

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 5th October 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, P. Coward, C. Hazzard, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, R. Parsons, R. Sims, Mrs. K. Symonds, Mrs. L. Traves

Also: R. Flower, R. Morris, V. Phillips, L. Stanton, D. Stone & R. Stone.

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).

Mr. Vernon Phillips who lives in Mere said he moved into his permanent address in April this year. He has a Jack Russell who is always escaping and so he had to have his perimeter stock proof fenced. However, every one of these boundaries has subsequently been broken by badgers. Mr. Phillips said that he understood that the law protected badgers but did not believe that they were generally liked, particularly when they caused damage to properties. He invited the Council to undertake a survey of how bad the problem is in Mere. The Chairman agreed that this matter would be discussed at the next meeting.

Dick Morris – ‘ I don’t know if any of you have been to see the gardening work that has been carried out at Downside Close, by the residents. It has been boarded and bark chipped and there are now two signs on no dog fouling, which so far seem to be having the desired effect. People who walk through and the bungalows at the top of the mound have all said how nice it looks. We are also weeding the path and road at the same time. The failure of the Management Company to do the work to Wiltshire Council standards, has as you know, resulted in residents being taken to court for non payment of charges. Would the council be prepared to give us a letter of recognition of what has been done, by the residents, to improve the appearance of the mound from a rubbish tip to its present state.’

The Clerk said that she had received an email from Mrs. Adrienne Howell asking her to remind members that the Mere Literary Festival in aid of the Linkscheme starts next week and it is hoped they will be able to support our local charity. MLF also extends an invitation to the Chair of the Town Council to attend the Award Ceremony on Sunday October 18th. 3pm. at The Lecture Hall.

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. R. Hill, R. Hughes & Mrs. Jane Hurd

58. 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. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 65a) (Finance)

59. Minutes – RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2015 be approved and adopted as a correct record of proceedings on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mitchell and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 7.9.15

60. Matters Arising

a) Adoption of road at Downside Close (see Minute 50a) – The Council agreed that they would be happy to write a letter to Mr. Morris to acknowledge how smart the open space or ‘mound’ in Downside Close looks and to congratulate the residents on their hard work. The Clerk stated that she had received an email from the Highway Development Control Manager at Wiltshire Council stating the following: ‘ I am pleased to inform you

that I am finally making some progress on this matter. After months of trying, unsuccessfully, to obtain a cost estimate from Balfour Beatty I had a meeting on site with another contractor last week. I now have estimates for all of the outstanding work which I will be passing on to the Bondsman. It appears that the Bond will be adequate to cover most, if not all of the work required. Once the Bondsman is in receipt of our estimates they have the option of choosing to undertake the works themselves or paying us the necessary costs up to the limit of the Bond. We have already notified the Bondsman of our intention to call in the Bond. Cllr. P. Coward asked why this was taking so long and the Clerk explained that when other new developments had been built locally at White Road and Kingsmere it had taken a long time to adopt the road because of problems (at White Road it was driveways and at Kingsmere it was drainage). However, in these cases the developers had been prepared to negotiate with the Highways Authority to address the problems and bring the road up to adoptable standard. In this particular instance, it would seem that the developer is not prepared to carry out any work although Wiltshire Council had spent a long time giving him the opportunity to do so. The Clerk also said that she had received an email, via Mr. Tony Layard, signed by 21 of the residents of Downside Close today with a request that it be provided to the Town Council members for their information tonight. However, the email was 11 pages long and the Clerk felt that it was not appropriate to distribute that amount of paperwork for members to digest either during the meeting or electronically (for those members that have email addresses) on the day before the meeting. Members agreed that this would have been inappropriate and asked the Clerk to distribute the information for the next meeting.

b) Traffic Management in Mere Town Centre - (see Minute 50c) – The Clerk confirmed that she had informed Wiltshire Council that the Town Council had approved the £1500 contribution towards the traffic management scheme for Mere, had asked if the funds needed to be submitted immediately and had asked for confirmation that this matter would now be progressed. She had received confirmation that the scheme had been added to the programme of works and that we would be informed when the waiting restrictions were to be advertised. Wiltshire Council had also confirmed that they would send us an invoice for the works once they had been completed. Members asked the Clerk to keep chasing this for progress reports.

