

# Mere Town Council

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> March 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. Hill, R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell (until 8.17 p.m.), R. Sims & Mrs. L. Traves

**Also:** R. Flower, R. Morris, Lt. Cdr. Keith Broach, J. Howard, Mr. Vernon Philips, Spencer Gunn & Claire Shaddick, Ian Sheppard, Mrs. M. Durkee, Mrs. A. Harris, Mrs. A. Beall, Mr. & Mrs. S. Sherrard, D. Stone, R. Stone & PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky (until 8.17 p.m.)

## **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. Harris said that she was really pleased to see that we were going to have a community litter pick but said that she would only take part if it was a Community Litter Pick and not part of the Clean for the Queen campaign.

Ian Sheppard said that he wanted to let the Town Council know that there would be a street party at Steep Street, Old Hollow & Waterside during the evening on 11<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. As Chairman of Mere Rivers Group, Ian Sheppard also said that during a recent meeting with MP Dr. Andrew Murrison, he had asked why the licence for water extraction from Mere had never been reviewed when others have been reviewed. Dr. Murrison had subsequently written to the Environment Agency and they had sent a convoluted response. However, they will be stopping extraction from the Wylde because it has been granted a special area of conservation and this will place more pressure on Mere. Mr. Sheppard said that the only difference between Mere and Wylde is a big hill: the Wylde, however, flows into the Hampshire Avon which is a trout stream and there are influential pressure groups pushing for the Hampshire Avon to be preserved. Mr. Sheppard said that he was going to ask if the Ashfield could have that same designation because our flora and fauna is just as important. The Rivers Group will be having more talks with Dr. Murrison, Wiltshire Council, Environment Agency and DEFRA but Mr. Sheppard had wanted to take this opportunity to keep the Town Council informed.

Mrs. Maggie Durkee said that she had come to the meeting to inform the Town Council that the Church were planning to hold a big flower festival in Mere Church in June 2017 instead of the Church Fete. The Church had made an application to the South West Wiltshire Area Board for a grant and will be sending a letter to the Town Council to ask for support and for a small donation. It is hoped that a Flower Festival will bring in tourists and support businesses in the town. Cllr. Hazzard said that the Church Fete usually raises a lot of money for the church and asked Mrs. Durkee if she thought a Flower Festival would do the same. Mrs. Durkee replied that it was hoped to have a variety of activities surrounding and in association with the festival which would raise money for the church.

Mr. Morris said that he understood that the Bond has now been released to Wiltshire Council for the road works in Downside Close and asked if the Town Council had received any news in respect of dates for the work to be started.

Mr. Stephen Sherrard of Mere Dental Surgery stressed the importance of considering all users when discussing and considering any proposed changes for traffic management at Duchy Manor site.

Mr. Roy Sims reminded those present that the Mere Cancer Research Group would be holding their spring bazaar in the Lecture Hall this Saturday. He also said that he had attended the Shaftesbury & Gillingham Transport Forum meeting recently where Wiltshire Council's consultation on the future of subsidised bus services was discussed. He urged anyone who uses the buses to fill out and submit the consultation form. Mr. Sims also said that he would be attending the Tisbury Community Safety Partnership meeting tomorrow night where the guest speaker would be the Wiltshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Angus McPherson. Mr. Sims also reported that there had been some instances of bad parking, particularly behind the Walnut Tree Inn and

pointed out that it would be impossible for a fire engine to get to many properties in Mere due to inconsiderate and bad parking.

Mr. Hazzard pointed out that the clock on the clock tower was no longer working.

