

# Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 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, P. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, J. Jordan, E. Mitchell, R. Parsons, Mrs. K. Symonds, R. Sims & Mrs. L. Traves.

**Also:** Mrs. A. Howell, R. Stone, Dick Morris, D. Stone, R. Flower, Mr. & Mrs. E. Henson, Mrs. A. Harris, Mrs. A. Beall, Mr. I. Sheppard.

## **Meeting convened at 7.38 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).*

The Chairman read out the following statement: 'On Saturday evening at about 7.30pm a woman was filmed by a young man on his mobile phone emptying a litter bin on the skate park. Her reason for doing this was to make a protest about the mess the youngsters make around the skate park. She was made fully aware that she was being filmed and when she was challenged she began to get abusive towards the young man. The lady then walked over to the other litter bin by the path, removed the black sack and walked over to the skate park saying this is the only way to get things done. The young man said this footage could go to the council. The lady replied good and they will understand the point I am trying to make. She then proceeded to empty the second bag of litter onto the skate park. The filmed footage was put on facebook and I was informed of the incident by my thirteen year old niece at 13.00pm on Sunday. I telephoned PCSO Peter Tscherniawsky 13.57pm on Sunday to check that he was aware of the incident and told him that there was 26400 hits on face book and this is likely to go viral, and pledged the Town Councils support. He told me that he was aware of the incident and was currently gathering more information.

The rubbish was cleared from the skate park when I checked at 2.30pm on Sunday but the litter has left a stain in the concrete. This is all the information I have about the incident. The matter is being dealt with by the Police.

Mrs. Adrienne Howell from Old Hollow said she had come to the meeting to make a plea to the Town Council to take more care of Mere. She said that Mere was much tidier and well kept when we had a street cleaner with a broom. She said that there was weeds and rubbish growing up everywhere and last Sunday, she and Barry had swept up 7 bags of weeds and rubbish from Dark Lane. Mrs. Howell pointed out that visitors often come to the cemetery in Mere but the bins in the cemetery were overflowing at the weekend and had still not been emptied this evening. She also asked for the grass to be cut rather than strimmed and that we reinstate a street cleaner with a brush and reinstate an Environment Committee. Mrs. Howell said that more care and attention and money, if necessary, needed to be spent on the upkeep of Mere.

Mrs. Harris said that there was a road sign going into Lynch Close that was propped up against private property. She said that there was an unsightly telephone box with broken windows on the Shaftesbury Road and agreed that there seemed to be a general lack of care and interest in the appearance of Mere.

Mr. Parsons said that people living or working around The Square had noted that cars were hanging around in The Square with drug taking going on. The car details had been passed on to the police who were aware of the situation.

Mr. Sims would like to thank everyone that supported Mere May Fayre for Cancer Research which raised £2,800.

Mr. Sims also raised the idea of appointing a Town Crier.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllr. R. Hill and PCSO Peter Tscherniawsky

## **25. 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. C. Hazzard declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 34a)

**26. Minutes** – RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting held on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 subject to the amendment that Cllr. M. Cassidy was present at the meeting. Proposal made by Cllr. Sims, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 9.5.16

**27. Presentation and discussion with representatives from Keep Wiltshire Frack Free group**

Mr. Bill Jarvis gave a presentation on Hydraulic Fracturing or ‘fracking’, the process and impacts. Mr. Ted Henson said that he accepted this was a controversial subject but he wanted to see the counter argument for fracking as he was aware that opinions differed. Cllr. Coward said that since fracking had been introduced in America and they were self sufficient in oil production, the price of oil had gone down. Cllr. Hazzard felt that the presentation would have been more effective if both sides of the argument had been offered and also felt it would have been better given at a public meeting in the Lecture Hall rather than at a Town Council meeting. Mr. Jarvis was thanked for giving his presentation.