c) Yew arches in Cemetery (see Minute 50d) – The Chairman reported: ‘On 21st September, Chris Hill from the animal and plant health agency made a site visit to the cemetery. Chris took samples from the distressed tree and two others. The samples were sent back to the laboratory for analysis. I spoke to Chris this morning and he informed me that the lab is still working on the samples so, hopefully, I should have an analysis report for you by the next meeting.’

d) Condition of boundary wall alongside Dark Lane (see Minute 53f) – the Clerk read out an email from Wiltshire Council’s Senior Building Control Surveyor dated 15.9.15: ‘I confirm that I visited the wall in question last week. In my opinion I didn’t consider the wall to be in a dangerous condition at the time of the visit. I trust this has answered your concern. However, if at any time of day or night you or any other person feels that the wall has deteriorated in any way that they consider it to be dangerous, please contact Wiltshire Council immediately.’ Members noted this information.

e) Policing in Mere (Public Session) – The Chairman said that following on from the report given in last month’s public session, he was concerned that Mere would be losing out on a PC and having to share a beat manager with Tisbury. He was also given to understand that our PCSO now had to attend Warminster Police Station before he could start any shifts in Mere. Members expressed their deep concerns about the loss of police staffing in Mere and agreed that the Town Council should ask the Police & Crime Commissioner, Angus McPherson, to attend a future Town Council meeting.

f) Waltons Antiques – building repairs (Public Session) – The Clerk reported that she had telephoned Waltons Antiques on 29.9.15 to ask if they had a progress update on repairs to the building. They said that there was a hold up because it was on the corner of the highway and it would be considered dangerous to work there with hoardings. Due to the number of large commercial & agricultural vehicles needing access around this corner, the contractors have insisted on traffic management with men rather than with traffic lights. Wiltshire Council

has asked for a certain company to be used which is likely to cost £16,000 per week and the insurance company is not happy about this. Waltons Antiques have, however, appointed contractors to come and paint the building and smarten it up which started today and they are hopeful that the building repair work will commence this year. The Clerk had offered the Town Council's help if required.

g) Report on meeting with football representatives (see Minute 54a & b) – The Clerk read out a report of a meeting held with football club representatives on Wednesday, 30th September (report attached). The Clerk further reported that since 30th September, there had now been a response from Andrew Guest, Area Development Manager (South) stating:

'Local Authorities have certain "permitted development" rights (that is, rights to carry out development without the need for a planning application) as defined in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order. By definition (as set out in the Order), Local Authorities include Parish Councils. The permitted development rights for Local Authorities allow them to do the following – The erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by a local authority or by an urban development corporation of –

(a) any small ancillary building, works or equipment on land belonging to or maintained by them required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land otherwise than as statutory undertakers

(The reference in Class A to any small ancillary building, works or equipment is a reference to any ancillary building, works or equipment not exceeding 4 metres in height or 200 cubic metres in capacity.) It follows that the Parish Council can erect small ancillary buildings without the need for a planning application. The key "test" relevant to your PC's current proposal is perhaps the requirement for the small ancillary building to be for "...the purpose of any function exercised by them..." on the land concerned. It follows that for the PC to exercise this PD right it would have to satisfy itself that the planned covered seating areas are related to the statutory functions of the Parish Council rather than to just provide a facility for a private football club. If the latter is the case then full planning permission is likely to be required from Wiltshire Council. Of course, the building size limitations would also apply in any event. I trust this advice is useful for your purposes. It comprises informal officer advice only based on the content of your email, and so is not binding on Wiltshire Council.'

The Chairman said that the football club did not require exclusive use of the covered seating areas and were happy for them to be used by the public as they were aware that the Recreation Ground was open to all and the general public may well want to use them as places of shelter etc. Therefore, members were satisfied that the covered seating areas were related to the statutory functions of the Parish Council rather than just providing a facility for a private football club. However, Cllr. Hazzard did point out that the submission of a planning application would provide public consultation. Cllr. Cassidy said that the proposed covered seating areas were not huge stadiums and were small structures and Cllr. P. Coward felt that, considering the size of the structures, it would be foolhardy to submit a planning application unless it was absolutely necessary as it would be a waste of resources. Members generally felt that the Town Council should use its permitted development rights but should conduct its own public consultation by publicising it in Mere Matters and putting up posters in the Recreation Ground and displaying the scaled location drawings etc. Cllr. Jeans suggested that once the scaled location plans were received it might be possible to get artists impression drawings from the artists studios on the Beaumonts Business Centre site.

61. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report - None

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report– Cllr. Jeans reported the following 'Wiltshire Council leader Jane Scott has been appointed as a Life Peer in the House of Lords and has confirmed she will continue as Wiltshire Council leader. We seem to be facing service cuts all the time and I don't know where it is going to end. Wiltshire Council is

ceasing to look after public toilets and has told the Town & Parish Councils that if they don't take them on they will be closed. All paddling pools in Wiltshire are being closed unless the towns take them on and all amenity planting areas are being grassed over.'

62. 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: 15/09635/TCA (Work to Trees in a Cons. Area)

Proposal: Beech tree – fell

At: The Beehive, 17 Castle Hill Crescent, Mere, BA12 6HL

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

Application Ref: 15/09471/FUL (Full Planning)

Proposal: Removal of existing concrete steps and replace with a new concrete ramp at 1:12 gradient

At: 51 Bramley Hill, Mere. BA12 6JX

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

b) Proposed bungalow development in Bramley Hill, Mere – consultation on initial sketch drawings

(attached) – The Clerk confirmed that she had received an email from Helen Taylor at Wiltshire Council's New Housing Team containing two initial sketch drawings showing the provision of two bungalows on the site of the garages adjacent to Bramley Hill (just off Homefield). Helen Taylor was keen to have the Town Council's initial comments on these so that their architect could consider these comments before finalising a revised set of drawings. The architect is keen to explore the possibility of achieving Passivhaus standard on this site and had advised that Option 1 would be a better layout to achieve that standard. However, their ability to achieve Passivhaus will be subject to costs and it may prove to be too expensive. Members were unanimous in their preference for the Option 1 layout as it fronts onto the road and is more in keeping with the surrounding area. Whilst members did not pass comment on any further details, they did say that they would be very interested to see further architects' drawings and would hope that the design and elevations would be in keeping with the buildings in the surrounding area. Helen Taylor had said, in her email, that she will need to arrange a public consultation event hopefully some time towards the end of October/early November when they have more detailed drawings and that all residents living in close proximity to the site will be invited, together with all residents who currently rent a garage on Bramley Hill. Town Councillors will be most welcome to come along to the event. Helen asked for suggested venues and members agreed that the meeting could be held in the Andy Young Pavilion if required. Members were unanimous in their preference for the Option 1 layout as it fronts onto the road and is more in keeping with the surrounding area. Whilst members did not pass comment on any further details, they did say that they would be very interested to see further architects' drawings and would hope that the design and elevations would be in keeping with the buildings in the surrounding area.

63. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults – the following jobs were identified/discussed:

- Grating sunk along Water Street down towards The Lynch (Cllr John Jordan)

- Drain on corner of The George towards Café is completely blocked (Cllr Bob Parsons)
- Deep potholes outside Park Corner Farm on the road towards West Knoyle (Cllr Philip Coward).
- Cllr. Jordan reported that the contractors had been out to repair the street light in Castle Hill Lane but the light was still being obstructed by the overgrown tree at the bottom of Landsdown – the Clerk reported that she had written to the property owner asking him to cut back this tree.
- Cllr. Parsons reported that the contractors had changed the bulbs to low energy bulbs around bus stops and traffic signs.
- Cllr. Jeans said that there was a street light being obstructed by foliage on the right hand side of the car park as it goes into Dark Lane. Also a further light on the right hand side of the car park (near the entrance to the new houses) which was being obstructed by foliage but this was probably a job for our own grounds staff.