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

**106. 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.*

- G. Jeans - payments

**107. Minutes** – RESOLVED that the Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 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 1.2.16

**108. Matters Arising**

**a) Downside Close – response relating to adoption of roads, pavements, street lights etc.** – the Clerk reported that she had heard from the Highway Development Control Manager to say that the bond cheque from the HNBC had been received and that he would shortly be having discussions with Ringway (the new contractor) to get the remaining works completed. The legal unit at Wiltshire Council and the Parish Council had urged the Highway Development Control Manager to ensure that the contractors are aware of the need to prioritise these works and he had replied, on 11<sup>th</sup> February, to say that he wanted to get the work done as quickly as possible but wanted to sort out the street lighting first so that any new surfaces did not need to be dug up. The Clerk had asked for a further update prior to the meeting but no news had been received. Cllr. Jeans said that he understood that the Bond money was around £40k which needed to cover the tarmac and the street lighting, he understood that the previous quotations received were only valid for 3 months and was concerned that, if the job was protracted too long, then the Bond cheque would get swallowed up in administration costs and there would not be enough money left over to carry out all the work necessary to get the roads adopted. Mr. Morris confirmed that all the street lights were in place, just not connected.

**b) Community Litter Picking Initiative** – the Clerk advised members that following the notice in Mere Matters, about 8 volunteers had come forward. The Town Council now needed to pick a date & times – looking at either Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April or Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> April between 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. and to advise the volunteers, complete a risk assessment and send this to our insurers, advise the participants of where to meet, arrange for the litter to be collected and make signs etc.

**\*c) 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>

Mrs. Rachel Hyde had provided the Town Council with a letter which, the Chairman said, was a very good starting point for the Council in which to base its decision. Cllr. Jeans said that the Town Council needed to make a point that we are not in an urban area and that we have no facilities within the town and that residents needed transport to get to arts, hospitals, sports etc. RESOLVED to thank Mrs. Hyde and to use her letter as a foundation on which to base the Town Council's response. Cllr. Hazzard abstained from voting as he had not read Mrs. Hyde's letter.

**d) Public Toilets - Concerns regarding urinals in gents toilets** – the Chairman reported that the gents toilets were in such a poor state of repair that it was necessary to close them for a few days for health reasons. However, the urinals have now been repaired and modified by a local company and are back in operation. Cllr. Jeans said that the plumber who has the unfortunate task of unblocking the urinals now cannot gain access because the plate has been pot riveted instead of screwed on. The Chairman said that this was unfortunate but could not be altered now and if it needed to be undone, he would come out and cut it off. The Chairman agreed to discuss this with the plumber if necessary.

**e) Old Mere First School Site – encroaching weeds and vermin control, issues relating to the Dark Lane boundary wall & future agenda items** – the Chairman reported that, at the last meeting, Mr. Vernon Philips had raised issues and made requests concerning the Old Mere First School site in Dark Lane. The Town Council has written to the owners of the site regarding the rat problem and also contacted Wiltshire Council's Environmental Health Department. Unfortunately, the Council has not received any response from the owners but the Environmental Health Department had been to visit the site and said that the rat problem seemed to be under control and that they did not have any powers to act unless the site was full of rubbish. The officer from Wiltshire Council had contacted Mr. Philips direct to explain their viewpoint. The Chairman said that general guidance on dealing with problem neighbour issues states that talking to your neighbour about your concern is the best place to start and the Chairman said that he would ask Mr. Philips to try this course of action if he has not done so already. The issue relating to the wall alongside Dark Lane is a safety issue as it runs alongside a public footpath. Cllr. Jeans stated, at the last meeting, 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 said that he would speak to the building inspector, highways and enforcement about this matter. Mr. Philips had asked if there was a member of the Town Council who was taking a particular interest in the old Mere First School site that he could go and talk to in between meetings and also asked that this issue be included on the agenda for every meeting until the matter was resolved. However, the Chairman said that the Old School is privately owned and the Town Council has no enforcement powers or control over this land and that, in his opinion, discussing this matter every month would not be a good use of councillors time. Cllr. Jeans confirmed that, in respect of the crumbling wall alongside Dark Lane, the owner of the old Mere First School had taken away the stone and had been asked to rebuild the wall. If he did not do this in the near future then Cllr. Jeans would inform Wiltshire Council's Enforcement Officer. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that Mr. Philips is very conscientious and she understood the problems associated with the site but said that they needed to be pursued through the right channels and that the Town Council did not have the powers to take any action. The Chairman therefore proposed that the Town Council should only raise this matter on future agendas when there is something new to report. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