**28. Report from Rivers Group on activities over last 12 months**

Mr. Ian Sheppard gave a resume of the activities of the Mere Rivers Group over the last 12 months. ‘The good news is that the Mere Rivers Group were awarded £1k from Grid Community Scheme. The purpose of this grant is to allow us to work on The Ashfield. The owner of Burton Grange owns a large stretch of the Ashfield and we are working with him to make further improvements. We have already done some work with Seeds4Success and we have more work planned for September. We have had a meeting with our MP regarding Wessex Water’s abstraction licence. Wessex Water currently abstract up to 9m litres of water per day from Mere. Between 1970 & 1975 they increased this to 16m per day. After 1975 was reverted back to 9m per day. We have asked our MP to find out why our licence has not been reviewed when others have been reviewed. We had a meeting in February with W. Water, Environment Agency, Offwat, Wiltshire Wildlife, British Consumer Group and Duchy of Cornwall – it was a good meeting and what was agreed was that we would pilot a scheme called Abstraction Incentive Mechanism where Wessex Water will stop exporting water from Mere when the water levels have gone below a certain point. However, a minimum of 4 million litres per day is still required to supply Mere, Gillingham & Marnhull. The new water supply pipeline from Corfe Mullen was not, originally, going to be connected to the Whitesheet reservoir but they seem to have had a change of heart now and it will be connected but only for use in an emergency. Expansion proposals for Gillingham are almost equal to the population of Mere and this will put more demands on the water supply. Ian Sheppard said that the Rivers Group will continue to keep the pressure on and talk to the Environment Agency and the MP was now involved. The Chairman thanked Mr. Sheppard and the Town Council acknowledged the good work the Rivers Group were doing and thanked the group for their continued efforts with this cause.

**29. Matters Arising**

**a) Queen’s 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations** – the Clerk confirmed that everything was proceeding with the firework celebrations to mark the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. At the present time over £1180 had been raised in donations from over 20 parishioners and businesses. Other pledges had been made and this with the £500 grant from Wiltshire Council’s South West Wiltshire Area Board, should bring us near to the £2000 target. Cllr. Jeans had been working closely with Mr. Deeker who had provided us with his Risk Assessment & insurance documents Both his and the Council’s Risk Assessments had been passed to our insurance company who had confirmed that Public Liability Insurance cover would be provided in respect of our responsibilities towards the display. Staff & helpers had been arranged for the event and a meeting would be held later this week to discuss actions/responsibilities. Publicity had been provided on the Mere website, Mere Muttters, Town Council Facebook page and Cllrs. Mrs. Hurd & Mrs. Symonds had kindly helped with posters which were displayed around the town.

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

**Restrictions** – The Clerk confirmed that she had asked for a progress update and had been informed that the Report was being written at the moment. This would then be discussed with the Cabinet member to decide whether or not it needed to be presented to Cabinet for decision.

**c) Downside Close – adoption of roads, pavements, street lights etc.** – The Clerk confirmed that work had started and that it had been confirmed that there was enough money to finish the work.

**d) Issues relating to democracy regarding Town Councillors v Wiltshire Council representative** – The Chairman stated that the Town Council & Town councillors have full control over what we are directly responsible for, or what we own or rent. Regarding what is under the control of Wiltshire council, we as a town council can only make requests. More is achieved if we both work together. The traffic management plan has to go before a Wiltshire council cabinet member to make the decision. Cllr. Hazzard said that this matter was of concern to him because Julie Wharton had said ‘in her experience, it is unlikely that the Cabinet Member will agree to proceed if the local member is not in support of the scheme...’ Cllr. Hazzard said that 14 Town Council members had agreed with the scheme and, since Cllr. Jeans had not spoken out against the proposals, it was assumed that he, too, was in favour of the scheme. Cllr. Hazzard wanted our Wiltshire Councillor to explain his sudden change of heart. Cllr. Jeans said that he had listened to the points raised in the public consultation. He said that he supported the Town Council as much as he could but his role as a Wiltshire Councillor was separate to his role as a Town Councillor as he represented a wider area and was elected to represent the voice of people living in the outlying villages as well as Mere. Cllr. Jeans said that the Cabinet Member would take into account his views, objectors’ views, highways officers views as well as the Town Councils views. Cllr. Jordan said that a few years previously he had written in to complain about traffic proposals in Castle Street and was told categorically that alterations could not be made because of an individual’s wishes who lives on the road, yet it would appear that Cllr. Jeans was prepared to make an amendment to suit a parishioners individual wishes who lives on the corner of Water Street/Salisbury Street. Cllr. Jeans said that he could justify his view which was not an objection but a proposal that the wording needs to be very clear as to where double yellow lines end outside Scone Cottage because if it ends in the wrong place then it could push parked cars further into Salisbury Street or further back in Water Street, blocking emergency services etc.

