

# Mere Town Council

*TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD*

**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.**

**Present:** Councillors B. Norris (Chairman), J. Jordan (Vice-Chairman), N. Beale, M. Cassidy, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, R. Parsons, R. Sims & Mrs. L. Traves.

**Also:** PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky, Mr. R. Stone, D. Stone, R. Flower, A. Miller, Mr. P. Farrow, Spencer Gunn & Claire Shaddick.

## **Meeting convened at 7.32 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).*

Andrew Miller from 1 The Lodge, St. Michaels View, Castle Street explained that he had written a letter to Wiltshire Council (copied to the Town Council) regarding the road along Castle Street, in particular speeding and the state of the road surface. He said that the road surface meant that it was extremely noisy and cars were often driving onto the kerb. The Chairman replied that the Town Council is aware that the road surface in Castle Street is in poor condition and assured Mr. Miller that the Town Council takes every opportunity to put pressure on Wiltshire Council for repairs. Mr. Miller said that it gets patched every so often but it needs complete resurfacing and some traffic calming measures. Cllr. Jeans replied that if there are potholes in the road which are considered dangerous then Wiltshire Council will patch them. However, Castle Street is suffering from delamination and this would require resurfacing. Only 5 roads each year from each Area Board will be put forward for resurfacing and we have asked that Castle Street is considered next year. As for the speeding issue, we could ask for the police to help with enforcing the speed limit either with a traffic speed data device across the road or with speed traps, or preferably both. The Clerk was asked to contact PCSO Pete about this. Cllr. Jordan confirmed that Castle Street had been well represented at Area Board level and said that he was aware that Cllr. Jeans had been trying hard to get this pushed as well. Cllr. Parsons said that a lot of people had commented to him that Wiltshire is by far the worse county for poor road surfaces and we needed to have a direct contact with Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Jeans suggested that the Town Council should write to Philip Whitehead (Wiltshire Council's Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport).

The Chairman informed the meeting that Gartell & Son had started drainage work in the cemetery today. He also stated that he would be organising a community litter pick to take place on a Sunday during September and advised that if anyone was interested in participating, they should contact him direct.

Cllr. Hazzard asked about dilapidated vehicles in the car park and asked if the Town Council had any rights to get people to move their vehicles. The Chairman explained that the Town Council relied on Wiltshire Council and the police for help with moving these vehicles but said that if we deemed something to be dangerous then we could take steps to remove them. Cllr. Hazzard said that perhaps the Council could adopt a policy to stop this kind of parking and it was agreed to raise this item on the next agenda. Cllr. Jeans said that he was certain that, during the days of Salisbury District Council, someone used to go and mark the tyres of cars because there was something in the rules that said that they shouldn't park there for more than 24 hours. It was agreed to make some enquiries about this.

Mr. John Heath from Water Street said that he thought one of the most dangerous places to cross the road in Mere is outside the Post Office. He said it was a dreadful place to cross and that, as there were dropped kerbs on the pavement, there should be a zebra crossing.

Cllr. John Jordan pointed out that the Carnival Procession was to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> September and not 10<sup>th</sup> as printed in Mere Matters!

Cllr. Sims said that there was a new emergency phone number 105 for people anywhere in Britain to contact their electricity network operator to report a power cut or safety concern, or receive reassurance during a blackout.

Mr. Andrew Miller said that he had seen road closure signs on the Mere to Gillingham road. Cllr. Parsons said that the road had been marked and it looked as though they were going to patch it. Cllr. Jeans and the Clerk confirmed that they had not received any prior notice of the road closures.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllrs. P. Coward, R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd & Mrs. K. Symonds.

**46. 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.*

**47. Minutes** – **RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016 on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote. **RESOLVED** to approve the Town Council's Staffing Panel and Appeals Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016 subject to amendments to the employee contribution rates under the LGPS scheme on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Jordan and carried with a vote of 3 for and 1 abstention.

#### **48. Matters Arising**

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

**Restrictions** – the Clerk reported that the latest update from the Senior Traffic Engineer, dated 2.9.16, was that she was preparing the works package and once she had submitted this to the contractors and received a date for the works, she would update us.

**b) Downside Close (Oval Homes Development) – adoption of highway** – The Clerk reported that the Highways Development Control Manager of Wiltshire Council had confirmed that the adoption would take place by means of a notice under S228 Highways Act 1980 and said that this was a straightforward procedure whereby the intention to adopt is advertised for 28 days and, if there are no objections, the road is automatically adopted at the end of that period. Wiltshire Council had confirmed that they had instructed their solicitors to prepare the notice. Members were pleased to learn that it was all proceeding as it should do.