**f) Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations** – the Clerk stated: the Queen's Birthday is on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> April although this date will not be the main focus of celebrations it is the official date for lighting beacons throughout the country. The Queen's Official birthday will be celebrated on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> June. The big celebration event takes place 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May at Windsor Castle. Patrons Lunch (Street Party in Pall Mall) is to take place on 12<sup>th</sup> June. Those unable to attend the Patrons Lunch are being encouraged to hold their own street parties across the country. It would seem to me that the main focus of public celebratory events will be held on weekend of 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June. I have been approached by a number of organisations to ask if we are co-ordinating anything or going to have bunting etc. I have suggested that we put a notice in the next edition of Mere Matters asking if groups or organisations or streets/roads are planning any parties and if so, when. The Town Council has already agreed and registered to have a bonfire/beacon on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> April on Castle Hill. We have applied to English Heritage for Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent for this and we will not receive their decision until 7<sup>th</sup> April at least. In the meantime, we have to draw up a risk assessment for our insurance company which needs to be approved by them at least 14 days prior to the event. I thought, originally, that the Town Council had agreed to let off some fireworks at the same time as the beacon, but since this is not the official celebrations, I would suggest that if fireworks were going to be set off, then that should be done during June when all the other events were taking place. This would also be a weekend and not a weekday. The Council agreed that if fireworks are to be considered, they should be set off in June and not April and also that a request, asking for sponsorship or donations for fireworks, should be made in Mere Matters. Cllr. Jeans said that he had made contact with Mr. Bill Deeker about setting off the fireworks from Castle Hill. It was agreed that the Council would not be purchasing mugs or medals. The Clerk also pointed out that she had received an email from The BBC's One Show asking if we know of anyone in the community who will be 90 on 21<sup>st</sup> April.

## 109. Reports & Consultations

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** – PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky distributed the Community Policing Newsletter which will now replace the neighbourhood policing newsletter. It was noted that a container at Duchy Manor had been broken into (3<sup>rd</sup> incident). Cllr. Hazzard also asked PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky about two young men who had been walking around Mere today selling goods for Great Ormond Street hospital and asked whether they were genuine. PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky said that he was not aware of any hawkers in the area but suggested that anyone approached should ask them for a copy of their card and telephone the number on the card if there were any doubts.

- Cllr. E. Mitchell left meeting (8.17 p.m.)
- PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky left meeting. (8.17 p.m.)

**b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report** – Cllr. Jeans reported that Wiltshire Council is no longer supporting Wiltshire Good Neighbours project but the Area Board is considering supporting a minibus for the elderly instead.

## 110. 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: 16/01923/TCA  
Application for: Trees In Conservation Area  
Proposal: T1 – Beech – Crown reduction in height and spread by up to 2.5 metres.  
Crown lift to give 3.5 metres clearance from ground.  
At: Lawrences, Old Hollow, Mere. BA12 6EG

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

Application Ref: 16/00199/106 - **For information only - awaiting further information from Wiltshire Council's legal department**  
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

The Chairman informed members that, upon asking for further information on the above application from the planning authority, we have been informed that it is being considered by Wiltshire Council's solicitors at the present time. This is an application to amend a Section 106 Agreement and so does not have the same consultation restraints as a planning application and so the Town Council has been advised to await further information from Wiltshire Council's legal team before considering a response.

**b) Technical Consultation on Implementation of Planning Changes** – the Clerk said that she had been made aware of a government consultation on the proposed approach to implementation of measures in the Housing and Planning Bill, and some other planning measures. Responses to the consultation will inform the detail of the secondary legislation which will be prepared once the Bill gains Royal Assent. The complete document was some 64 pages long but a summary of the proposals are:

- Changes to planning application fees

- Permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development
- Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development
- Creating a small sites register to support custom build homes
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Local Plans
- Expanding the planning performance regime and extending the existing designation approach to include applications for non-major development
- Testing competition in the processing of planning applications
- Information about financial benefits
- Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service
- Facilitating delivery of new state-funded school places, including free schools, through expanded permitted development rights;
- Improving the performance of all statutory consultees including changes to statutory consultation on planning applications.

