

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 1st February 2016 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. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, R. Sims, Mrs. K. Symonds & Mrs. L. Traves

Also: R. Flower, R. Morris, Lt. Cdr. Keith Broach, Mrs. S. Stronach, Mr. Vernon Philips, D. Stone & R. Stone.

Meeting convened at 7.30 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).

Mrs. Stronach introduced herself as the Managing Director of new Downside Management Company. She said she lives in Gillingham but owns a property in Downside Close which is rented out. She said that she had been informed that an arrangement was made with Phi Group to enquire as to whether the residents could take on responsibility for the retaining wall alongside Downside Close. The Chairman explained there was obviously a misunderstanding and said that he would be reading a statement later on during the meeting about this.

Mr. Dick Morris from Downside Close asked if there had been any news on the progress of road adoption works – the Chairman reported that there was no positive news to report.

Mr. Vernon Philips from Pettridge Lane said he had noted that there was nothing on the agenda about the Old Mere First School. He was aware that the Town Council was sending a letter to the owners of the Old School and that, if no response were received, it would then write to the Environmental Health Department of Wiltshire Council. The wall in Dark Lane has started to crumble and many of the capping stones have been taken down before they fall down. I also believe that you may have contacted the pest control people about the rats. In the past couple of weeks I have cut down a curtain of brambles. Mr. Philips asked if there was a member of the Parish Council who was taking an interest in the Old Mere First School that he could talk to in between meetings and also asked that this issue be included on the agenda for every meeting until the matter was resolved. Cllr. Jeans responded that there had been an emergency closure in an area of Dark Lane because of the crumbling state of the wall and that the top stones of the wall had been removed in order to reduce the weight. Cllr. Jeans said that because the wall is in a conservation area, he feels that there is a good chance that the owners can be made to put it right and confirmed that he would speak to the building inspector, highways & enforcement about this matter.

Mr. Hazzard asked if it would be possible for the Town Council to remove the Xmas Lights from the Clock Tower as soon as possible.

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. P. Coward, R. Hill & E. Mitchell

97. 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 – pecuniary interest in Minute No. 103 a)
- Cllr. Jeans – pecuniary interest in Minute No. 103 c)
- Cllr. Jordan – personal interest in Minute No. 101 a) – Planning Application 16/00805/TCA
- Cllr. Mrs. Traves - personal interest in Minute No. 101 a) – Planning Application 16/00805/TCA

98. Minutes – RESOLVED that the Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 11th January 2016 be approved as a correct record of proceedings on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 11.1.16

99. Matters Arising

***a) Downside Close – response from Phi Group regarding Permacrib Retaining Wall** – The Chairman confirmed that the Town Council had received a response from Phi Group, the company that built the retaining wall at Downside Close. He said that the most significant point answered in the correspondence was that of the sixty year guarantee for the wall which is not transferable. The Chairman confirmed that the full response will be passed to the residents of Downside Close for their consideration.

The Chairman also reported that the Town Council had received more voluminous responses from the residents of Downside Close for consideration which can be passed on to all councillors if requested. However, in the opening email received, he quoted: *‘The residents of Downside Close would ask the Phi Group to have Nothing to do with what the PC are asking you to do in their recent correspondence which was never authorised by the residents.’* The Chairman said that, as a councillor, he can ask questions and does not need to seek the permission of residents of Downside Close before doing so. He was merely asking questions to provide information which could be passed on to the residents of Downside Close.

The Chairman further reported that, as agreed, the Town Council was continuing to lobby Wiltshire Council to get the roads, pavements and lighting up to an adoptable standard. The last response was that it was in the hands of the NHBC. Cllr. Jeans proposed that the Town Council should contact the NHBC people direct to point out the need for some urgency in this matter. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote in favour.

b) Community Litter Picking Initiative (see email from S. Harris 14.12.15) – the Clerk said that the Council had signed up for the initiative and the equipment had been received. A notice was being placed in the next issue of Mere Matters to see if there were any individuals or any groups that would like to take part in a volunteer led litter picking event, hopefully during March or April

c) Report on meeting with Co-Op manager regarding deliveries – The Chairman reported that he had met with the manager of Mere Co-Op on Thursday, 28th January to discuss the various issues raised at the last Council meeting by Cllr. Parsons. The manager informed him that the shop had one truck delivery 4 days per week and 2 truck deliveries 3 days per week. When there were two deliveries in one day, the deliveries are planned to be staggered so that there is one in the morning and one in the afternoon. However, trucks do occasionally turn up at the same time due to unforeseen circumstances. The manager stated that the drivers had been informed that two vehicles could not be in the shop area at the same time but the drivers have said that on occasions they could not find anywhere else to park. The Chairman had suggested that when two trucks arrive together the second truck could park at the industrial estate and wait.