#### **49. Reports & Consultations**

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** – PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky said that they now had an 'intel' board for the Mere Area. The local police have been tackling the issues relating to boy racers around Mere and also pushing for traffic safety on the A303 following a recent fatality – the second this year. The advice is that if you break down on the A303 you should try and get off the carriageway and get to somewhere safer. Cllr. Jordan asked if it would be possible to have some speed checks carried out in Castle Street and also if it would be possible to arrange for the traffic speed data device across road outside St. Michaels View. (May need to request this with Wiltshire Council.)

**b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report** – Cllr. Jeans said that, as an interim measure prior to the new parking and waiting restrictions, he had placed bollards along Salisbury Street. He had also liaised with the Doctors Surgery and owners of vehicles parked in the Salisbury Street Car Park to ensure that the mobile Breast Screening Clinic could access the car park. He also pointed out that Planning Committee decisions seemed to be very inconsistent at the moment.

#### **50. 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: 16/07234/TCA  
Application for: Work to Trees in Cons. Area  
Proposal: T1 – Ginko – Fell

At: The Old Rectory, Church Street, Mere. BA12 6DS

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

Application Ref: 16/05791/TCA

Application for: Work to Trees in a Cons. Area

Proposal: T1 – Conifer tree – fell

T2 – Yew tree – crown reduction approx one metre and re-shape

At: Trelawn, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JG

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Parsons, seconded by Cllr. Hazzard and carried with a vote of 10 in favour.

Application Ref: 16/07459/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Erection of a timber kennel unit to accommodate 120 dairy cows.

At: Higher Mere Park Farm, Mere. BA12 6AD

It was pointed out that there was an issue raised by the Rights of Way Department of Wiltshire Council regarding this planning application and the fact that the official route of footpath 41 would run through the proposed development. Cllr. Jordan said that Mere Footpath Group had recently repaired a stile along this footpath and noticed that the footpath had been redirected from its official line which actually makes for a better walk and he was sure that most walkers would prefer its unofficial line to its official line. RESOLVED on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried with a vote of 10 in favour and 1 abstention to submit the following response:

*The Town Council is happy to support the planning application subject to the condition that the applicant applies to have the footpath (MERE41) officially and legally diverted. The Town Council is aware that the footpath's unofficial route is away from the farm buildings but the legal line, as recorded in the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way runs through the farm buildings and would, indeed, run through the proposed development. The Town Council feels that most users of the footpath would prefer to walk along the unofficial route, away from the farm buildings and would agree with the observations of the Rights of Way Officer and suggestion that the applicant should submit an amended development plan showing how the footpath through the site is to be accommodated.*

Application Ref: 16/07935/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Proposed conversion of existing barn to provide dwelling with annexe

At: Manor House, Manor Road, Mere. BA12 6HR

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application with the following condition relating to the annexe, on proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote in favour:

*The Town Council requested that the applicant is required to enter into a legally binding S.106 agreement for the annexe so that it is ancillary to the main use of the barn and cannot be occupied separately.*

***b) Notice of informal briefing meeting with David Lohfink, Land & Planning Director of C. G. Fry & Son to discuss revised application 'minor material amendments' to Phase 1 and detailed designs 'reserved matters' for Phase 2 of Woodlands Road Development (Hill Brush Factory site) – the Clerk explained that Mr. Lohfink had been in touch to explain that C. G. Fry and Son would be submitting a Minor Material Amendment application to the Full Planning that had been granted for Phase 1 of the development and a detailed planning***

application for the Outline permission that had been granted for Phase 2 of the development. Mr. Lohfink had indicated that he would be happy to make an informal presentation to the Town Council about the changes prior to arranging a public consultation meeting. The Clerk had arranged for Mr. Lohfink to come and give an informal presentation to the Town Council on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30 p.m.

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

**a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults** – Cllr. Parsons brought up the issue of the blocked drain outside The George again. The Clerk reiterated that this had been reported to Wiltshire Council, using the MyWiltshire Reporting app and the response was that it was low priority and would be done when resources allowed.

**b) Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme (PEAS) 2016/17** – letter from Wiltshire Council's Weather & Drainage Manager – the Clerk confirmed that the Town Council had been invited to take part in the PEA Scheme again which involved the issue of salt, sand bags, tabbards, road signs etc. The only difference being is that the salt came in 25kg bags rather than 1tonne bags and needed to be collected from the Warminster Depot this year. It was agreed to request that the Town Council collect 40 X 25kg bags of salt.

