

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of Mere Town Council held on Monday, 1st June 2015 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors B. Norris (Chairman), J. Jordan (Vice-Chairman), N. Beale, M. Cassidy, P. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill (from 8.16 p.m.), R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, R. Sims, Mrs. K. Symonds, Mrs. L. Traves

Also: Sally Brett, Mr. R. Flower, Mrs. A. Harris & Mrs. Alison Beall, Mr. D. Morris, Mr. D. Stone, Mr. R. Stone.

Meeting convened at 7.31 p.m. with **Public Session**

The Chairman will convene the Town 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).

Alison Beall from North Road said that she noted what was said previously about organised litter cleaning projects and the fact that there are insurance issues but having heard about litter clearing projects in Gillingham, Shaftesbury & Milton on Stour, she would like to find out how much it would cost to provide the insurance to carry out an organised litter clean. The Clerk said that she would try and get some information from the Town Council's insurance company.

Annie Harris said that she had not yet got around to providing the Clerk with a list of signs that need cleaning. Also, with regards to the Band Hut opening, she hoped that Mere would take note of the excellent work having been achieved by the Mere & District Railway Modellers Club. She also wanted to mention contracts and asked why there is always an extension to contracts for Wessex Water, Gas works etc. The extended works being carried out by Wessex Water along Water Street have caused great inconvenience and the residents have suffered from missed bin collections.

R. Sims pointed out that the Chamber of Trade would be providing more signs for tourists and travellers when they exit the Castle Street Car Park. He also wanted to say thank you to everyone for supporting the Cancer Research May Fayre – over £4,000 was raised.

Apologies for absence received from PC Richard Salter & PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky & for the late arrival of Cllr. Hill

27. 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 Town Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

- Cllr. E. Mitchell declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 33c)
- Cllr. G. jeans declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 35a)

28. Minutes – RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 11th May 2015 on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 11.5.15

29. Matters Arising

a) Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2015/16 (see Minute 9) – The Clerk explained that a local council must appoint an internal auditor who is independent of the day to day transactions of the council and its members. The auditor should not be a member of the council. The auditor may be anyone who, in the opinion of the council, is competent to carry out the work and does not have to be a qualified person. They can be paid for their services. It is not necessary for the auditor to have professional indemnity insurance cover in place – the Audit Commission has stated that the internal auditor will not be held responsible for not discovering any error, omission or fraud which may come to light at a later date. The Clerk stated that the audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31.3.15 is the last audit for which John Wilson is acting as Internal Auditor. Mrs. Mary White has attended one or two of the internal audit sessions over the last 18 months and has indicated a

willingness to act as Internal Auditor. RESOLVED on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs Hurd, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote, that Mrs. Mary White be thanked for her kind offer and be appointed as Internal Auditor for Mere Town Council.

b) Repair work to Clock Tower building (see Minute 17) – Cllr. Hill reported that the scaffolding was erected on 18th May and work started shortly afterwards. He reported that the roof, slates and lead work were all in good condition and although quite a bit of woodwork needed repairing, it was nothing structural and appeared that we had caught it just in time. Cllr. Hazzard asked if the Council could arrange to get the bell working again whilst the scaffolding was in place but Cllr. Hill said that it was not necessary to use the scaffolding to access the bell.

c) Casual Vacancy (Minute No. 24a) – the Clerk explained that she had declared the vacancy to Wiltshire Council who had sent out a notice which had been posted on the noticeboard and in the post office window, giving parishioners the opportunity to request an election. If, by 5th June, 10 parishioners have demanded an election then we will have to hold an election rather than filling the vacancy by co-option. If we do not need to hold an election then, after 5th June, the Clerk will put up notices to say that the Town Council will be filling the vacancy by co-option at the next Town Council meeting and will invite those interested in becoming a Town Councillor to submit an expression of interest and a personal statement that can be distributed to councillors.

d) Adoption of road at Downside Close (see Minute 261f) – the Clerk confirmed that she had received no further update or information from Wiltshire Council on the progress of adoption.