b) Representation to MP to discuss the future of the rivers as requested by Mere Rivers Group – The Chairman stated that the Ashfield and upper reaches of the Shreen are in a very sorry state and many residents are rightfully concerned. Mere Rivers Group share this concern particularly as our previous success in recovering river flows resulted in increased activity of water voles, kingfisher and other wildlife. Unfortunately, all this has been undone by recent problems in the supply area which have had to be met from the Mere aquifer. Although it has not been a particularly dry summer these additional demands have resulted in the current state of Mere’s streams. Mere Rivers Group are concerned that it seems the Mere supply is used in every emergency in this area while rivers with fishing rights are protected. In the groups opinion this situation is unfair and unsustainable, particularly as the future expansion in Gillingham will result in extra demand on Mere water. Extraction from the Mere aquifer should not be at the cost of Mere’s chalk steams and their wildlife. Mere Rivers Group intends working with Wessex Water to remedy the situation and has asked me to speak to our MP outlining our concerns. As I am Chairman of the Town Council as well as a member of Mere River’s Group, I feel that I can only do this if I have the support of the Town Council.’ Members were happy to give the Chairman their full support of the Mere Rivers Group concerns and to speak to Dr. Andrew Murrison MP.

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

a) Report on Annual RoSPA Play Area Inspections – the Clerk confirmed that the Annual RoSPA Play Area Inspection had been carried out on all three play areas within the town. The inspection report had not identified any high risk or urgent matters but there were a number of more minor repairs and issues which the grounds staff were undertaking in order to reduce any risks.

65. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments – RESOLVED to approve the payments set out in payment schedule below on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote. Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room whilst this item was discussed/voted.

Mainstream Digital Ltd	Telephone call charges 30.7.15 – 27.8.15	9.00 – Pd. By DD 14.9.15
T. J. Young	Repairs to Husqvarna Ride-on	189.98
Eon	Electricity in public toilets 11.8.15 – 10.9.15	41.83 – Pd. By DD 24.9.15
R. H. King t/as Kings Courts	Refurbishment of tennis courts	4176.00
Mole Valley Farmers	Security chain, padlock + sundries & tools	90.30
Fenland Leisure Products Ltd	Play Area Repairs – Wetpour base coat & top coat	158.40
Jeans	Public Toilets – to replace tube & check fitting in ladies toilets (reported by MB 17.9.15)	50.00
Tincknell Fuels Ltd	Gas oil for grounds machinery	192.78

Southern Electric	Unmetered supply to clock tower	16.97
Wessex Water	Supply to public toilets 19.3.15 – 10.9.15	381.85
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	186.04
Lyreco Ltd	Public Toilets – cleaning products + stationery + ink toner cartridges	200.21
Playsafety Ltd	Annual RoSPA Play Area Inspections	262.80
Imprest Account – cheque Nos. 3095 - 3103	PAYE, Wages, Petty Cash & Pension	8333.96
Wessex Water	Water supply to trough at Southbrook Allotments	28.83
Mole Countrystores	Mesh Panel for Duchy Manor boiler room	4.26

66. General Items

a) *Shaping the future of children's centres in Wiltshire – Wiltshire Council's Children's Centre Consultation Document*

The Clerk explained that she had become aware of a consultation document on the future of children's centres in Wiltshire, this consultation had been brought to her attention by Cllr. Jordan, via Mere School, but there had been no direct communication on this. The Chairman explained that at present Wiltshire Council operates thirty children's centres around Wiltshire. The proposal put forward is to reduce the number of children's centres to fifteen. Where children's centre buildings are closed, services will be delivered by staff in the community through outreach support. Mere children's centre at Duchy Manor is one of the centres earmarked for closer. The nearest proposed children's centre to Mere will be the new campus building in Tisbury although it was proposed to offer an outreach service in Mere. The Chairman said that he would be attending meetings over the next week or two to discuss this and find out more information to present to the Council at the next meeting for formal discussion/response.

67. Forthcoming meetings

a) *South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting* – 6.30 p.m. Wednesday 7th October at Dinton Village Hall – the chairman said that he would be attending the Area Board meeting.

b) *Local Housing Panel Meeting* – Mere Lecture Hall – 14th October 10.30-12.00 & 16th October 19.00-20.30

c) *Wiltshire Council's Public meetings to set out challenges ahead* – the Clerk said that she would attend the meeting in Salisbury on 29.10.15

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm

*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) RESOLVED to approve the following payments:

R. H. King t/as Kings Courts	Refurbishment of tennis courts	4176.00
Wessex Water	Standing charge for meter to old cricket club	12.12