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

**a) Grazing on Castle Hill & Long Hill** - deferred

**b) Issues at Southbrook allotments** – The Clerk pointed out that there had been a recent problem at the allotments at Southbrook: one of the residents living along the Southbrook road has had some building work done to their house and authorised their builder to place a skip for the building rubbish to be placed on their allotment (without requesting our permission). The builder ordered the skip which was subsequently placed on a vacant allotment and the skip was overloaded. The skip operator came to collect the skip and couldn't take it away because it would have been unsafe. The builder was given notice to unload the skip to a safe level. Meanwhile, the Clerk had contacted the skip operator asking them to remove the skip from the allotments as we had not granted permission for them to place the skip there. The skip operator turned up after the notice period and the skip hadn't been unloaded. The skip operator therefore unloaded the excess rubbish onto the allotment site and removed the skip. This incident has been quite unpleasant, the police have been involved and we understand that the householder and builder have fallen out. The police have closed their case because it is a civil matter. After negotiations carried out by the Chairman, the skip operators have agreed to bring in another skip so that our grounds staff can load it with the excess rubbish and clear the vacant allotment of debris. This incident has reaffirmed the need to block unauthorised vehicular access onto the allotment site at Southbrook (a measure which the Town Council agreed to last year). Unfortunately, the access is not wide enough to accommodate a vehicular gate and a pedestrian gate and so we have ordered a collapsible lockable bollard with combination padlock and a sign. We will be liaising with the Duchy of Cornwall and farmer who has access to the fields beyond. The bollard will be installed in the next week or two and the padlock will be added once we have written to all the allotment holders giving them the combination code. The Chairman pointed out that the Town Council has a policy for skips on our land but suggested that an additional condition should be added to the allotment tenancy agreements stating that skips on allotment land were to be used for the collection of allotment rubbish only and even then by prior agreement with the Town Council. Members agreed to this.

**c) Problems with trees adjacent to allotments at Jack Paul Close** –The Clerk informed members that she had been receiving complaints about the tall trees growing on the western boundary of Jack Paul Close allotments, adjacent to the bypass bridge along Manor Road. The Clerk had established that the trees were the responsibility of Wiltshire Council and was assured two or three years ago that Wiltshire Council would add it to their scheduled works and budget to have the trees reduced in height. This year the Clerk reported this on the myWiltshire app and has now received the following response: 'I can advise you that Wiltshire Council will not cut back any healthy trees unless they are causing damage to property. There is no legal obligation to prune or

remove their trees for reasons of light loss to an adjoining/neighbouring property. A 'right to light' is difficult to prove and only refers to buildings and light, not to gardens and sunlight.' The Clerk said that the allotments would eventually be rendered unusable and was extremely frustrated by this response. It was agreed to raise this for discussion at the Budget meeting and also to ask the Duchy of Cornwall if they can offer any help with this matter.

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

**a) For Town Council to adopt recommendations made by Staffing Panel and Appeals Committee (see Minutes of meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016)** – The Chairman said that he wanted to thank Philip Coward and the Hill Brush Company's Finance Manager, Matthew Thorne, for their advice and went on to explain that exploring pension options has been quite challenging: the Committee had the options of NEST, NOW and LGPS schemes. Cllr. Hazzard pointed out that he was aware that a number of councillors were not in favour of the recommendations being made by the Committee and that there was clearly a need to discuss the matter further. It was therefore agreed to defer the discussion until the end of the meeting as it may be deemed necessary to go into Confidential Business.

**b) Request for financial support towards production of a book to celebrate 20 years of Mere Literary Festival** – the Chairman reported that during the summer recess, the Town Council had received a request for financial support from the Mere Literary Festival who wanted to produce a book illustrating the history of Mere Literary Festival (now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year). The Literary Festival had applied for a grant from the South West Area Board and, as a result, they have been asked to approach their local council for a financial contribution in order to demonstrate that they have local support. The Chairman had made the decision to award a grant of £100 in order to help them with their grant application.

**c) Request for financial support towards Mere Playgroup refurbishments** – the Chairman reported that during the summer recess, the Town Council had received a request for financial support from the Mere Pre-School who wanted to revamp their premises to include painting interior, replacing carpet, replacing old furniture and updating equipment ready for the children to start a fresh term in September. The Pre-School had applied for a grant from the South West Area Board and, as a result, they have been asked to approach their local council for a financial contribution in order to demonstrate that they have local support. The Chairman had made the decision to award a grant of £100 in order to help them with their grant application.