At present the Co-op does not provide a banksman to marshal the vehicles and the manager agreed to discuss this with his area manager. The Manager did not know if the delivery vehicles were fitted with reverse cameras and reversing aids and suggested contacting his head office for this information. The Manager said that he would have wished that Mr Parsons had let the Co-Op staff know of the incident when he was hit so that the incident could have been fully investigated and logged.

100. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – Copies of the Community Policing Report & the Mere Neighbourhood Police Team monthly newsletter, prepared by PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky, were distributed to council members. It was noted that three people have been arrested and released on bail pending further investigations in relation to the armed robbery that occurred at Willoughby Hedge Service Station in January. Cllr. Sims added that £350 worth of fuel stolen from a lorry parked overnight on layby along A303 at Chaddenwick Hill.

b) Wiltshire Councillor’s Report – Cllr. Jeans reported that he sat on the finance group committee and that central government was allowing councils to add a 2% levy for vulnerable people. Cllr. Jeans also confirmed that Ringway Infrastructure Services Ltd had been awarded the new Highways Maintenance contract to be effective from April 2016.

101. 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: 15/12639/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Proposed construction of detached 13 bedroom specialist care unit within the grounds of existing residential care home.
At: Bramley House, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JN

In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting. Cllr. Hazzard said that whilst most people seem to be happy about the proposed building, the major concern would seem to be parking and it looks like they are proposing to create a pedestrian access onto Homefield which is going to increase parking problems along Homefield. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that she was concerned about the land ownership issues and it was agreed that the ownership of the land should be made clear. Cllr. Jordan says that the access statement implies that there are no problems with parking and no need to provide any extra parking facilities. He said that parking is challenging all over Mere and any applicant submitting a proposal that may make the situation worse should be made to increase parking provision. It was RESOLVED to recommend approval of the application subject to the following concerns on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds and carried with a vote of 6 for, 3 abstentions (Cllrs. Hazzard, Jeans and Hurd) and 1 against:

Concerns: Whilst the Town Council would support the principal of providing a detached 13 bedroom specialist care unit at Bramley House, the Town Council does have some concerns relating to this planning application:

Land ownership: The Town Council has concerns about the land ownership boundaries defined within the location plan accompanying this application. Neither the blue ownership boundary lines nor the red development lines compare with the Land Registry Title plans. There is land at the southern boundary and along the south-eastern boundary of the property adjacent to Bramley Hill that falls outside the ownership of Bramley House and there is land along the northern boundary of the development red line that we believe does not belong to the applicant (unless the applicant has purchased this land from Wiltshire Council in the last 7 years). We note that the applicant has declared that nobody except the applicant was the owner of any part of the land to which the application relates and therefore it could be possible that the applicant has purchased this highway verge in recent years. A planning application submitted by the applicant in 2009 (S/2009/0550) shows a different ownership boundary to the north of the site and Google Street Map views of 2009 would also corroborate this. The Town Council feels that the land ownership situation needs to be established in order to legalise the situation.

There is a second irregularity on the planning application: Paragraph 6.1 of the Design & Access Statement states that 'the principal entrance at first floor level of the new development approximately 750mm below the existing pavement level to Homefield, a short flight of steps and separate 'level access' leading from the pavement and landing area respectively....' The arboricultural consultants are recommending the installation of a pleached Hornbeam Hedge along the rear boundary of the site as shown on the Arboricultural Impact Plan. However, this would block off the entrance and would be planted on land that may not be within the ownership of the applicant.

