

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 2nd November 2015 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Cllrs Brett Norris (Chairman), John Jordan (Vice-Chairman), N. Beale, M. Cassidy, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, R. Parsons, R. Sims, Mrs. L. Traves

Also: Mrs. A. Harris, Mrs. A. Beall, Mr. & Mrs. Layard, R. Morris, Lt. Cdr. Broach & other residents of Downside Close, R. Flower, D. Stone & R. Stone.

Police Sgt. Peter Sparrow, PC Charlotte Chilton

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).

Meeting convened at 7.31 p.m. with Public Session

Annie Harris from Water Street said that the sunken drain hole cover in Water Street had still not been repaired. She also raised concerns about the Children's Centre Consultation and the possible loss of another facility in Mere.

Mr. Morris of 47 Downside Close said that it would be very helpful if the Town Council could help us find out if the Section 106 could be transferred to the property owners. He also wondered if there was any further news on a firm date for the roads and street lighting as the lack of street lighting was causing a hazard. He also said that there had been recent problems with dog fouling on the communal areas of Downside Close and said that he wanted to put up a CCCTV camera in his back garden to see if he could find out who was not cleaning up after their dog.

Lt. Cdr. Broach of 49 Downside Close said that he had moved in a year ago and was unaware of any of the problems that blight this estate. He was not aware that the developer had gone into liquidation and not aware that the directors had taken on the management company. He was very concerned that the developer was able to build a wall without planning permission from Wiltshire Council. The liquidator also removed the Parent Title of the S.106 land which has subsequently been filed with the Land Registry. We are required to sign to say that we will pay management charges on a six monthly basis and in Section 2 of the agreement it says that the management company will perform the work to the Council's standards. If the Council came around to inspect these areas they would see that they were not up to standard. Since my arrival on the estate I have never seen any maintenance being done by the management company and as a result of that I am not prepared to pay charges and as a result of that I have been summoned to court.

It was clarified that residents paid £74 per six months or £156 per year and that no court date had yet been set. Cllr. Hazzard said that young cattle were bothering & chasing people that walk along the public footpath that runs through the field adjacent to his property and wondered if anyone knew if there were any restrictions on the types of cattle that should be kept in fields with public footpaths. Cllr. Mitchell said that there were no legal restrictions.

Cllr. Parsons said that a week ago a gentleman passed away after suffering a heart attack outside Mere Co-Op. Members of the public were very helpful but could not revive him. What is worrying is that all the firemen from Mere Fire Station were in the station and never got called to attend as first responders.

Mrs. Layard from 21 Downside Close reiterated the various problems with the Downside Close development, clarified the management fees payable (Freehold owners of flats with car ports pay £235 p.a., Affordable flat owners pay £500 p.a. with £100 ground rent). She also spoke of the resident's aspiration to submit a S.106A application to discharge or modify the liability so that responsibilities of some of the management company's assets could be transferred to the residents.

Apologies for absence received from Councillors P. Coward, Mrs. K. Symonds & PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky

68. 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. C. Hazzard declared a pecuniary interest in finance (Minute No. 76a)
- Cllr. G. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in finance (Minute No. 76a)

69. Minutes – RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2015 be approved and adopted as a correct record of proceedings on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 5.10.15

***70. Policing in Mere & the new Community Policing Model** – presentation by Sgt. Pete Sparrow, Community Policing Team Sector Deputy (Trowbridge & Warminster Sectors)

Sgt Pete Sparrow said that a new model was being trailed on how we should be able to provide an affordable policing presence in Wiltshire. Mere has traditionally been covered by a PC and a PCSO and response from Salisbury and although Mere is one of the safest parts of the county, the response times are one of the worse. The new Community Policing Team will be based out of Trowbridge and Warminster and will patrol these towns along with Mere, Tisbury, Westbury and Bradford on Avon. We have already noticed that response times are reducing. We have removed the position of Community Beat Manager and the role and responsibility has now passed to the PCSO who is best placed to be the link between the community and he can direct beat officers as to where police should be focusing their patrols. Attached to the Community Policing Team are CID and local investigators who are civilian and have been previously working out of Melksham interviewing offenders. local investigators who are civilian and CID. PC Charlotte Chilton (Charlie) will be the Community Co-ordinator for Westbury, Warminster & Mere and will also co-ordinate events.