Consultation on this document closes on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> April.

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

**a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults** – the Clerk reported on Wiltshire Council’s responses to the current and pending MyWiltshire Reports made by the Town Council.

**b) Highways England – Improvement plans for the A303/A358** – the Clerk said that she had inadvertently come across information about public engagement days to explain what Highways England were planning to do along the A303/A358 corridor to deliver the commitment to the Road Investment Strategy. The Clerk had become dismayed when she discovered that these plans did not include any proposed works in the West Knoyle/Mere area of the A303 but instead concentrated on three schemes:

- **A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down dualling** – construction of a twin-bored tunnel at least 1.8 miles long as the road passes Stonehenge and a bypass for Winterbourne Stoke to link the existing dual carriageway section around Amesbury with the dual carriageway at Berwick Down.
- **A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling** – dualling of the 3 mile single carriageway section of the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester
- **A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling** – creating a dual carriageway link from the M5 at Taunton to the A303

Members noted this information and Cllr. Sims said that he would bring this matter up at the Tisbury meeting.

**c) Proposed temporary closure of: The Square, Mere - May Fayre (Cancer Research), 21st May 2016** – members noted this information.

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

**a) Drainage of new cemetery – recommendations & request for delegated authority** – The Chairman reported: *Since the New Year I have been working with Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Hill, & Cllr Hazzard on a project to provide more drainage and paths in the new cemetery. We have contacted and met four drainage companies on the site and gathered specifications and quotations. On the 24<sup>th</sup> February I held a meeting with the vice chairman, Cllr Hazzard, Cllr Hill and Cllr Mitchell at the council office to examine the specifications and quotations. The councillors came to the conclusion that they would ask one of the contractors to come back to re-look at the lateral drainage options and agree spacing’s so that they would fit in with the graves. Also ask for clarification on the size of the drainage pipes for the laterals. Also ask for a quotation to finish the pathway and renew the pipe on the western boundary. The Councillors feel it would be beneficial to carry out the work as soon as possible after things start drying out. I would like to ask the council to agree to delegate the authority*

for these members to make a decision on the contractor, specification and quoted price. Full details of the quotations etc. will be given to councillors by request and full details will be available after the decision is made. Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that these five councillors should be delegated authority to make decisions in these matters. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

**b) Mere School – proposals to increase car parking & improve safety** – Cllr. N. Beale said that the school had concerns over children’s safety and particularly over the children’s safety when parents came to collect them in the afternoon as many parents parked around or drove across the pick up zone. The school had tried to make parents aware of these problems but unfortunately this had backfired and caused other issues, for which the school has subsequently apologised. However, the school had now put forward some new proposals which would involve creating a zebra crossing across the school drive, a footpath to the pavilion car park and extending the pavilion car park to about twice its size. Cllr. Hazzard said that the Town Council would not be able to make a quick decision on this matter as it would need much greater consultation and clearer plans and it was important to get together to discuss this with the sports groups and other user groups/ organisations and businesses. It was felt that the Sports Development Group would be a good conduit for such a consultation meeting. It was agreed that the Town Council should call a Duchy User Group Meeting to be Chaired by the Town Council Chairman. Cllr. Nick Beale agreed to prepare plans & drawings that could be issued to attendees prior to the meeting. Cllr. Jordan said that the school, in recognition of being the major users of the Andy Young Pavilion car park, has agreed to contribute some planings or scalplings to fill some of the potholes in the Andy Young Pavilion car park.