Parking: The Town Council's principal concerns are that of the lack of parking provision and the current problems with on-street parking associated with the care home. *The Design & Access Statement states that existing parking provision for Bramley House exceeds the current requirements for staff and visitor parking and could therefore accommodate parking for the additional three staff if required, together with any additional visitor parking and it is anticipated that the Bramley House site will not require any further parking provision than is currently available.* This statement would imply that there is not a current parking problem associated with the care home and, unfortunately, this is not the case. At weekends in particular, visitors parking around the site can cause obstructions and visibility problems for road users and pedestrians. It is not uncommon for visitors to park their cars around the Bramley Hill residential estate and all along the Homefield residential

estate, often parking on bends and on junctions. By creating the main access to this development along the Homefield entrance, this will exacerbate the congestion along Homefield and cause problems for the residents of Homefield trying to access their own homes.

There are areas of land adjacent to Bramley House, currently owned by Wiltshire Council, that could be utilised for off-road parking and this may be a solution to the parking problems currently associated with the care home and its visitors. Perhaps these could be explored by mutual agreement.

Application Ref: 16/00176/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Two storey extension, extend detached garage.
At: Elveston, Ivy Mead, Mere. BA12 6EN

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

Application Ref: 16/00016/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Proposed first floor extension over existing ground floor room
At: 9 Denes Avenue, Mere. BA12 6HW

RESOLVED that the above application should be recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. Hughes, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a majority vote. Cllr. Hazzard abstained from voting. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

Application Ref: 16/00006/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Demolish existing dwelling and outbuildings and erect replacement dwelling and outbuildings (resubmission of 14/07001/FUL)
At: Limpers Hill Farmhouse, Limpers Hill, Mere. BA12 6BD

RESOLVED that the above application should be recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, seconded by Cllr. Beale and carried with a majority vote in favour. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

Application Ref: 16/00392/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Proposed construction of barn for storage of fodder
At: Whitehill Farm, Swainsford, Mere. BA12 6JU

RESOLVED that the above application should be recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. Sims, seconded by the Chairman and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

Application Ref: 16/00805/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in Cons. Area
Proposal: T1 – Lawson Cypress – Section Fell
At: Treganhawke, Castle Hill Lane, Mere. BA12 6JB

RESOLVED that the above application should be recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. Hughes, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a majority vote in favour. (Cllrs. John Jordan & Mrs. L. Traves abstained from voting).

Application Ref: 16/00710/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Proposed rear infill extension with the addition of two rooflights
At: Prospect Villa, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JH

RESOLVED that the above application should be recommended for approval on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Hazzard and carried with a majority vote. (Cllr. Mrs. Traves abstained from voting).

102. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

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

- Cllr. Mrs. Hurd reported that Castle Street was now in a very bad state and that a pothole in the middle of Castle Street was now extremely deep.

b) Wiltshire Council's Public Consultation on the Future Provision of Subsidised Bus Services in Wiltshire:

please see: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/articles/bus-service-consultation>

It was reported that the Mere Taxi Bus Service is used on a Monday & Friday for the Rosemary Goddard Day Centre and on Thursday it is targeted for people going to Gillingham and therefore it is not, in real terms, a taxi service because you have to go where they want on the day. Cllr. Jeans said he was slightly concerned that the first pages of the questionnaire ask if you have a car or access to a car and said he would be alarmed if the responses to these questions was interpreted as those with a car or access to a car did not need to use the bus service because at any time in the future people could find themselves without the ability to drive, without a car or without access to a car. It was agreed that the Chairman would include information on this consultation in his report for Mere Matters and invite members of the public to inform the Town Council of their concerns and inform them that the Town Council would be discussing the matter at the next meeting with a view to making a collective response.

c) Fingerpost signs – Cllr. Jeans reported that the fingerpost sign at Edgebridge, opposite the Walnut Tree Inn had been rebuilt by a local craftsman and was looking wonderful. Cllr. Jeans said that there was a further fingerpost sign between West Swainsford & East Swainsford that only had one finger left on it and felt that this should be reinstated. The Town Council RESOLVED that Cllr. Jeans should apply for a grant from the South West Wiltshire Area Board to have this fingerpost repaired/refurbished and that Cllr. Jeans should instruct Mr. McCann to carry out the work. (Proposal made by Cllr. Jeans, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.) Cllr. Jeans informed members that Dorset were replacing all their fingerpost signs as a matter of course.

103 Buildings, Open Spaces, Play Areas, Sports Grounds, Allotments & Cemeteries

***a) Mere Surgery Expansion Proposals – request from WC asking for confirmation that Town Council is happy to surrender part of the car park from lease.**

- Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest in this matter, sat with members of the public and took no part in the discussion.