30. Matters Arising from Annual Parish Meeting

a) Mere First School Building, Dark Lane – breach in conditions of sale –The Chairman said that this matter had been brought up at the Annual Parish Meeting when Mrs. Adrienne Howell had suggested that the property may be in breach of the sale contract due to covenants attached to it. Cllr. Jeans said that he had spoken to John Price, the Senior Estates Officer at Wiltshire Council who had suggested that we would need to go to the Land Registry and get the detailed title register for the property. RESOLVED that the Town Council should pay the Land Registry for a detailed copy of the title register of the property on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Syonds and carried with a unanimous vote.

31. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – The police representatives had sent their apologies for not being able to attend the meeting but had passed on copies of the June Neighbourhood Police Team newsletter for distribution. Cllr. Sims said that there had been a number of non-residential break-ins in the area.

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

32. 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: 15/03908/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Proposed replacement garage and utility room with storage over

At: Burnside, Mill Lane, Mere. BA12 6DA

RESOLVED on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Sims, that the above application should be recommended for approval subject to the condition that the garage and utility room which is the subject of this application shall remain as permanent ancillary accommodation to the principal dwelling (Burnside, Mill Lane) and shall be occupied only by persons of the same household. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting.

Application Ref: 15/04297/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: 2 storey rear extension, single storey front porch and alterations to dormer window roofs
At: Kingsbrook Lodge, Shaftesbury Road, Mere. BA12 6BJ

RESOLVED on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, that the above application should be recommended for approval. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting.

The Clerk confirmed that another planning application for a single storey extension to north elevation at 13 Southbrook Gardens, Mere, had been received since the agenda had been circulated and that the consultation deadline was 23rd June which would end before the next Council meeting. Members agreed that they would like to ask for a deferment so that this application could be considered at the next Town Council meeting.

The Clerk also informed members that the planning authority had received a Prior Notification for Change of use of agricultural building and land within its curtilage to 1 new dwelling at Dutch Barn at Church Farm, Wet Lane, Mere. The Clerk explained that the Planning Authority would not consult the Town Council on this application unless it was deemed that planning permission was required. However, members of the public could make comment on the Prior Notification – the reference number being 15/04591/PNCOU

b) Planning Application 14/10556/FUL for a Romany Gypsy pitch and associated works at Mapperton Hill, Mere – The Chairman reported that he and Cllr. Mrs. Traves had attended the Strategic Planning Meeting at Trowbridge on 29th May. Cllr. Mrs. Traves had spoken as Chairman of the Parish Council and he had read out a comprehensive report on behalf of Wiltshire Cllr. George Jeans. The Committee had decided to defer a decision until they have made a site visit. The Planning Officer is recommending approval of the application. We await notification of a further strategic planning meeting.

33. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults:

The following issues were identified/reported:

- Cllr. Jeans reported that at Jack Paul Close there is a piece of land that the Housing Association says is Highways but is not being cut.
- Castle Street – road surface is poor.
- Boar Street (opposite United Reformed Church) – very deep pothole.

b) Recording accidents – Cllr. R. Sims said that he had asked for this to be raised as an agenda item because the police had wondered whether it was worth recording minor scrapes, should they be reported. The Chairman and Clerk reminded members that back in September 2013 the Community Area Transport Group had requested that Parish Councils begin to keep a record of all accidents resulting in damage to property or vehicles they are aware of in their parish as other data available (stats collected by the emergency services) only draws on accidents or collisions which have resulted in personal injury. However, at the time, the Parish Council felt that they could not support this as it would be too time-consuming and onerous to add it to the Parish Council's administration. Members agreed and felt that they were not in a position to support this suggestion.

c) Proposed Diversion of Footpath No. 39, Mere – Having declared a pecuniary interest in this matter, Cllr. E. Mitchell left the room whilst this item was discussed. The Clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Council had received an application, dated 28 February 2014, to divert Footpath No. 39 Mere, under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980. The Rights of Way Officer said that 'the landowner has applied for the diversion to remove the footpath

from the yard so that a locked gate can be installed to improve security. The proposed diversion will provide a more pleasant walk for the public with superior views and would no longer require access through a dirty yard. The diversion route will have a recorded width of 2 metres.’ Wiltshire Council would like our observations regarding this application by 29th June. Cllr. Jordan said that he had looked at this some time ago and noted that it had taken Wiltshire Council over a year to process this application. Cllr. Jordan said that he thought the diversion would be a definite improvement and agreed that it would make for a more pleasant walk.

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the proposed diversion of Footpath No. 39, as shown on the plans provided, on proposal made by Cllr. Jordan, seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried with a unanimous vote.

