by officers under delegated powers. The new regulations will:

- Allow any person to attend a public meeting of a relevant local government body for the purposes of reporting.
- 'Reporting' is defined in the regulations as:
 - Filming, photographing or audio recording of proceedings;
 - Using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings of a meeting as it takes place or later;
 - Reporting or providing commentary on proceedings of a meeting, orally or in writing.
- Allow any persons with the aim of reporting to use any communication methods, including the internet, to publish, post or otherwise share the results of their reporting activities, during or after the meeting.
- Do not affect the current circumstances in which a private meeting may be held or a person may be excluded (for example, where exempt information would be disclosed or in the case of disorderly conduct).

Members had no comments to make.

116. Forthcoming meetings

- Wiltshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning Workshop Event – 3rd event on the subject of 'Consultation and Community Engagement' – Cllr. Hope said that he would try and attend the meeting in Warminster on 31st March.
- Sowing Seeds – New Funding Opportunities – Series of meetings to identify priorities for the area and to put forward project suggestions.

117. Clerks Report – RESOLVED to approve and adopt the Clerks Report on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

Future agenda items:

- Names on the Honour Board (Motcombe Village Hall)
- Clock Tower picture frames

*Further information on these items in Clerks Report

MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No. 1093497

1a) Hedge at rear of Youth Club/White Road – suggestion to reduce height from 10ft to 5ft

The Clerk explained that it was no longer possible for a tractor to gain access to cut the hedge at the rear of the properties along White Road without damaging people's private property due to the size of the modern machinery. The hedge had not been properly cut last year and if it could be taken down to a height of about 6ft then the tractor would be able to cut both sides and the top of the hedge from the Recreation Ground using the tractor and hedgecutter, apart from the small area behind the youth club building which will have to be cut by hand from the White Road side.

Trustees RESOLVED that the hedge should be reduced to 6ft in height in order to enable both the sides and top to be cut by tractor and hedgetrimmer. Proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. R. Mitchell and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

Meeting closed at 9.14 p.m.