RESOLVED on proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Hughes and carried with a vote of 8 for and 2 abstentions that the Town Council should write back to Wiltshire Council & copy in Medentres saying that we have no objection, in principle, to rescinding some of the car park land from our lease. However, the plans that have accompanied this email are not the same as we had seen previously and would result in the loss of more car parking spaces than we had anticipated. We therefore have concerns about this and the fact that the boundary of the application would appear to withdraw public access from the car park to Dark Lane. We do not know whether or not these plans are merely preliminary drawings or more advanced proposals but we would welcome more discussions with Wiltshire Council, MedCentres & Mere Surgery to discuss design proposals in more detail in order to mitigate our concerns before we commit to the boundaries and amount of car park land that is to be transferred.

b) Public Toilets - Concerns regarding urinals in gents toilets – The Chairman reported that there was a problem with the urinals in the gents toilets which was causing a major hygiene issue, both for users and for the council's staff. Cllr. Hazzard said that if the Council was going to keep the public toilets then we should make them something to be proud of but the Clerk pointed out that the Town Council had not made a decision on whether or not it would keep the public toilets once the current lease had expired and that complete refurbishment would cost a lot of money. It was agreed that the gents toilets should be temporarily closed in order to carry out some repairs/modifications to rectify the current problem. The Clerk said that she had sought quotations to replace the urinal unit and had estimated that this would cost somewhere between £1000 - £1500. However, the Chairman said that he thought the existing unit could be repaired and modified and would seek further advice on this.

c) Safety concerns for Salisbury Car Park whilst third party fencing replacement work is carried out - Cllr. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting whilst this matter was discussed. The Clerk pointed out that Cllr. Jeans needed to repair the fence on the boundary between his property and the car park (behind the public toilets up to Jeans gate). Mr. Jeans was appointing contractors to carry out the work (Bourton Fencing) and they had requested that HERRIS Safety Fencing be used to block off the 7 car parking spaces affected whilst the work was being carried out which would take less than a week. Members were happy to grant permission for this on condition that the work would take no longer than a week.

d) HLS Scheme – the Clerk informed members that the Long Hill Management work programmed for Year 5 of the Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme was progressing and would be finished at the end of February. The Management Plan which was originally drawn up for a period of 5 years would also be coming to an end and so the Clerk had made an appointment to meet with representatives of Natural England on site in March to review the work we had carried out in the last 5 years and to identify anything outstanding or further work which may be appropriate during the next 5 years.

e) Request to pay for allocated parking space at Wellhead allotment car park – the Clerk reported that a resident of Wellhead had asked if it might be possible to pay a fee for an allocated space at the allotment car park. Members were reminded that the car parking area at Wellhead had been created, with the permission of the Duchy of Cornwall, in order to provide car parking spaces for allotment holders and residents of Mere in order to ease the congestion in the Wellhead/North Road area as many of the properties in that area did not have any off-road car parking provision. However, the Town Council felt that if they started allocating spaces within the car park to residents then this would cause more problems – there may not be any spaces available during the day for allotment holders to use; a precedent would be set and other residents would expect to have the same treatment. This may, in turn, lead to problems where other people have parked in an allocated parking space and so on. Members were unanimous in their decision that the car parking area should remain unallocated and that the Council's policy for this car parking area should remain:

1. The parking area is for the use of any residents of Mere and their visitors on a first come, first serve basis. No-one has any preferential rights to parking.
2. No vehicles are allowed to cross the land leased by the Council beyond the bollards at the rear of the parking site for any purposes whatsoever.
3. Vehicles, their accessories and contents are parked in the car park entirely at the owners risk. Mere Town Council will not be responsible for loss or damage thereto howsoever caused.
4. Only private cars and vans can be parked in the Wellhead Allotment parking area – No LGVs.
5. All cars/vans parked in the Wellhead Allotment parking area must be road legal i.e. Road Vehicle Tax, current MOT (if required) & motor vehicle insurance. No vehicles under a statutory off road notification (SORN) to be parked in the Wellhead Allotment parking area.
6. No activity in connection with the selling, hiring or other disposal of vehicles or goods or services shall be carried on in the car parking area.