34. Buildings, Open Spaces, Play Areas, Sports Grounds, Allotments & Cemeteries

a) Issues with hedge and possible damage to property at Homefield – the Clerk explained that some years ago, at residents request, the Parish Council had agreed to allow the hedge at the back of one of the properties at Homefield, to grow higher in order to preserve the residents privacy in his garden. However, following a change of property ownership, the new owner had requested that the hedge, which had now become trees, be cut down to the same height as the surrounding hedge in order for him to maintain his garage guttering, wall and fencing– this our grounds staff would be doing. However, when we visited the resident, he also raised the question of rising damp in his garage that he felt could be caused by the hedge plants being thick and growing close to his garage or it could be caused by leaking or blocked guttering. The resident had said that once he was able to inspect the guttering, he would ask a professional what is causing the damp and what treatment would be required.

b) Issues with fence and hedges adjacent to cemetery and Clerks suggestion to remove spoil and clear area – The Clerk said that she had received a request, from the new owner of Breezlands, Pettridge Lane – to repair the cemetery fence at the back of their property and also to do something about the tall weeds that are growing on top of the spoil heaps and over the wall of their garden. The Chairman said that he had visited the site with John Jordan and the grounds staff who felt that the fence was repairable and the grounds staff were confident that the repairs could be done ‘in house’. As for removing the spoil heaps, there were various ideas but the Chairman asked for this matter to be deferred until the next meeting so that he could consult further. RESOLVED to repair the fence ‘in house’ up to a limit of expenditure of £500 on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote. It was also RESOLVED that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be delegated authority to make a decision on the spoil heaps.

c) Mere Swimming Pool – Cllr. Mrs. Hurd explained that she had asked for this to be raised on the agenda because she was aware that nothing had happened to the swimming pool or the site. Cllr. Jeans said that he would be happy to see something done with it but would like the Council to agree that, if practical, we do something that would not involve filling in the pool completely. Cllr. Hughes said that if it wasn’t filled in completely, it would build up with stagnant water and lead to all sorts of problems. Cllr. Hazzard said that it would be nice to know if the school had any ideas for potential uses of the site. Cllr. Jeans added that anything put there should respect the fact that it is a Second World War memorial. Cllr. Mrs Traves said that this hadn’t been respected in the last 5 years as the site is an absolute eyesore. Cllr. Jordan suggested that a working group be formed to come up with some suggestions. It was agreed that Cllrs. Beale, Cassidy and Jordan would form a working group and report back on suggestions & ideas to the Town Council.

35. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedule attached on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward and seconded by Cllr. Sims.

b) Skate Park – Capital Spending/Asset Register – The Clerk pointed out that the Skate Park was paid for jointly by the Parish Council and by the Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity. However, because the skate park was within the Recreation Ground, the asset should be within the Recreation Ground’s asset register and not the Town Council’s. RESOLVED that the skate park should be transferred to the asset register

of the Charity on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

c) To approve Budget/Expenditure Report for financial year ending 31.3.15 (report attached) – RESOLVED to approve the Budget/Expenditure report and summaries for the financial year ending 31.3.15.

d) Internal Audit Report – the Clerk read out the Internal Auditor’s report as written by Mr. John Wilson: “I have carried out a final internal audit of the Mere Parish Council Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2015. In my opinion the Council has maintained proper accounting records and the financial statements have been properly prepared. There are no matters which require special comment. I would like to acknowledge the assistance I have received from the Clerk, Lindsey Wood. As always she makes this task easier by having everything ready to hand and in such good order.’ Members expressed their gratitude to Mr. Wilson for carrying out the internal audit, which was his last as internal auditor. The Clerk confirmed that the Internal Auditor had completed section 4 of the Annual Return and had been able to answer ‘YES’ to all questions.

e) To approve accounts & supporting statements and to verify bank reconciliation for the year ending 31.3.15 (attached) – It was RESOLVED to approve the accounts and supporting statements as previously distributed

f) To complete and sign Annual Return for the year ending 31.3.15 – From the information provided in Minute 35c) to e) above, the Accounting Statements 1-11 were completed and approved by the Parish Council. Points 1 – 9 of the Annual Governance Statement were read out to members. Members answered yes to each of the statements. Sections 1 & 2 of the Audit Commission’s Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2015 were signed by the Clerk and by the Chairman in the presence of the Parish Council.

g) To note public rights to inspect accounts - the Clerk informed members that a notice had been placed on the noticeboard on 8th May, informing the public of their rights to inspect and make copies of the accounts and that all documents would be available, on reasonable notice, from 22nd May to 19th June. Local Government Electors and their representatives also had rights to question the external auditor about the accounts.