Cllr. Mrs. Hurd felt that a lot of the police work was almost social work because they get to know the families and absorb a lot of local knowledge and she was concerned that this new way of working would not absorb that local knowledge.

Sgt. Sparrow said that the PCSO should still have a lot of local knowledge and he is the officer that would have the time to deal with and talk to people

Cllr. Jordan said that he was concerned that our PCSO now has to spend a large part of his working day in Warminster being briefed. Sgt. Sparrow said that PCSO Peter does start his duty with a briefing with the team at Warminster but if he was to stay in Mere he would need to have a dedicated vehicle just for his use which is not financially viable.

Cllr. John Jordan asked about dog fouling problems but Sgt. Sparrow explained that this is not a police problem but should be dealt with through the Environmental Health Department of the local council. He also said that we would have a dedicated dog warden for the south of the county.

Cllr. Jeans said that he understood the fact that there was no money and said that PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky was absolutely brilliant. However, Cllr. Jeans expressed his concerns for the future of Mere Police Station and said that its retention was absolutely essential and that Wiltshire Council paid for the police station to be attached to the Fire Station because we were not going to get a campus in Mere. He wondered if Sgt. Sparrow knew of any plans for the future of the Mere Police Station. Sgt. Sparrow said that he had not heard not been any party to any conversation about the future of the police station in Mere. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that if there was any threat of the Mere Police Station closing then the Town Council should be the first to know.

The Chairman asked if Sgt. Sparrow could confirm what the response times to a 999 call in Mere were. Sgt. Sparrow said that they should be within 20 minutes but had been out side that time. Since the new Community Policing Team project, however, the 20 minute targets had been met.

71. Matters Arising

a) Problems with badgers (Public Session meeting 5.10.15) – The Chairman reminded members that Mr. Vernon Philips reported that his boundary fence had been broken by badgers and invited the Council to undertake a survey to find out how bad the problem is in Mere. Mr. Philips understood that badgers were protected by law under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. As this is the first badger problem that has been brought to the attention of the Town Council, I feel that undertaking a survey at this time would be a waste of Town Council resources. However, his request has been Minuted for future reference. Also, there is

comprehensive guidance on how to stop badgers entering your garden with suitable fencing from the Badger Trust and/or the Wiltshire Badger Group. It was unanimously agreed to take no further action on this matter.

***b) Adoption of road at Downside Close (see Minute 60a) + correspondence from residents** – The Clerk reported on the latest update received from Wiltshire Council, dated 28th October, confirming that the estimated costs of the necessary works had been sent to the bondsman. The bondsman’s engineers are currently assessing the cost and, if agreed, a cheque will be sent to Wiltshire Council. Once Wiltshire Council have the money from the Bondsman they can place an order for the work to be undertaken. With reference to the information circulated to members, as submitted by the residents, the Chairman said that it was probably about a year ago when this matter started appearing regularly on the Parish/Town Council agendas. ‘Since that time we have been making representations to Wiltshire Council to take steps to bring the road, pavements and street lighting up to an acceptable standard. We are writing letters, sending emails and making telephone calls on a monthly basis to get updates and to ensure that the matter does not become ignored or neglected. We sought advice from Wiltshire Council’s legal services last year and received a comprehensive legal report in January this year which was distributed to a number of residents along Downside Close. As a Town Council we have very limited powers and resources, but, in so far as we may be able to act within our legal restraints, statutory powers and limited resources, we would very much like to help and support the residents in addressing these complicated and complex issues. The problem is that we are regularly receiving correspondence relating to this development, some of is voluminous and extremely involved and I find it very hard to determine exactly what it is that the residents expect of us. I would like to propose that we ask the residents to provide us with ONE A4 sheet of paper with bullet points setting out exactly what they would like us to do.’ Members unanimously agreed with the Chairman’s proposal.