7. No vehicle repairs to be carried out in the parking area.
8. Delivery of firewood, building materials or similar items may be made on to the parking area, provided this is done in a reasonable manner and that any such items are moved in a very short time.
9. The Council will not pay for surfacing, but will welcome any help which can be given by residents of the town.

104. Finance, Policy & Resources

***a) Payments** – RESOLVED that the payments as set out in the payment schedule attached to the agenda be approved and cheques duly signed by authorised signatories at the meeting.

b) Sale of assets – sale of timber + request to purchase capping stones – The Clerk confirmed that following an advertisement placed in the Blackmore Vale Magazine, the Council had received 4 telephone bids for the timber (1) £80, (2) £233, (3) £300 & (4) £325. The Clerk pointed out that one of the bidders was a town councillor who was not present at the meeting but did not make the winning bid. The timber would be offered to the winning bidder. The Clerk also pointed out that a local person required 6m of capping stones and had asked if it would be possible to buy capping stones from the Town Council, either from those stored or those on the dilapidated wall at the cemetery. Members felt that as they had a long term vision to build a new gateway to the new cemetery using the stone from the old cemetery wall then they would be unwilling to sell any stone we have.

c) Internal Audit Report – the Clerk confirmed that Mrs. Mary White had recently carried out the interim internal audit and had submitted the following report: ‘On 14th January I carried out an internal audit of the Town Council’s Financial Statements for the year ending 31st March 2016. In my opinion the Council has maintained proper accounting records and the financial statements have been properly prepared. I had every assistance in this audit from the Town Clerk, Lindsey Wood, who had everything necessary to hand and in excellent order.’ Members noted this report and thanked Mrs. White for her assistance.

d) Seeds4Success – the Clerk read out a letter from the Jaki Farrell, Service Manager for Seeds4Success on behalf of the young people of Mere and the staff, volunteers and trustees of Seeds4 Success thanking the Town Council for its support and donations during the 2014/15 financial year.

e) To form working group to investigate and assess Auto Enrolment options for the Town Council (as agreed at Annual Budget Meeting) – It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cllrs. Mrs. Traves, M. Cassidy & G. Jeans + P. Coward (if able to help) would form a working group to consider the Auto Enrolment options for pensions for the two grounds staff.

f) To fix date, venue & membership for Annual Risk Management & Insurance meeting (April 2015) – It was agreed that the Annual Risk Management & Insurance Meeting would be held on 29th March at 11. a.m. and that the Chairman, Vice- Chairman, Cllr. Mrs. Traves & Cllr. Jeans would attend.

105. General Items

a) Report on Tisbury Community Safety Partnership Meeting held on 4.12.15 – The Chairman reported that both he and Cllr. Sims had attended this meeting in Tisbury where Dr. Andrew Murrison MP had been invited as guest speaker. It was reported that Cllr. Sims had asked if there was any truth in the rumour that the Fire & Police station in Mere were to be closed & Dr. Murrison had replied that there was no truth at the present time although Dorset Fire & Rescue Service and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service were working together to merge on 1st April 2016. Cllr. Sims also asked for confirmation that the A303 would be duelled from Stonehenge west and was told that this is planned to be carried out over the next 5 years.

b) Licences for gas and oil exploration in Wiltshire – The Chairman said that the Town Council had received some emails raising concerns about the fact that Wiltshire Council was issuing licenses in the area for gas and oil exploration (fracking). However, it was agreed to defer this item to allow the Chairman time to discuss this matter with Wessex Water.

c) To fix date, venue & agenda items for Annual Parish Meeting – It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held in the Andy Young Pavilion on 27th April at 7.30 p.m. (Refreshments from 7.00 p.m.)

105. Forthcoming meetings/events

- Wiltshire Council's 'Rising to the challenges of 2016 and beyond' series of meetings
- South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting, Wednesday 3rd February at 6.30 p.m. in Wilton Community Centre – Cllr. Jordan said that he would be attending this meeting.
- Invitation to presentation regarding plans to enhance the use of St. Michael's Church – Wednesday, 3rd February at 7.30 p.m.- Chairman will attend this meeting.

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) To approve submission of Recreation Ground Charity Annual Return 2014/15 to Charity Commission

It was agreed that the accounts (as attached) should be submitted to the Charity Commission.