

# Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> September 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 (until 8.50 p.m.), E. Mitchell, R. Parsons, R. Sims, Mrs. K. Symonds, Mrs. L. Traves

**Also:** P. Down, R. Flower, P. Gatehouse, J. Howard, D. Morris, 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. Dick Morris from 47 Downside Close said that he was speaking on behalf of the Downside Close residents: 'We want to know what the hold up is on the road and pathways on the Downside Close Development. I am aware of two other estates in Wiltshire, one in Melksham and one in Tisbury, which have been finished and all roads surfaced since I moved into Downside Close. The developer left the road in an unfinished and unsafe state. We are still waiting for the Council to adopt the road and make it safe to drive and walk along. The raised ironworks cause the road to flood at the start of the Close. We have to rely on help from our parish council and from our unitary authorities. Who else can we turn to? We pay council tax and we are entitled to live in a safe and attractive development that received planning permission from these councils. I understand that the council hold a bond from the developer to undertake this task. What is the problem? Also, I expect you all know that the majority of the Downside Close development are not paying the maintenance charges as we are not getting value for money. In our deeds the management company is covenanted to do the work to the standard agreed by Wiltshire Council. As a result we have taken over the gardening ourselves. Oval is taking the non-payers to court, most of us being old age pensioners. We do not need the worry and stress this is causing. There is talk of us going to the press and TV to highlight the problem of the road etc. and to bring it to wider attention. This morning Oval Homes sent a man down to spray with weedkiller. He was spraying where sheep were grazing and did not know what he was spraying with and whether or not it would affect the sheep.'

Mr. Roy Sims informed those present that PC Richard Salter would no longer be the beat manager for Mere but would be taking up a new post within Wiltshire Police. Mrs. Hurd asked if the Council could write to Richard to thank him for all he has done for Mere.

Cllr. Hazzard asked if anyone knew what was happening regarding the damaged corner of the Waltons Antique Shop that occurred after a Road Traffic Accident many months ago. He said it had now been in this damaged condition for many months and that as it was in such a prominent position in the centre of The Square, it was an eyesore and not in keeping with the appearance we want for our town. The Clerk said that she understood that delays were due to problems involved with carrying out structural work on the edge of the highway and the criteria imposed by the Highways Authority.

The Clerk read out a letter from Mrs. Rosemary Churchill: 'I am sure of being one of many Mere residents who are enjoying the "Magnificent" baskets, tubs, large and small, which are giving such pleasure this summer with the variety of flowers & colours and with the careful watering and upkeep they must be having to keep them in such lovely shape. Hopefully, you can convey our appreciation to all concerned.'

The Clerk reported that one of Ballands Bowmen members, Marlene Toomer, has just won the International Field Archery Association World Bow Hunter Championships in Hungary.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllr. P. Coward.

## 48. 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.*

- L. Traves declared a personal interest in planning application 15/07270/FUL and a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 55a

- G. Jeans declared a personal interest in planning application 15/07270/FUL and a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 55a

**49. Minutes** – RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015 be approved and adopted as a correct record of proceedings on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Jordan and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 29.6.15

**50. Matters Arising**

**a) Adoption of road at Downside Close (see Minute 40b)** – The Clerk pointed out that the Town Council office had been persistently telephoning the officer contact at Wiltshire Council to seek updates on this matter. On 22<sup>nd</sup> July we were told that he was still awaiting costings from Balfour Beatty although he had confirmed that the specification was correct. On 13<sup>th</sup> August we telephoned again and were told that he was still waiting for costings from Balfour Beatty and he was thinking of contacting another contractor with a view to getting a quotation. Cllr. Jeans said that he had sent in an email asking why the bond had not been called in. Mr. Morris said that since the residents had received their Court Summons they had all been meeting on a regular basis and they were united in their views.

**b) Report on Clock Tower refurbishment work (see Minute 40c)** – The Clerk reported that the work had now been completed and that the total costs had been £15,075. The Cumbria Clock Company had been out to re-set the clock and the grounds staff were making the minor adjustments as it gained or lost time. The Clerk had received a report that the chiming mechanism was not working correctly in that the clock was chiming late at night but this now seemed to be working correctly.

