

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 7th November 2016 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors: B. Norris (Chairman), J. Jordan (Vice-Chairman), P. Coward, R. Hill, R. Hughes, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, Mrs. K. Symonds & Mrs. L. Traves

Also: Dick Morris, D. Stone, R. Stone, Mrs. A. Harris, Mrs. A. Beall, Roy Flower & Lisa Butler

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. Dick Morris of 47 Downside Close asked if there had been any movement on the adoption of the roads along Downside Close. The Clerk said that she had received no further communication but agreed to raise the matter with Wiltshire Council again.

The Chairman said that on Wednesday, 19th October, he attended the Richborough Estates Public Consultation event at the Grove Buildings to view/discuss proposals for development of land adjacent to B3092/Gillingham Corner. He spoke to one of the representatives who said that over 80 people had attended the event.

The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council had applied for a Temporary Road Closure Order for The Square for the Remembrance Day Service to be held next Sunday, 13th November 2016. The road closure order would last for 10 minutes only and would take effect from 10.57 a.m. until 11.07 a.m. The Clerk had arranged for the appropriate road closure and diversion signs to be delivered and the grounds staff had agreed to come in and operate the closures. The Chairman would be laying a wreath on behalf of the Town Council.

The Clerk read out a letter from Mrs. Adrienne Howell of Mere Literary Festival thanking the Town Council 'for its generous donation towards the publication costs of *Merely a Festival* which was produced to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Mere Literary Festival. The Festival's thanks also go to the Chairman for representing the town at the Awards Ceremony and helping to cut the anniversary cake and to councillors who supported events. The Mere & District Linkscheme are most grateful to the Town Council for your kind support of its charity and its festival.'

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. M. Cassidy, C. Hazzard, E. Mitchell, R. Parsons and R. Sims and also from N. Beale for late arrival.

68. 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 Planning Application 16/09081/FUL
- Cllr. Brett Norris declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 75a)

69. Minutes – The Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Monday, 3rd October 2016 were approved as a correct record of proceedings subject to the following amendment:

Public Session, Page 2, third paragraph.... **Mr. Sims** said that the Old Mere First School had been broken into at least 3 times.....

70. Matters Arising

a) **Standing Order relating to 'Previous Resolutions' (6 month rule) – in respect of request for grant towards toilet in St. Michaels Church.**

The Chairman outlined the Town Council's Standing Orders relating to the 6 month rule as follows:

A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer (Clerk) in accordance with standing order 9 or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

With reference to the information above and in the Clerks Report, Cllr. Jeans said he would like to ask for 3 councillors to agree in principle only to supporting the Church in their application for funding for an accessible toilet. Cllrs. Mrs. Hurd, N. Beale and R. Hill agreed to sign the written notice.

71. Reports & Consultations

- a) Neighbourhood Policing Report - None
- b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – None

72. 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: 16/09081/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Demolition of existing residential garages, construction of 2 bungalows together with associated parking, landscaping and public parking.
At: Land adjacent to 2 Homefield, Mere. BA12 6LT

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Jordan and carried with a vote of 7 in favour and 2 abstentions. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

Application Ref: 16/09871/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in a Conservation Area
Proposal: T1 – Norway Spruce tree – fell
At: Bristow House, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JF

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

Application Ref: 16/10339/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Removal of existing detached garage and first floor bay window extension. Erection of a single storey rear extension and detached garage. Alterations to existing elevations.
At: Greystones, Pettridge Lane, Mere. BA12 6DG

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Hill, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote of 6 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

73. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults – Councillors confirmed that they had now received the list of tasks that could be completed by the Parish Steward. It was agreed that the list of tasks should also be published in Mere Matters with a note asking members to notify the Clerk if they wanted any jobs added to Parish Steward issues sheet. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Steward would be in Mere for two days this week and that she had forwarded the issues sheet with tasks for him to carry out. Councillors requested that the following tasks be added to the next list:

- Limpers Hill – Centre of road is getting built up with silt and grass growing out of the silt in the middle of the road.
- Pothole along Southbrook road outside 1st new house on right where scrapyard was (by gateway).
- Potholes outside Park Corner Farm on road to West Knoyle.
- Potholes outside 2 cottages at entrance to Lower Park Farm.

b) Low flow rate in Mere rivers – Cllr. B. Norris reported: 'the water level in both our rivers is very low. The Ashfield river at Burton is totally dry from the source down past the Mill Pond. The Shreen source is now from a spring under

Brookside Cottage which is a quarter of a mile from the original source. Wessex Water have taken over and above the agreed amounts of water from Mere source. There are various reasons for this. The water source at Codford is being repaired and will not be back on line until May 2017. Abstraction from the Wylfe has had to be stopped or restricted because of low river flow and we have also had a dry autumn. Although Wessex Water are trying to minimise the transfer of Mere water, they also have to ensure that they balance supply and demand across the area they supply. Unfortunately, every time there are problems elsewhere, Mere rivers pay the price. Our streams are at the lowest since 2011. Mere Rivers Group will be meeting representatives of the Environment Agency shortly to explore the possibility of reviewing the amount of water that Wessex Water can extract under its current licence.'

