

# Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.**

**Present:** Councillors N. Beale, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, J. Jordan, E. Mitchell, R. Parsons, Mrs. K. Symonds, R. Sims & Mrs. L. Traves.

**Also:** PC Phil Bridge, R. Stone, Dick Morris, D. Stone, L. Stanton, Hamish Bell, V. Phillips, R. Flower, M. Arnold & Dr. King.

## **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).*

Mr. Louis Stanton asked the Council if it was aware that the development opportunity for the property known as Hill Brush Company is for sale. He said he wondered who owned the land at the moment, what the sale was about and what would happen to all the assurances that were given to us by C. G. Fry & Son. Mr. Stanton said that a lot of people were anxious about this situation. The Chairman said that this matter had been brought to the Council's attention and said that the Town Council thought that Fry's would be developing the site but if they have decided to try and sell it then they have a right to do so. The planning permission for the site could be passed on to any new potential buyers.

The Chairman said that he wanted to pass on the Council's congratulations to a member of our staff, Mr. Josh Suter and his wife Hayley, on the birth of their daughter Ferne.

Mr. Clive Hazzard said that the Sunday Times published an article last week on the Best Places to Live in Britain and Mere was listed as one of the 15 Best Places to Live in the South West. Mr. Hazzard said that he had been asked to talk about this on BBC Wiltshire Radio and thought that we ought to be really proud of this achievement and take the opportunity to promote. It was agreed that this should go on our website and Facebook page.

Mr. Hazzard also said that there was a blue van that had been parked outside The George Inn with a flat tyre for many days now. Wonder what can be done about it. The Clerk said that this had been reported to all the relevant authorities and was being dealt with accordingly.

The Chairman raised concerns at the litter and unsightly state of Castle Street, particularly around the Ship Inn and said that he would try and get hold of the agents to see if anything could be done about the issue.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllrs. M. Cassidy, P. Coward, B. Norris & PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky.

## **In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Cllr. John Jordan in The Chair**

### **116. 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 personal interest in Minute No. 123a)

**117. Minutes – RESOLVED** that the Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> March 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 7.3.16.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Working Group meeting on the Assessment of Internal Controls held on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016 be approved on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried by those present on 29.3.16

**118. Presentation and discussion with representatives from Medcentres PLC and Mere Surgery to discuss Mere Surgery expansion proposals – Dr. King from Mere Surgery and Mr. Mike Arnold from MedCentres.**

The Chairman gave a brief summary on a short meeting held between the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Clerk and Doctors at the surgery on the morning of 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Dr. King explained that it had been a while since he had last talked to the Council about the surgery's expansion proposals but suddenly things had all fallen into place, funding had become available and it was necessary to speed the process along again. He said that we all wanted sustainable health care in Mere and that Health Care in a village setting is preferable to a large centre elsewhere. The surgery was built 25 years ago for a population of about 1800 and since then we now have a patient list of about 4,500. We want to see the surgery sustainable for the future but currently only have about half the total area of floor space that we need to provide adequate health care. We anticipate another 500-1000 patients in near future. During the current financial climate, it is very difficult to get people to lend to us as doctors and we will be part-funding this project and trying to take advantage of a fairly narrow window of opportunity for funding from the NHS. Due to this narrow window of opportunity, it has been necessary for us to submit a planning application before the end of the financial year at 31.3.16. Members were shown plans of the proposed expansion proposals and recently submitted planning application:

Cllr. Mrs. Symonds asked about the extra facilities required and it was explained that the doctors wanted to ensure that consultation rooms were fit for purpose in terms of privacy and hygiene

Should we have more patients it is likely we will increase doctor time. We each have our own special interest, such as minor surgery – it would be nice to have facilities to do that in Mere and we may be able to have other clinics. It won't automatically reduce waiting times but may improve facilities on offer.

Council members expressed concern that the proposed plans would take up a lot of parking spaces within the car park and questioned the orientation of the proposed extension or whether existing access owners had been approached to see if they were willing to give up their access: Dr. King said that all possibilities had been explored. They had gone through a robust design process in consultation with NHS, at a cost that NHS can afford. He said he understood the value to some of the Mere residents that car parking space is high but said that the NHS won't pay that compensation.

Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that there is no question that this is very emotive. We all feel we want the surgery to prosper but we have to judge it on its planning merit. In my opinion there are things to go against it. Concerns were raised about the red line ownership boundary and the fact that this would effectively cut off the right of way into the car park from Dark Lane. Mr. Arnold said that it was possible to change the red line boundary. There were concerns expressed about the construction – Mr. Arnold said that the period of construction was likely to be 7-8 months and that they would need a construction compound within the car park whilst works were proceeding.

Mr. Hamish Bell, speaking on behalf of Mere & District Chamber of Trade said that the Chamber had particular concerns about the car parking and the fact that the expansion proposals would necessitate losing 2 spaces designed for coaches and lorries and enabling coaches to turn around in the car park. He explained that coach facilities within the car park was one of the facts being used by the Chamber of Trade in the tourism promotion with Visit England.

Cllr. Sims said that he had lived in various towns and thought that our medical facilities in Mere were great.

Cllr. Jeans said that he would be declaring a personal interest in this matter but stressed the importance of the red line boundary on the planning application, the fact that there may be objections from residents living within the vicinity of the car park and any upstairs windows. He also asked whether there may be an opportunity for funding towards the re-lining of the car park. Mr. Arnold & Dr. King said that they were happy for planning conditions on the windows and would need to look into any possibility of funding for car park lining which would need to be the subject of a future conversation.

## **119. Matters Arising**

**\*a) Downside Close – adoption of roads, pavements, street lights etc.-** With reference to the information in the Clerks Report, the Clerk said that she had since received a reply from Wiltshire Council's Highway Development Control Manager 'I have now met with our new term contractor whose contract starts tomorrow. They have promised to get a response back to me early next week with costs for the different elements. I will then be able to agree a date with them for work to commence. I have received letters from a number of the Downside Close residents, most of which have requested that the road surfacing be given priority. I will be contacting them all once I have an update from our contractor. I will copy you and Cllr. Jeans into that update.

If I hear anything further in advance of your meeting, I will let you know.’ Mr. D. Morris thanked the Parish Council for pushing this.

**b) Community Litter Picking Initiative** – The Chairman informed members that the Litter Picking Initiative would take place this Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> April at 10 a.m. Meeting at the Clock Tower. At present there were approximately 10 people who had volunteered to join but anyone was welcome. Insurance and Risk Assessments had been completed. Mrs. Jean Young and Ann Newbery had already carried out a volunteer litter pick last weekend. All volunteers that take part will be thanked.

**c) Queen’s 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations** – the Clerk reported that for the Queens actual Birthday Celebrations on 21<sup>st</sup> April, the Town Council had registered a beacon/brazier with the official Pageantmaster. It has been agreed that the brazier used for the Diamond Jubilee will be lit, not the gas-fired beacon (used for VE Day celebrations) because of the practical problems of transporting the gas cylinders to Castle Hill. Scheduled Monument Consent application sent to Historic England (copy to Duchy of Cornwall) for beacon on Castle Hill. Consent has been given. Hugh Beamish of Historic England has asked for photos to be taken of the site before and after the event. Insurers have been notified and provided with a risk assessment. They have confirmed that cover is in place (16/3/16) Emails have been sent to PCSO and fire service. PCSO has acknowledged receipt. We have just heard that the official lighting time for the beacon is 8.30 p.m. and we will be advertising this on the Council’s Facebook page and on the website. The Clerk said that volunteers and staff now needed to be organised and briefed on getting the equipment up on the hill. Mr. Richard Coward had kindly offered to help with this. Note: There will be no firework display at Mere on 21<sup>st</sup> April. This is planned to take place for the Queen’s official birthday celebrations in June. The Clerk said that the Council had received £145 in donations towards fireworks and Cllr. Jeans confirmed that Mr. Bill Deeker had agreed to set off the fireworks but indicated that the cost would be in the region of £2,000. The Area Board would give £500 towards this but it was necessary to raise more money. It was agreed to raise this matter on the next agenda.