### **30. Reports & Consultations**

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** – Copies of the Community Policing report were handed out. This report covered:

Revised Control Strategy for forthcoming year + priorities

Community Messaging via [www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk](http://www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk)

Press release in relation to lost/found/stolen property

Opinions on police attendance at meetings: It is clear that under the new model we are not able to attend as many meetings as we used to and this has led to some concerns being raised. You will receive a report for every meeting and an officer or PCSO will attend in person when operational commitments allow. Could you please answer the following questions? 1. Do you only want to see the PC or PCSO who covers your area? 2. Alternatively, would you be happy to see any PC or PCSO (understanding that they may not be fully aware of all the local issues)?

Current Sector Series – May 2016 has seen a significant increase in offences of theft in the Mere area (normally 9 per month but this month it has increased to 20). 5 of these relate to petrol station fuel thefts but the biggest increase has been with theft from vehicles, mostly targeted at ‘beauty spots.’

Local Crimes – two reported ‘non dwelling’ burglaries in the Mere area – one shed and one garage.

Cllr. Sims also reported that dippers had been taking purses from handbags. The Chairman reported on a meeting we had held with police..... In relation to the question raised on police attendance at meetings, members agreed that they would prefer for the PC or PCSO that covers our area, to attend our Town Council meetings if he is on duty and available at the time. Cllr. Parsons said that he had a recent experience where dialling 101 was a complete waste of time and that if you wanted to get a response from the police it was necessary to dial 999 even if it wasn’t an emergency.

**b) Wiltshire Councillor’s Report** – Cllr. Jeans said that he had been given a list of Highway Major Works being proposed in the area. He and other councillors did not necessarily agree with the roads which had been chosen for resurfacing treatment and had asked for the matter to be discussed at the next Area Board meeting only to find that traffic orders had been made and that it was too late to stop many of these works prior to the Area Board meeting. Cllr. Jordan said that he thought Castle Street should be a priority for highway resurfacing and should certainly have taken priority over the minor roads leading off the A303.

### **31. 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: 16/04418/FUL  
Application for: Full Planning  
Proposal: Proposed rear garden room extension  
At: 10 Oak Lane, Mere. BA12 6FJ

RESOLVED to recommend the above application for approval on proposal made by Cllr. Hughes, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a majority vote of 12 for and 1 abstention.

Application Ref: 16/04032/FUL  
Application for: Full Planning  
Proposal: Erection of a porch on the front (west) elevation  
At: Hillcrest, Hazzards Hill, Mere. BA12 6EU

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

**b) Report on meeting with Richborough Estates** – The Chairman reported that on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, Cllrs. George Jeans, John Jordan and himself had been asked to attend a preliminary meeting with representatives of Richborough Estates to discuss an area of land in Mere that they had been contracted to explore development opportunities for housing. The land in question was the land adjacent to Gillingham Corner (where the Carnival fairground is held) and the number of houses being mentioned was 130. The Chairman explained that both he & Cllr. Jeans had expressed their thoughts that Mere was expecting to reach its allocation for housing within the South Wiltshire Core strategy but Richborough Estates had replied that Wiltshire Council was losing planning appeals because it could not demonstrate a 5 year land supply for housing. Cllr. Jeans said that he was currently making enquiries about this.

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

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

**b) Request to apply for Traffic Order to restrict vehicles along Angel Lane (request for lockable bollard at top of Angel Lane, restricting traffic between 6 p.m. & 8 a.m.)** – The Clerk said that she had been asked by a resident of Angel Lane, if it would be possible to erect a lockable bollard at the end of Angel Lane to stop youngsters driving up to the cemetery at some speed late at night. The resident had offered to erect and lock the bollard during the evening and to let it down in the morning. The Clerk had made enquiries with the Highways Department who had told her that as Angel Lane is adopted highway in its entirety it would need a legal order to restrict vehicular access. Members of the Town Council felt that this was not a practical or appropriate solution and that it would be better if some action could be taken against the boy racers rather than take action which may result in the problem moving elsewhere.