**c) Traffic Management in Mere Town Centre - Report on CATG meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July and request for Mere Town Council to contribute £1500 towards new Traffic Management Scheme. (see Minute 40e)** – Cllr. Jordan expressed his disappointment at the outcome of the CATG meeting and reported that 3 schemes were supported at the meeting – one where a parish was asked to contribute 10%, another where the parish was asked to contribute 25% and the Mere scheme where we were asked to contribute 75%. He reported that Cllr. Tony Deane said that money was tight yet later he had deemed it necessary to award £20k to Tisbury for a building for their youth. Cllr. Jordan said that he had pointed out that the scheme was put forward to improve highway and pedestrian safety and expressed his disappointment that no other Wiltshire Councillors supported us. Cllr. Jeans said it is not that straightforward and pointed out that the CATG only had £17k for distribution whereas the Area Board which allocated the money for the Tisbury Youth Building had a separate budget. Cllr. Jeans said that he had warned all parishes last year that they would need to contribute more towards Area Board Grants. Another option would have been for the CATG to submit Mere's Traffic Management Plan as a substantive scheme for funding but this would take more time to prepare, would need more officers and councillors to approve the funding and would basically delay the process more. Given the fact that this scheme had been started two years ago and the recent Facebook campaign, Cllr. Jeans said that he felt Mere's need was more urgent. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that Mere Town Council should pay the £1500 contribution in order to get the scheme underway as soon as possible. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a unanimous vote. However, members wanted to express their unanimous view that the Town Council considers it has been treated most unfairly by the CATG in 'moving the goal posts' and changing the criteria at such a late stage in the process.

**d) Yew arches in Cemetery (see Minute 44b)** – Cllr. Hughes confirmed that he had been to look at the dead yew tree and he did not think it was diseased and his advice would be to dig it out, replace the soil and replant a yew tree (as large as we can buy) in the winter. The Chairman said that a family member of his had connections with the Animal and Plant Health Agency and was happy to arrange for a Plant Health & Seeds Inspector to come and take some samples of the yew tree and send them to the laboratory for investigation – this work would be carried out free of charge. RESOLVED that this option be gratefully accepted.

**e) Locking grounds at night (see Minute 44c)** – The Chairman reported that the Recreation Ground and Duchy Manor Gates were now being locked at night.

## **51. Reports & Consultations**

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** – There was no police present although the Clerk did distribute copies of the September Neighbourhood Police Team Newsletter.

**b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report** – Cllr. Jeans reported that the planning application for the Gypsy & Traveller Site at Mapperton had been approved with a number of conditions. Cllr. Jeans said that he felt he had no choice but to approve the application as he felt it would have been approved on Appeal and probably without any or many conditions attached. At least he did manage to get a number of conditions attached to the planning application which would make the site more respectable. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that she felt the final decision was political and said that although Cllr. Jeans had managed to get a number of conditions attached to the planning approval, she was concerned that the conditions needed to be adhered to and enforced. Cllr. Jeans said that the Area Board had recommended the release of a large sum of money to Seeds4Success to enable them to open the youth club but he was aware that this money had not yet been released because someone at Wiltshire Council had made an objection. He appreciated that this left Seeds4Success in a difficult position.

Cllr. Mrs J. Hurd left building at 8.50 p.m.

## **52. 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: 15/07270/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Location: Linden Barn, Castle Hill Lane, Mere. BA12 6JB

Proposal: First floor extension over existing porch

**RESOLVED** that the above application should be recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. R. Sims, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds and carried with a majority vote. Cllr. Jeans & Cllr. Mrs. Traves, having declared a personal interest in this planning application, refrained from discussion or voting on this matter.

Application No: 15/04655/PNCOU (Prior Notification under Class Q for change of use of existing agricultural building to form a single dwelling and associated works)

Location: The Barn at Woodlands Road, Mere. BA12 6JT

Although the Town Council was not required to consult on this application, the Clerk informed members that the planning authority (Wiltshire Council) had determined, in this case, that prior approval is refused as the application is supported by insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the site was used solely for an agricultural use on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013 or that it was last in use solely for an agricultural use, as part of an established agricultural unit. Also, the application fails to demonstrate via any form on structural assessment that the existing building is structurally strong enough to take the loadings associated with external works to provide for the conversion to residential use.