c) Yew arches in Cemetery (see Minute 60c) – The Chairman reported that the lab diagnosis has come back concerning the infected yew tree in the cemetery and has isolated a pathogen called *Cryptocline Taxicola*. Chris Hill from the Animal & Plant Health Agency stated: ‘this is not a notifiable disease or something that he can give advice on. A quick research shows it affects Yew Trees around Europe. There doesn’t appear to be much around for control but this could be worth following up with your grounds people or an agronomist.’ My own investigation of the treatment of this condition requires removing the affected leaves and branches and spraying the remainder with fungicide - (Dithane M45). As all of the tree is infected I believe that a controlled removal of the tree is our only option. Also treating the yew trees adjacent to the infected tree would be required. Although Mr. Hill could not give official advice, he did steer me in this direction. The Chairman therefore suggested that the yew tree is carefully cut down and bagged up and removed from site. Any branches of the surrounding yew trees showing similar signs of the infection are cut out and bagged up. As a precautionary measure the soil around the infected tree is also removed and replaced. In the early spring the yew trees around the infected yew tree are treated with fungicide. A new yew tree is planted after at least twelve months providing the pathogen has not spread. Cllr. Jordan seconded this proposal which was carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

d) Proposed bungalow development in Bramley Hill, Mere (see Minute 62b) – the Clerk informed members that Wiltshire Council would be holding a drop-in public consultation event on Tuesday, 17th November for local residents to view the proposals for the Bramley Hill garage site. The event will be held in the Grove Buildings from 5 – 7 p.m. Town Councillors are, of course, most welcome to attend the event. Letters have been sent out to those residents who rent a garage in the affected block (garage nos. 1-17 Bramley Hill) notifying them of the council’s proposals. Further letters will be sent out to all residents of Bramley Hill and some householders from the adjacent development in Homefield and Underhill, who live close to the site, will also be invited.

Cllr. R. Parsons left meeting

***e) Shaping the future of children’s centres in Wiltshire – Wiltshire council’s Children’s Centre Consultation Document (see Minute 66a)** – The Chairman summarised his reported that had been distributed with the agenda papers: ‘Wiltshire Council is conducting a consultation on the future of the children’s centres in the

county. Mere area is ranked as being the 4th most deprived in the county, Tisbury being ranked as 13th. At a meeting held on 9th October, the area manager of the children's centre and health officials stated that keeping the children's centre in Mere open was their preferred option. The children's centre consultation questionnaire is designed for individual's responses. However, does the Town Council wish to write a letter supporting the need to keep the children's centre open in Mere?' RESOLVED that the Town Council should write a letter urging Wiltshire Council to retain the dedicated Children's Centre building in Mere on proposal made by Cllr. Jordan, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote. Cllr. Jordan also commended the Chairman for attending the various meetings and obtaining such an amount of information.

72. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – Cllr. Sims reported that there had been minor road traffic accidents on the Gillingham Road.

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – Cllr. Jeans reported that he had attended a CATG meeting this afternoon. Cllr. Jordan asked Cllr. Jeans what he thought about Wiltshire Council selling all their Children's Health Services to Virgin Health. 'Richard Branson says he's going to make 5% profit. As a town councillor I am a bit worried because we are all appalled at the highway contract and concerned that the same could be happening again.' Cllr. Jeans said that he specialised in planning & the youth and he was not aware of this although he did say that a lot of deals were completed behind closed doors, especially when it came to competitive tendering. He did say, however, that he would look into the matter and see if he could provide more details for his next report.

73. 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: 15/10167/TCA Work to Trees in Cons. Area

Proposal: Goat Willow tree – re-pollard

At: The Hurdles, Water Street, Mere. BA12 6DZ

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

Application Ref: 15/10162/TCA Work to Trees in Cons. Area

Proposal: Large Conifer – Fell

At: 3 Spring Terrace, The Fields, Mere. BA12 6EF

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

74. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

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

- Sunken drain in Water Street

b) Road Closure for Remembrance Service Parade & signs for future road closures – the Clerk informed members that on 6th October she became aware that there may not be enough police presence to assist with the road closure for the Remembrance Day Service and Sgt. Pete Sparrow said that he would have to push this back to us to take ownership. He recommended that we have an official road closure order rather than just rely on goodwill. On 8th October the Clerk submitted the forms for an official road closure from 10.57 a.m. until 11.07 a.m. in The Square. The Town Clerk had completed a Risk Assessment form to accompany the road closure application and completed a consultation letter which was distributed to a number of householders and businesses in The Square. The Area Highway Engineer had said that we would need to provide advance warning notices and diversion signs (even for a 10 minute closure). Wiltshire Council could not provide the

signs free of charge to parishes for events any longer. However, we had managed to borrow the necessary signage from the Mere depot, as arranged by our local area highway co-ordinator. On 20th October it was confirmed that our Road Closure Order had been approved. Our grounds staff had agreed to come in to work on Sunday, 8th November in order to marshal the road closures.