**c) Proposed stopping up of highway adjacent to 3 New Cottages, Shaftesbury Road, Mere** – Cllr. Jordan proposed that the Town Council should raise no objection provided that there was still 1m of highway rights after the edge of the curb. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a vote of 10 for and 3 abstentions.

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

**a) Drainage of new cemetery** – The Chairman reported that since January of this year a small group of councillors have been looking at improving the drainage at the new cemetery. Four contractors that have expertise in land drainage have been invited to advise and quote - Abbots, Bartlets, Paul Froud & Gartells - After careful consideration and with budget constraints the contract to carry out the drainage work has been awarded to Gartells. Gartells have also been asked to lay 42 meters of path on the east side of the cemetery. The costs of the work will be £8222.40 for the drainage work and £4730.00 net for the path total £12952.40

net. The costs of drainage to the new cemetery needs to be taken into account at the next finance meeting when deciding what to charge for burial plots.

**b) Wiltshire Probation Service work on painting railings in cemetery** – The Chairman reported that the Wiltshire Probation Service have been supervising the painting of the railings in the cemetery over the last 3 weekends and the work was proceeding well.

**c) Repairs to wall at rear of Salisbury Street Car Park** – Members were reminded that the rear wall of the car park, adjacent to the steps and the Doctors Surgery had been hit by a truck. The Town Council had received a quotation to pull the wall back into place, scrape out cement and re-point at a cost of £600. RESOLVED to accept quotation and appoint contractors to carry out the work on proposal made by Cllr. Sims, seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

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

**a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedule attached. Proposal made by Cllr. Mitchell, seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote of approval. (Cllr. Hazzard, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room whilst this matter was discussed and took no part in discussion or voting).

**b) To approve Budget/Expenditure Report for financial year ending 31.3.16 (report attached)** – RESOLVED that the Budget/Expenditure report for the financial year ending 31.3.16 should be approved on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

**c) Internal Audit Report** – Mrs. Mary White had written: ‘On 2<sup>nd</sup> June, I carried out an internal audit of the Town Council’s Financial Statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. It is my opinion that proper accounting records have been maintained by the Council and that financial statements have been properly prepared. In this audit the Town Clerk, Lindsey Wood, provided every assistance and had, as ever, everything necessary to hand and in excellent order.’ Members expressed their gratitude to Mrs. White for carrying out the internal audit. The Clerk confirmed that the Internal Auditor had completed section 4 of the Annual Return and had been able to answer ‘YES’ to all questions.

**d) To approve accounts & supporting statements for the year ending 31.3.16 (attached)** – RESOLVED to approve the accounts and supporting statements for the year ended 31.3.16 on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a unanimous vote.

**e) Annual Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 – Annual Governance Statement 2015/16** – From the information provided in Minute No. 124e) [4.4.16] & Minute 34b) – 34d) above, Points 1 – 9 of the Annual Governance statements 2015/16 (Section 1 of the Annual Return), were read out to members and members answered ‘yes’ to each of the statements. The Annual Governance Statement was signed by the Clerk and by the Chairman in the presence of the Town Council.

**f) Annual Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 – Account Statements 2015/16** – from the information provided in 34d) above, the Accounting statements 1-11 were completed and approved by the Town Council. Confirmation of approval of the Account Statements was signed by the Clerk and by the Chairman in the presence of the Town Council.

**g) To note public rights to inspect accounts** – The Clerk confirmed that, as required by The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 the Town Council must now publish the Annual Return, the Declaration that the Accounting Statements are unaudited and the Notice for the Commencement of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights. Publication is on the parish website [www.merewilts.org](http://www.merewilts.org)

### **35. General Items**

a) South West Wiltshire Area Board Initiative to provide funding to enable greater access to the internet for local communities through the improvement of local community communications - deferred

### **36. Forthcoming meetings/events**

- Training opportunity: Essential Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Holiday Inn, Taunton
- Wiltshire Neighbourhood Watch Association Annual General Meeting – 10 a.m. Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> June in the Bay Window Room, Wiltshire Police Headquarters, Devizes
- Parish Steward Scheme Presentation – Alamein Suite, City Hall, Salisbury – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 from 7.00 to 8.30 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.*

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**MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND**

Registered Charity No. 1093497

To approve payment to Mere Town Council for maintenance of Recreation Ground £8312.46

The above payment was approved on proposal by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.