**b) Notice of Tree Preservation Order for all trees within the grounds of Bramley House, Mere**

**(Provisional Tree Preservation Order)** – the Clerk confirmed that following the applications to fell 8 trees at the back of Bramley House and the Town Council's request that the application be referred to Wiltshire Council's Tree Officer for consideration, the Tree Officer had deemed it necessary to apply a Tree Preservation Order on all the trees within the grounds of Bramley House. The Tree Preservation Order took place, on a provisional

basis, on 18.8.15. Wiltshire Council will consider whether the Order should be confirmed and take effect formally within 6 months. Before this decision is made, the people affected by the Order have a right to make objections or other representations about any of the trees covered by the Order. The Town Council were in agreement with the Tree Preservation Order.

### **53. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport**

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

- Street light out at the bottom of Hillside, Castle Hill Lane – Cllr. Mrs. Traves
- Barrow Street – road surface is in very bad condition – Cllr. Jeans
- B3095 at Warminster Hollow – Steep Hill 10% sign is missing and repeater 50mph sign is also missing further along road.

#### **b) A303 – recent accidents & local implications + request to government and Highways Agency to pursue dual carriageway and associated junction improvements as a matter of urgency –**

The Clerk reported that following the large number of fatal accidents on the A303 in recent months, Cllr. Jeans had asked for this to be raised on the agenda and so she had asked Wiltshire Police Disclosure Unit for accident statistics for the A303 between Wincanton & Amesbury during the last 6 months. Unfortunately, Wiltshire Police had said that to locate, retrieve and extract the information would exceed the Freedom of Information Fees Limit of £450. They did however, provide a list of accidents between the same locations from 1.11.14 to 30.4.15. The Clerk said that she had taken further statistics from the NPT Newsletters and calculated that there had been 5 fatalities in the last 5 months. Cllr. Jeans said that it is not only the safety on the A303 that is of concern but also the impact that it has on our roads and neighbouring hamlets and villages such as Burton and West Knoyle. Cllr. Bob Parsons said that he thought there had been 10 fatalities in the last 12 months. RESOLVED to write to the Department for Transport, MP, Highways Agency & Wiltshire Council to urge them to make some safety improvements to the A303.

**c) Road surface along Shaftesbury Road –** Cllr. R. Hill said that he had tried to cycle along Shaftesbury Road recently and it was virtually impossible. The road surface is ribbed where workmen had made a poor job of resurfacing the road last year and it was a real safety hazard. Cllr. Mitchell confirmed that the ribbing of the road was caused by poor workmanship at the time. Cllr. Jeans said that a similar concern had been brought up at a recent Highway Meeting and the response had been that the roads are not designed for cyclists. RESOLVED to make representations to the Highway Authority about improving safety and surface along Shaftesbury Road.

**d) State of roads through Mere generally (see last Month's Minutes) –** The Clerk said that she had raised this as an agenda item because she wondered whether the Council wanted to do a survey of the roads in Mere and identify the areas which are considered to be priorities for resurfacing. This was pertinent because a number of small roads in Mere and outlying villages had received new surface treatment where residents had felt that there were others that were more deserving and money was not being spent wisely. RESOLVED to write a letter to Parvis Khansaria (Wiltshire Council's Associate Director of Highways & Transport) & Philip Whitehead (Wiltshire Council's Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport) + Department of Transport to say that we are expecting to see improvements to the highways generally.

**e) Wiltshire Council's Passenger Transport Review –** The Clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Council had held a series of pre-consultation workshops on options to review Passenger Transport delivery. Unfortunately she was unable to attend any of the workshops but had been informed that the purpose of the review was to cut Wiltshire Council's spending on public transport. Cllr. Jeans said that 50% of buses that you see on the roads in Wiltshire are subsidised and that the only buses we are likely to see survive are the primary routes and our only primary route is the bus from Mere to Gillingham. He said that he was unhappy about these proposals because the reasons behind Wiltshire Council undertaking their car park review some years back was so that they could spend more money on public transport. The Clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Council would be preparing public

consultations documents in November/December with a view to the public consultation taking place in early 2016.

**f) Condition of boundary wall alongside Dark Lane** – Cllr. J. Jordan said that two people in the last week have asked me to express concern about Dark Lane. The wall is in a disastrous state in several places, there is a split in the wall and it bows and leans nearer the Boar Street end and there are at least 2 other places where large amounts of the wall has no pointing. Cllr. Jordan proposed that the Town Council should ask the Building Inspector from Wiltshire Council to come and give his opinion. Proposal carried with a unanimous vote.