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

***a) Mere Swimming Pool site – report and suggestions for future use from working group** – with reference to the draft proposals, distributed by the working group, Cllr. Jordan proposed that the Working Group be authorised to investigate this further, obtain prices, investigate funding options etc. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd seconded proposal which was carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

b) Request from Mere Museum for headstone for Frederick Holmes – Having helped the Mere Museum identify the grave of Frederick & Annie Holmes (the Mere photographer), the Clerk informed members that Mere Museum had done some fundraising & located a Cornish granite headstone, the cost of which looks do-able. The Museum was therefore enquiring about the cemetery fees in relation to the installation of this headstone. RESOLVED that the Town Council should waive fee in recognition of the importance of the work that Frederick Holmes did for Mere.

76. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments – Cllr. Jeans & Cllr. Hazzard, having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, left the room whilst the matter was being discussed and voted upon. RESOLVED to approve the payments as set out in the payment schedule.

b) To approve Budget/Expenditure report at 30.9.15 – members approved the budget/expenditure report and noted the comments made by the Clerk:

This budget/expenditure report for the period ending 30.9.15 shows a small surplus of £1200 rather than the shortfall of £2400 as shown in the last quarter report. The savings we have made are as follows:

- £400 on audit fee
- £200 on flag donation
- £233 electricity meter disconnection fee for Band Hut refunded
- £300 refunded from W. Water for standing charge made over 3 years that should not have been made on meter in Recreation Ground
- 75% of predicted annual cemetery income received in 6 months

c) To set date, membership & venue for Annual Budget Meeting: It was agreed that the Annual Budget Meeting would provisionally be set for 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 2nd December in the Town Council office and that the attendees would be: Chairman, Vice-Chairman + Cllrs. C. Hazzard, N. Beale, M. Cassidy, Mrs. Traves, E. Mitchell, R. Hill G. Jeans & P. Coward (if possible). It was agreed that the Clerk would send round an email to those councillors to see if the date was convenient to most.

d) Xmas lighting – The Clerk reported that the following had been actioned:

- Unmetered Connection Agreement completed and sent to SSE by email 20/10.15. No acknowledgement to date, flagged to follow up mid November.
- Balfour Beatty contacted by email 14.10.15 to request connection. Jasbir Sanghera to carry out connection in consultation with George Jeans. Date to be agreed. Flagged to follow up mid-November.
- SL3 form completed and sent by email 20.10.15 to Atkins Global with copies to Wiltshire Council, requesting permission to illuminate the tree in The Square. Copies of risk assessment and evidence of Town Council's public liability insurance cover sent. Atkins confirmed approval by email 26.10.15
- Town Council's insurers contacted to check that they are happy with installation of Christmas lighting on same basis as previous year. Came & Co confirmed by email 29.9.15 that insurers' requirements remain unchanged.
- Grounds staff checked all lighting. One braid for clock tower is not working and new lighting required for clock tower guttering. Ordered replacement braid and icicle lighting to hang from guttering. Delivery received.
- Risk assessment updated to include installation & illumination of icicle lighting on Clock Tower.
- Erection of xmas lighting to be co-ordinated & arranged. Xmas lighting switch on Friday, 4th December at 6.00 p.m.

Councillors agreed that the Town Council should hire a cherry picker from Sydenhams Hire Centre in order to erect the xmas lights and Cllr. Hazzard kindly agreed to provide some manual help for the erection/installation of the lighting.

77. General Items

a) Report on Wiltshire Council's Public Meeting to set out challenges ahead – The Clerk reported that she and Cllr. Jeans had attended the meeting in Salisbury Guildhall. The crux of the meeting, Chaired by Cllr. Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, was explaining how Wiltshire Council would be facing further hardship with further government cuts. There seemed to be a general readiness from Wiltshire Council officials towards Parish & Town Councils taking on further service delegation or asset transfers and towards Parish & Town Councils increasing their precepts.

***b) Is there any interest in a substantial devolution of assets and/or services to the Town Council? Letter from Cllr. Dick Tonge, Wiltshire Council** – RESOLVED not to express any interest in the devolution of assets and services at this particular time but to await, with interest, news of the experiences and lessons learnt in Salisbury and other towns and parishes.