36. General Items

Wiltshire Council’s current consultations:

- a) Wiltshire’s Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy (Consultation closes 1.7.15)
- b) Gambling Policy (Consultation closes 10.8.15)

37. Forthcoming meetings

a) South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting – 3rd June 2015 at Dinton Village Hall (2.30 – 3.45 p.m. – Themed Event focusing on Older People). Area Board meeting starts at 3.45 p.m.

Cllr. Jordan said that he intended to attend the Area Board meeting but may be late.

b) Mere & District Linkscheme AGM, Friday 19th June, Grove Building 7pm for 7.30 p.m. – the Clerk reminded members about the Linkscheme AGM.

*Further information on these items in Clerks Report

Note: Members are reminded that the Town 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.

MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No. 1093497

a) Dogs in the Recreation Ground – Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that she had asked for this to be discussed again as she was unaware whether or not the issue of dog fouling in the recreation ground was still a problem. The Clerk & Cllr. Jeans both confirmed that, although this matter would probably always be a problem, there had not been quite so many complaints in recent months. There had, however, been complaints relating to dogs being allowed/encouraged into the children's play area which staff were currently monitoring.

b) Maintenance charges of the Recreation Ground for 2014/15 and approve payment (£10,108.80) - RESOLVED
to approve invoice from Mere Parish Council for Maintenance charges of the Recreation Ground for 2014/15 and approve payment (£10,108.80) on proposal made by Mrs. L. Traves, seconded by Mrs. J. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote in favour.

c) Disconnection of water supply to old Rutter Pavilion - the Clerk confirmed that she had contacted Wessex Water regarding the connection of the water supply to the old Rutter Pavilion as the Charity had been paying in the region of £80 per year for water & sewerage charges, including standing charges on a connected meter supply to the old Rutter Pavilion, even though the building had been demolished. Wessex Water had written to explain that if the Charity wanted to consider disconnection, there were two options:

- Permanent disconnection of supply: Requests for a permanent disconnection must be made in writing. In most cases they are free of charge, but there could be substantial reconnection costs if a supply is required in the future.
- Temporary turn off of supplies: If you would like the supply to be temporarily turned off, Wessex Water will do so free of charge. Subsequent restoration of supply will incur a fee. If you choose to have either a temporary or permanent disconnection we will remove all future charges.

RESOLVED to apply for a temporary disconnection on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward.

d) Payment - RESOLVED to approve the following payment:

Wessex Water – water supply & sewerage charges for Old Rutter Pavilion - £40.80

Meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

Schedule of payments for Parish Council meeting 1.6.15

E. G. Coles	Parts for Kubota tractor	144.78
Eon energy	Electricity for public toilets	56.06 (Paid by DD 27.5.15)
Cash	Travel expenses + photo ID for training for groundsmen	29.20
Sydenhams	Sundries for youth club, changing rooms & mowers	19.63
Rochford Garden Machinery	Blade for mower & guard set	113.10
Scats	Weedkiller	19.97
TF Builders Ltd	6Yrd Builders Skip for Wellhead Allotments	216.00
Farnfields Solicitors	Fees for third party solicitors for transfer of The Cabin, White Road	1500.00
Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity	Donation	10250.00
Seeds4Success	S.137 Donation	450.00
Mere & District Linkscheme	S.137 Donation	350.00
Mere Matters	S.137 Donation	600.00
Wiltshire Good Neighbours	S.137 Donation	100.00
1 st Mere Brownies	S.137 Donation in lieu of flag raising	75.00
Broker Network Ltd	Insurance	3617.18
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil for May	235.29
Jeans	PAT testing, replacing broken heater in Youth Club and adjusting timer on MUGA Cleaning of mopheads & 1 box of washers	557.88 28.63
Wessex	Supply 5L drum of Showerhead Plus	23.40
Imprest Account – cheques 3062 - 3069	PAYE, Wages, Petty Cash & Pension	
Lyreco Ltd	Office supplies/stationery	60.73