#### **54. Buildings, Open Spaces, Play Areas, Sports Grounds, Allotments & Cemeteries**

##### **a) Request from Mere Town Football Club to erect permanent seating area around football pitch in Recreation Ground**

– A set of drawings were passed around and Mr. Peter Down explained that the Mere Town Football Club, now being in the Dorset Premier League, were required by the league to provide covered seating and they had given them a time limit of 3 seasons to get covered seating area for 50 people. Mr. Down said that they regularly have between 80-100 spectators on a match day. The Town Football Club had won 60 Olympic Stadium seats as part of the Olympic Legacy and would apply to the Football Association to build the covered areas in which to install the seats. The proposal was to erect 2 permanent covered seating areas (stands) either side of the existing dug outs on the south side of the main football pitch in the recreation ground. The dimensions of these stands is 2.4m wide, 2.7m high (at highest point) and 5.8m long. (The two stands will be identical) The structure will be block built and the roof will be timber with box section industrial sheeting and the base will be concrete. Each stand will contain 24 seats in 3 rows of 8. Cllr. Hazzard said that he supported sport in mere but wanted to know how many Mere Town Football players actually lived in Mere. Mr. Down said that about 70% of the players that play on the adult football pitch would live in Mere. Cllr. Hazzard said that he did not think it was right for the people of Mere to give up things to subsidise people that live outside Mere. Mr. Sims said that he was supposed to be Mere Town Council's representative for the football club and had phoned 3 times but not had any answer and asked who he should contact. The Clerk said that she would provide Cllr. Sims with the relevant information. The Chairman said that he didn't think we could make a decision on this tonight because there would be a lot of work in front of us. We would need to check whether or not planning permission is required. Also, we have a dual responsibility – we are responsible as Town Councillors but also as Trustees of the Mere Peace Memorial Sports and Recreation Ground Charity. Cllr. Parsons said that there were alarm bells going through his mind knowing the problems faced with Bath Rugby and their Recreation Ground. It was agreed that the Clerk would seek advice about the requirement for planning permission but advised the Football Club that it would be helpful to have a scaled site plan.

**b) Issues relating to changing room expenses** – The Chairman said that the high costs of running the changing rooms had been raised at previous meetings and therefore he had investigated the matter with the Clerk and had held various meetings with the football representatives. The football clubs had agreed to make an additional contribution of £500 this financial year making the total contribution to the Town Council of £1268 and he asked whether this was acceptable. It was pointed out that the average cost of the gas is £1895 per year. Cllr. Jeans said that it was a sight to behold to come up to the sports grounds and see so many children playing football and he said it was justifiable to subsidise this sport. Peter Down said that they put the showers on for 20 minutes on a Saturday and 20 minutes on a Sunday. Cllr. Jordan said he was surprised by the running costs but said that it was an extremely large boiler which the Town Council had to fire up each week in order to carry out the Legionella Risk Assessment Testing. He said that the opportunities for economising are very little although ideally there would be fewer shower heads and a combi boiler. Cllr. Hazzard said that he had a great love of sport in Mere and would be happy to propose we subsidise the rest of the costs on condition that the Football Club are happy to meet with us every year to review the costs etc. Cllr. Norris said that at the time the Town Council refurbished the changing rooms we expected other groups to use the facilities but this is not the case so would it therefore be worth exploring the football club taking on a lease for these facilities independently of the Town Council. It was unanimously agreed to explore all these options.

**c) Issues relating to boiler maintenance** – the Clerk said that as our current boiler maintenance contract had expired and she was aware that the football season was imminent and there were issues with the boiler, she had instructed Wessex to come and service/repair our boilers (two in the changing rooms and one in the pavilion). The engineer from Wessex reported some minor problems with the boiler in the pavilion but there were more major problems with the large water boiler for the changing room showers. The appliance dictates how large the ventilation needs to be and the ventilation in the boiler room was undersized and was therefore deemed to be ‘AT RISK’ and should not be used. He had placed warning notices on the boiler and informed us of the minimum ventilation measurements. We are now working on increasing the ventilation and hope to get the boiler re-commissioned in the next week or two.

## 55. Finance, Policy & Resources

**a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve the payments set out in payment schedule attached on proposal made by Mrs. K. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a majority vote. Cllr. Mrs. Traves & Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room whilst this item was discussed/voted.