## 120. Reports & Consultations

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** – PC Phil Bridge from Warminster Police Station attended the meeting and presented the Police report. Non dwelling burglaries have been reported this month, not only in this area but Warminster and North Dorset has had the same. Offenders are searching garages at remote locations and stealing power tools and motorbikes etc. Our advice to residents is secure your garages or sheds with a sturdy lock. Shed alarms can be bought quite cheaply and fitted easily. We recommend one with a loud alarm that will deter offenders. There have been 8 low level crimes in the Mere area during March 2016. PC Bridge was thanked for attending the meeting. No questions raised.

**b) Wiltshire Councillor’s Report** – Cllr. Jeans reported that further funding cuts within Wiltshire Council were affecting youth facilities. Wiltshire Council used to employ 18 people that would help with funding applications for youth projects but these 18 people were now being cut to 7.

## 121. 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: 16/00199/106

Application for: Modification of 106

Proposal: Modification of Section 106 Agreement relating to S/2009/1522 to discharge the liability on the southern and western boundary strips.

At: Land off Downside Close and Old Hollow Lane, Mere BA12 6AS

\*Wiltshire Council’s decision to REFUSE the above application was made on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Members noted the information in the Clerks Report relating to Wiltshire Council’s decision to refuse the application.

## 122. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

**a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults** – the following issues were reported at the meeting:

- Manor Road junction with North Street – pull in is filled with mud.
- Hole in pavement by litter bin outside old Antique Shop.

The Clerk gave an update on the issues reported on the MyWiltshire App and Wiltshire Council's responses.

**\*b) Proposed Traffic Regulation Order for Consultation – Various roads, Mere – Parking and Waiting**

**Restrictions** – members noted the information in the Clerks Report. The Clerk reported that a letter of objection to the Traffic proposals for Mere had been received from Mr. & Mrs. Durkee. Mr. & Mrs. Durkee had also said that there had been no consultation about these proposals. Members pointed out that there had been discussions and public consultation on this matter for two years now, and the Clerk was asked to write back to Mr. & Mrs. Durkee informing them that they should make their representations known to Wiltshire Council.

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

**a) Mere Surgery Expansion Proposals** – The Chairman pointed out that now the town council had received a presentation from the Doctors, it now needed to consider two things – one being the planning application itself, which should be considered on planning merits and two, being the issue of whether or not the town council wishes to rescind the land from its lease with Wiltshire Council for the car park. A number of councillors raised their concerns about the amount of car parking spaces that would be lost to the doctors surgery proposals. It was pointed out that the planning application had not yet been received and the Clerk suggested that the Council may prefer to consider the two issues (outlined above) at the same time. It was therefore agreed that the following response should be sent to Mr. Arnold (copied in to Wiltshire Council): 'The Town Council agreed that they would like to consider the issue of releasing the land from our lease when we are in a position to consider the planning application – Wiltshire Council's planning department will automatically send us a copy of the planning application or an electronic link to the planning application when it is registered and we will be given a formal 21 day consultation period. Whether or not our next Town Council meeting will fall within that consultation period I am not sure (the next meeting is scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> May) but, given the significance of this matter and the impact it has on the town, we may well call an extra meeting just to discuss this in any case. In the meantime, members asked if it you could please make an amendment to your planning application so that the red line follows the line of the proposed building and not the line of the car park boundary– members certainly gave me the impression that this was an important matter to them. If it could be amended in the near future it is likely to save time because it may be that we will just be sent the one application and not a subsequent amendment with a further consultation period.'

**b) Walls alongside Dark Lane** – It was pointed out that there had now been damage to the wall on the other side of Dark Lane (near the Doctors Surgery) and it was suggested that there should be bollards erected between the car park and the boundary wall. With regards to the wall belonging to the Old Mere First School, the Chairman stated that there had been some pointing done to the wall but the capping stones had not been reinstated. Cllr. Jeans said that Wiltshire Council's building inspector, John Huckle, was only interested in structural safety and was satisfied that the wall was now safe. However, there is an obligation on the owner to put back the capping stones because it is a Conservation Area. Cllr. Jeans indicated that the owner had said that he would be out to do some more work on the wall and agreed that he would call the enforcement officer if this was not carried out within 6 months. Both the Chairman & Cllr. Parsons said that they would be happy to meet the enforcement officer on site.