**c) Cemetery Railings – report on meeting with Community Payback representatives** – The Clerk reported that last Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, she had met with Peter Aldridge of the Community Payback Team to discuss the possibility of painting the cemetery railings and gates as part of a Community Payback project. Mr. Aldridge assessed the job and thought that it would make a very suitable project. He explained that we would need to provide all the equipment and paint and that we would need to make a small contribution towards the administration of the work but he said that Parish & Town Councils get concessions the same as charities and he did not think that the contribution was likely to be excessive. He gave the Clerk the impression that the job could be stated in the next couple of months. The Clerk was waiting to hear from his supervisor as to the exact contribution request and the likely start dates. Cllr Jordan said that he would welcome using the Community Payback Team as the Footpath Group had had a good experience with them. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that a decision should be delegated to the Clerk as long as the required contribution is £300 or less. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried with a unanimous vote.

**d) Relining of Castle Street Car Park** – the Clerk reported that on 22<sup>nd</sup> February the office received a telephone call from Eric Stevens from County Roadways, Road & Traffic Services. They were working in the area carrying out some work for Wiltshire Council and said that if they had any white paint left over at the end of the day, they needed to pay a salvage fee & dispose of the paint. If they could charge us the salvage fee, they would be happy to come into Mere and re-paint the lines in the Castle Street Car Park. After speaking to the Chairman about this, we agreed that we should set a maximum fee and agreed that they could not go over £500 – the invoice has come in at £480. We have subsequently received a number of positive comments about the work.

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

**\*a) Payments** – Cllr. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting whilst the matter was discussed and voted. RESOLVED that all payments be approved on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of those in the room.

**b) Is the Town Council interested in pursuing Transfer of Land adjacent to Bramley House under the Transfer of Asset scheme from Wiltshire Council?** – Cllr. Jeans said that as a result of considering a recent planning application for Bramley House, it has now been confirmed that some of the land they are proposing to utilise does not belong to Bramley House but belongs to Wiltshire Council Housing. Cllr. Jeans wondered if the Town

Council would be interested in applying for an asset transfer of this land if Wiltshire Council's Property Services department were willing to transfer. The Clerk pointed out that there were other areas in the vicinity of this land at the rear of Bramley House which the Town Council may like to consider worthy of an asset transfer at the same time and it was RESOLVED, on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, that the Town Council should ask Wiltshire Council whether there was any potential in opening this up for discussion.

#### **114. General Items**

**a) Concerns over poor ambulance response times** – the Chairman stated: “I have personally experienced having to wait over an hour and a half for an ambulance to take my wife to hospital. Although the first response time was good the time getting her to hospital was worrying. On the 17<sup>th</sup> Feb a Mere resident needed urgent medical attention The first response was superb (Mere fire service) a paramedic then arrived and requested an ambulance to take the patient to hospital at 7.15pm The ambulance arrived at 11.30pm - 4.15 hrs later. These instances where the ambulance service is slow to attend are totally unacceptable. I wonder whether these are just isolated instances or whether the ambulance service is degrading and can no longer be relied upon by rural communities.” It was agreed that the Chairman should ask this question in Mere Matters to get other peoples views. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd pointed out that there is only one ambulance on cover from Bath to Salisbury and when this ambulance is misused, other people that really need it don't get it.

**b) Do you think child poverty in the Mere, Tisbury and Wilton community areas should be addressed? (see email from Steven Harris – 22.2.16)** – Cllr. Jordan said that at a recent Area Board meeting, the severity of child poverty in the Mere area was discussed. Cllr. Jordan said that he had pointed out that Wiltshire Council was proposing to close the Mere Children's Centre and felt that there was an obvious inconsistency in these two positions. Cllr. Jeans said that when talking about child poverty, it was not just about money and that there were various reasons why children might be in poverty. Cllr. Jordan said that there would be a future meeting on this subject and that he would be happy to attend and represent Mere.

**c) Report on meeting with Frome Town Council** – the Clerk said that she and the Chairman had attended a workshop meeting with Frome Town Council that was extremely interesting as they shared many common problems & issues.

#### **115. Forthcoming meetings/events**

- Tisbury Community Safety Partnership – Cllr. Sims attending
- South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting – Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 6.30 p.m. in Hinton Hall, Church Street, Tisbury (venue to be confirmed) – Cllr Jordan attending

Meeting closed at 9.22 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.*