***c) Wiltshire Council's Grass Cutting Arrangements 2016 – are there any areas of Wiltshire land that we would be interested in transferring to our responsibility?** (See attached Co-Ordinators Newsletter) – The newsletter asked for town & parish council comments on whether there are any areas of Wiltshire land that they would be interested in transferring to their responsibility. This could be achieved through asset transfers and service delegation. Alternatively, parish or town councils may wish to enhance the provision of service from Wiltshire Council through the use of voluntary groups or making payments direct to Wiltshire Council's contractor for enhanced levels of service. The Chairman said that he would like the Town Council to take on responsibility for all the grass cutting throughout the town but he was aware that Wiltshire Council would not be offering any financial assistance for this service delegation so this option was not financially viable. Cllr. Jeans felt that the Town Council might like to consider taking on grass cutting for the footpath from the Cemetery to Edgebridge and also Burton Path and also a small area of grass at the end of Springfield Road as these were areas that were often complained about. It was agreed that the grounds staff should be asked to assess whether or not they would be able to take on any extra responsibilities within their existing time/machinery resources and to discuss this further at the Annual Budget meeting. Cllr. Jordan said that whoever has taken over from Balfour Beatty appears to be doing a much better job.

78. Forthcoming meetings/events

a) Emergency Planning Workshop for local town and parish councils – Monday, 23rd November from 5.30 to 8.00 p.m. at Dinton Village Hall – the Chairman said he would try to attend this meeting.

***b) Wiltshire Association of Local Councils, Annual General Meeting** on Wednesday, 4th November 2015 at 6.00 p.m. in Stanley Park Sports Club, Stanley Lane, Chippenham

Meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

*Further information on these items attached or 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.

Payment Schedule for meeting 2.11.15

Mainstream Digital	Telephone – call charges + quarterly rental	53.58 – Pd. DD 14.10.15
Mainstream Digital	Broadband 17.9.15 – 16.12.15	57.60 – Pd. DD 14.10.15
Wessex Water	Water supply to Jack Paul Close allotments 20.3.15 – 14.9.15	123.14
Wessex Water	Water supply to Wellhead allotments 20.3.15 – 11.9.15	66.37
Wessex Water	Water supply to Trough at Long Hill 18.3.15 – 10.9.15	14.15
Wessex Water	Water supply to new cemetery 19.3.15 – 11.9.15	42.46
Farnfields Solicitors	Final payment for completion of transfer of Horticultural Cabin	931.00
I. V. & S. M. Thomas	Hedge trimming 7.10.14 & 27.2.15	180.00
CPRE	Annual membership subscription	36.00
Sydenhams	Shackles, nuts, screws & woodfiller & timber (Play Equipment repairs)	16.72 + £25.57 + 27.34
Eon Energy	Electricity supply for public toilets 10.9.15 – 30.9.15	30.12 Pd. DD 27.10.15
Cash Reimbursement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Toilets – Toilet & Drain pipe unblocker (purchased from Ebay) • DVLA – vehicle tax for Mitsubishi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29.97 • 140.00
Mere School	Electricity for swimming pool 16.7.15 – 21.10.15	11.07
Mere School	Electricity for changing rooms & office 16.7.15 – 21.10.15	109.76
Mere School	Gas for changing rooms 16.7.15 – 21.10.15	179.27
Mere School	Water for changing rooms 16.7.15 – 21.10.15	83.75
North Street Nurseries	Autumn planting for tubs & flower beds	900.00
Blachere Illumination	Replacement braid for Clock Tower & icicle lights for Clock Tower	452.40
Greenflow	Battery pack & service of urinals in public toilets	58.32
Jeans	Mop head cleaning for public toilets & sundries	40.93
Imprest Account – cheque Nos. 3104 - 3112	PAYE, Wages, Petty Cash & Pension	4925.43
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	192.17
Fenland Leisure Products Ltd	Spare parts & sundries for play equipment repairs	164.40

Hygiene Supplies Direct	Public Toilets – Sanitary bin liners	72.35
Rochford Garden Machinery Ltd	Strimmer sundries	34.99
Lyreco	Cleaning equipment & toilet rolls	70.74
Cash	Travel expenses to Wiltshire Council meeting in Salisbury Guildhall (Town Clerk)	20.00