**c) Request to erect shed on allotments at Southbrook** – The Clerk informed members that Mr. Rossi has removed a 6m X 3m netted tunnel from his allotment plot (No. 113 at Southbrook) and now wishes to erect a wooden shed approx. 10ft X 8ft on this allotment. Members granted approval for the shed to be erected.

**\*d) Allotment report** – members noted the information in the Clerks Report and added that since the Clerks Report was published a further 2 allotment holders had paid their rent and the number of vacant allotment plots at Southbrook had been reduced to 6.

**e) HLS Scheme – report on site meeting with Margaret Fenelly from Natural England** – The Chairman informed members that a site meeting had been held with Natural England to assess the HLS Scheme and what work would be required to do over the next year or so. Margaret Fenelly from Natural England had been impressed with the progress made on Long Hill and gave us some huge compliments. It was recognised that there was

more work to do on the north side of Castle Hill and advice was given on what to do next. The Clerk would be preparing a Management Plan for future consideration and liaison between the Council and Natural England over the next few months.

#### **124. Finance, Policy & Resources**

- \*a) Payments** – RESOLVED that all payments, as detailed in the payment schedule attached, be approved on proposal made by Cllr. C. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.
- b) Request to make electronic payments from Imprest Account only – look into it
- c) Waste Charges for 2016/17 (increased by 92p per week)** – the Clerk informed members that she had received a letter from Wiltshire Council stating that it had revised its waste fees and charges for 2016/17 and that the new charges would come into effect from 1.4.16. The Clerk informed the Council that the Town Council's contract for the weekly collection of a 1100 litre wheeled bin would increase by 5% or 92p per week. The Town Council agreed that a new annual contract should be signed.
- \*d) Request for financial support towards St. Michael's Church Flower Festival 2017** – With reference to the request, as outlined in the Clerks Report, members felt that they were unable to allocate any funding towards this event. We find ourselves in a position of enhanced competition for grant aid and whilst members agreed that the event itself would be a community event, they were concerned that funds raised by the event would be used for the church and expressed concern that any offer of a grant would set a precedent for further competition considering there are other churches in Mere that are in need of money.
- e) To adopt the actions as outlined in the Minutes of the meeting of Assessment of Internal Controls** – RESOLVED that the actions be approved.

#### **125. General Items**

**a) Report on South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting held on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March** – Cllr. Jordan reported that both he and the Chairman had attended the meeting where they were given a briefing on how the new combined Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service would work and it did not appear to threaten our provision here in Mere. WC were asking Area Boards to establish Health & Wellbeing Groups –taking on the role now provided centrally with some funding trickling down. An unconvincing update was given on the delivery of new housing to meet local needs. We expressed our concern about meeting the needs for 'affordable housing' – both to buy and to rent. A long presentation was given on the development and provision at The Nadder Centre. At another point in the meeting the slow arrival of ambulances was raised which chimed with concerns raised by the Chair at our last meeting. This was going to be followed up. We were given the proposed Major Maintenance plan 2016/17. A map view of what was planned showed that the scope of the plan was very limited. Locally, Barrow Street Lane and Six-Acre Lane Junction were to receive surface dressing. We expressed our concern that nothing was planned for Castle Street and asked that representation be made to support the case for resurfacing Castle Street. Mere Flower Festival 2017 was to receive a SWW Area Board Grant of £500.

#### **126. Forthcoming meetings/events**

- Councillor Development – Essential Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor (Workshop training offered by South West Councils on 15<sup>th</sup> July at Holiday Inn, Taunton)
- Negotiate a better outcome in planning, Training event – Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at Lackham House
- Audit Training Session , Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at Devizes
- Annual Parish Meeting
- User Group Meeting to discuss Duchy Manor traffic management
- Annual Town & Parish Council Involvement Meeting (Wiltshire Council Highways)

*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

Wiltshire Council – National Non-Domestic Rates

0.00

The Clerk informed Trustees that Wiltshire Council were still applying the discretionary award to Charitable properties for National Non-Domestic Rates. Therefore the rates payable for the Recreation Ground & Tennis Courts were zero.