Sutcliffe Play South West Ltd	Play Equipment for Castle Hill Play Area (paid from Policy R2 funds)	10924.80 – Pd. 3.8.15
Mole Valley Farmers	Materials to repair fence in cemetery	17.33 – Pd. 3.8.15
Abbey Drainage Services	Attend to & clear blocked WC in ladies toilets	182.30 – Pd. 17.8.15
Value Products Ltd (Safetysigns4less.co.uk)	Dog signs for allotments	39.00 – Pd. 11.8.15
Sydenhams	Materials for fencing repairs in cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 123.72</li> <li>• 64.80</li> <li>• 35.95</li> <li>• 22.97</li> </ul>
	Materials to install bin at White Road/Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21.72</li> </ul>
Mrs. L. Traves	Travel expenses claim (2 trips to Trowbridge for Strategic Planning Meetings)	36.00
J. H. Rose & Sons Ltd	Scalpings for Southbrook allotments	37.15 – Pd. 17.8.15
T. J. Thornley	Renewal of domain name	?????
Mainstream Digital	Telephone call charges 30.6.15 – 30.7.15	5.05 – paid by DD on 14.8.15
Seeds4Success	Donation previously agreed	4000
Mr Powell	Water	25.00
T. Thornley	Domain name renewal – 1 year ( <a href="http://www.merewiltshire.org">www.merewiltshire.org</a> )	13.19 – Pd. 17.8.15
Cash	Amazon Order for 4 X LED Solar Powered lights for AYP car park	81.98 – Pd. 17.8.15
Southern Electric	Disconnection of Off Peak Metering at old Band Hut	233.83 – Pd. 17.8.15
Eon	Electricity supply to public toilets 14.7.15 – 11.8.15	38.68 – Pd by DD on 25.8.15
Mole Valley Farmers	Hasp & Staple + socket set	14.71
	Grease + Pest control bait	14.10
Npower Limited	Admin charge on redundant electricity meter in old Band Hut 27.6.15 – 7.7.15	7.55
Jeans	Cleaning of mops & large latex gloves	43.35

Wallgate Ltd	Soap for public toilets	60.00 – Pd. 25.8.15
Broker Network Ltd	Motor insurance – Farm Policy for Mitsubishi & Tractor	827.72
Fenland Leisure Products Ltd	Caps & wetpour binder for play areas	48.00
Duchy of Cornwall	Half yearly rent on allotment lands	322.06
Duchy of Cornwall	Annual rent for Castle Hill	15.00
Rochford Garden Machinery	Head Kit – Bump Feed	21.99
Lyreco	Stationery, cleaning products etc	166.06
Jeans	To repair lights in public toilets	29.99
Imprest Account – cheques 3087 - 3094	PAYE, Wages, Petty Cash & Pension	5476.91

**b) To approve and consider Budget/Expenditure report for period ending 30.6.15 (report attached) –**

Reviewing the budget against actual expenditure regularly gives members early warning about the likelihood of a shortfall (or surplus) and helps them to decide what responsive action to take. The Clerk explained that the quarterly budget report showed a shortfall of £2388.65 which was not surprising since the Town Council had made unforeseen expenditure for litter collection of £792.49 and the figures included the unforeseen contribution towards the Traffic Management Scheme of £1500. The Clerk informed members that she had made notes on the variations + or – 25% and members agreed to contact the Clerk if they wanted further information.

**c) Conclusion of Audit – Accounts year ended 31 March 2015** - The Clerk reported that the External Audit had been completed on 22<sup>nd</sup> July with the External Auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, returning the Annual Return and reporting ‘on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. The clerk confirmed that a Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been placed on the noticeboard informing parish electors that they may obtain, inspect or take a copy of the Statement of Accounts and Auditor’s Certificate and Report by arrangement with the Clerk.

**56. General Items**

Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that 30 goats had escaped from Castle Hill onto her garden last week. Eventually the owner, Mr. Steven Horn, did come out to move them and said that a gate had been left open.

**57. Forthcoming meetings**

The Clerk pointed out that there was a Market Town meeting in Trowbridge on 16<sup>th</sup> September. Cllr. Bob Parsons said that he was unable to attend this particular meeting but may be interested in attending future ones.

Meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

\*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.

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**MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND**

Registered Charity No. 1093497

***a) Request from Mere Town Football Club to erect permanent seating area around football pitch in Recreation Ground.***

As Trustees, members were happy with the discussion and decision they had made as Town Councillors regarding the above request.