**d) Request for financial support towards installation of accessible toilets in St. Michaels Church Tower** – The Clerk read out a letter from Mr. Marsh on behalf of St. Michael's PCC: 'The PCC of St. Michael's is planning a reordering of the church to make it more user-friendly and welcoming. Part of the reordering will be the installation of two toilets in the base of the tower – one disabled with baby changing facilities and one ordinary toilet. I have spoken to Cllr. George Jeans and I have been in touch with Mr. Stephen Harris, Community Engagement Manager (S.W.Wilts Area Board). He informs me that I should liaise with you as you would need to inform him of the Town Council's views. S.W. Wiltshire Area Board has a small amount of money devolved to support local communities wishing to provide accessible toilets and there is also a Community Area Grant which also might make a contribution. We would like Mere Town Council to make a contribution of between £50 and "200 to seed fund the project and to show support for it thus boosting our case with Wiltshire Council to make grants from their two sources. I attach our statement of need for public toilets at the western end of Mere.' Cllr. R. Hill said that he thought this was a good idea but the Town Council should be aware that other churches had provided toilets without a grant from the Town Council. The Clerk made councillors aware that Cllr. Mrs. Symonds had said that she did not think it appropriate for the council to fund works for the benefit of the church itself and that there would, no doubt, be specific fund raising where members of the town could contribute individually if they saw fit. Cllr. Jordan said that, unlike many other towns and parishes, Mere Town Council did provide public toilets in Mere and the costs of this provision were considerable. Cllr. Parsons said that he had recently attended a very well supported event in Mere Church (Military Wives Choir) and he was unaware that people had found it inconvenient to go to the Grove Building for the toilet facilities. Cllr. Cassidy felt that the Council should make a small contribution of £100. Cllr. Jeans proposed that the Town Council should make a contribution of £100 subject to the South West Wiltshire Area Board approving a grant and subject to

the proposed toilets being accessible to the public and signage to the toilets being publicly displayed. The voting for this proposal was recorded as 5 in favour and 5 against. The Chairman used his casting vote and voted against the proposal. The proposal was therefore not carried.

**e) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached (August & September)

**f) To approve Budget/Expenditure report for quarter ending 30.6.16** – NOTED that the Budget Expenditure report for the first quarter of the financial year showed a small surplus of just under £1500. RESOLVED to approve the Budget/Expenditure report for the quarter ending 30.6.16.

**g) To provide new litter bin for Salisbury Street Car Park and take on litter removal responsibilities for this litter bin** – the Clerk reported that one of the litter bins in Salisbury Street Car Park which fell under the responsibility of Wiltshire Council was removed by Wiltshire Council contractors because, they say, it was vandalised. To our knowledge it had a broken door which we could have fixed had we known they would take it away. When we undertook the divisions of responsibilities of the litter bins Wiltshire Council did say that if they had to remove any litter bins then they would not be replaced. This litter bin is in a prominent position at the entrance to Salisbury Street Car Park and was well used. Cllr. George Jeans has asked Wiltshire Council if they would continue to empty the litter bin if the Town Council replaced it but they have replied that they will not. Does the Town Council want to replace the litter bin and take on responsibility for emptying it? RESOLVED to replace the litter bin and take on responsibility for emptying it.

## 54 General Items

- a) **Mere Cancer Research – Christmas Market (see email from Penny Fennon 7.8.16)** – The Clerk confirmed that Mere Cancer Research wanted to hold the Christmas Market on Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December and wanted to know if the Town Council would be arranging the ‘grand light’ switch on during that night. It was agreed that the Xmas Lights would be organised so that the events could be co-ordinated. Members also pointed out that there had been comments last year about there not being enough lights on the tree. The Clerk agreed to investigate this and purchase more lights if necessary.
- b) **Town Crier for Mere** – Cllr. R. Sims said that he would like permission to request that Mr. Bob Parsons act as Town Crier for Mere. He said that it would be a completely voluntary role and would not cost the Council anything. Cllr. Bob Parsons said that he was happy to take on this role. RESOLVED that Mr. Bob Parsons take on the role of Mere Town Crier on proposal made by Cllr. R. Sims, seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a unanimous vote.

## 12 Forthcoming meetings/events

- a) **Wiltshire Association of Local Councils – Training Event - Town Planning from the Parish & Town Council Perspective** – Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, 10.00 – 16.00, Devizes Town Hall.
- b) **Invitation to interactive public meeting to help Wiltshire Council meet the challenges ahead** – meeting to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> September in Salisbury City Hall at 5.30 p.m.
- c) **Shaftesbury Hospital proposals** – it was reported that Gillingham Town Council was arranging a meeting for as many interested parties who wish to attend to discuss and form a united response in respect of the NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group’s proposed intention to downgrade Shaftesbury Hospital (they were proposing to change the hospital to a community hub, without beds). The meeting would be held at the Town Hall, Gillingham on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> September at 7.00 p.m. and the Chairman said that he would attend on behalf of Mere Town Council and report back on the meeting.
- d) **Mere Literary Festival** – the Clerk reminded members that the 20<sup>th</sup> Mere Literary Festival would take place 10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> October. The Town Councillors were invited to the award ceremony on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> October at 3.00 p.m. in the Lecture Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

*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.*