c) Highways Major Maintenance Programme – The Clerk stated: 'As you are aware, I have been trying to establish how Parish & Town Councils could get roads listed on the yearly Major Maintenance Programmes for resurfacing as Mere Town Council is anxious that Castle Street should be included and she also has a similar issue at West Knoyle for a road in their parish to be included. Last years' experience left everyone feeling very angry about the process as both Parish & Town Council's wishes were ignored and Area Board Committee Members' wishes were ignored and we all felt that scarce resources had been spent inappropriately. Having been directed from one officer to another in Wiltshire Council, I have finally received correspondence from Peter Binley, Head of Highways Asset Management, who writes: "Wiltshire Council's Local Highways Investment Fund 2014-2020 is making a long term investment in improving the highway network. Unfortunately, we cannot do everything at once and do have to prioritise work. As part of the process a list of proposed schemes is submitted to each Area Board for consideration annually. They are able to suggest alternative schemes of similar size or value which could be substituted, or to identify sites for consideration in future years. In some cases there may be a good reason for progressing one scheme in advance of another, for example if it is a route to a hospital or local service. There are some schemes that need to be done for safety reasons, particularly if there are safety concerns or skid resistance issues. This year the lists of proposed sites were prepared later than usual because of recent contract changes and the need to divert staff resources to procuring and introducing the new highway contract. Castle Road (*sic*), Mere was identified as a potential scheme in the original 2014-2020 list prepared in 2013 so we would expect to treat it during that period. At the time the C297 was not identified as having particular problems but the flooding in early 2014 and other factors can cause increased deterioration. In some cases there may be localised areas which need repair and there is a process for identifying and prioritising them through the local highway office. The list of potential sites for 2017/18 is still being prepared and it is too early to know whether it will be possible to include these sites for consideration by the Area Board, but your suggestions have been noted. I hope these comments are helpful." Members noted this information and asked the Clerk to reply to Mr. Binley and inform him that for some reason, at a recent Area Board meeting it was pointed out that the road through Mere Town Centre and Castle Street is not identified as a link road as it is assumed that people heading for Gillingham/Shafesbury continue along the A303 west of Mere and then turn off, when in reality they do not, they turn off the A303 east of Mere, drive through Mere town centre and Castle Street to access the B3095. Also the Town Council feels it is important to mention that every time there is an accident or road block on the A303, Castle Street becomes the A303 as all traffic is diverted through the town whether officially or unofficially. Thirdly, to ask Mr. Binley to clarify that the road in question is Castle Street, Mere and not Castle Road.

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

a) Proposals for old swimming pool site at Duchy Manor – Cllr. John Jordan said that some time ago he volunteered to come up with some proposals for the old swimming pool site. He had since taken the project a little bit further and had recently asked Lisa Butler, who knows about fitness, to come and take a look at the project and give a presentation to the Town Council to inspire members to set aside some seed money towards the project at the budget meeting.

Lisa Butler gave a Power Point presentation to members at the meeting (presentation attached).

At the end of the presentation, members felt that they were happy to give a nod of approval for the preparation of a feasibility study and to set aside some seed funding.

b) TLC for the cemetery with volunteer group – Cllr. John Jordan said that he had received a complaint from a resident of Mere who had spent some time tending a plot in the cemetery but came back a week later after the groundsmen had strimmed the cemetery and their plot was covered in grass cuttings. Cllr. Jordan said he realised that this was not the fault of the grounds staff as, in theory, they were supposed to be able to mow over the cremation plots but this was not possible. Cllr. Jordan therefore wondered if some volunteer help, doing some gardening and path trimming in the cemetery, might make a difference and wanted to know whether he had the support of the Town Council. Cllr. Jeans proposed that the council should support the volunteers and explore possibilities of increasing expenditure on cemetery. Members agreed that the volunteer help should be supported. Cllr. Jeans thanked Cllr. Jordan and the footpath group for all the work they did in Dark Lane recently.

c) Update on HLS Scheme, programme of works for winter and Capital Works funding – the Clerk reported that the grounds staff would be starting work on the clearance of dense scrub regeneration on the north side of Castle Hill in the next month. Historic England had confirmed that Ancient Monument Consent would not need to be applied for on condition that the works were carried out in accordance with their recommendations.

d) Recent water leak problems (Public Toilets & Youth Club building) – The Clerk explained that she had recently become aware of two water leaks. One in the public toilets which was now under control but, as a result, the Town Council had received a water bill of £1200. The Clerk had received a leakage allowance claim form from Wessex Water and would submit this in the next day or two. The second leak was somewhere within or around the Youth Club building. The water meter for the Youth Club building is over 50m away in the childrens play area of the Recreation Ground and when Wessex Water came to read the meter they said that there were two leaks – one of them they would deal with but the other one we needed to deal with. After they had repaired their water leak it transpired that there was still water leaking somewhere within the building (after the internal stop tap). The Clerk had called out Nugents plumbers to investigate and it was not possible to identify where the water was leaking as all the pipes for the building are underground. The only options would be to dig up the floor of the building or renew the water pipework within the building above ground. The Clerk had received an estimate of between £1400 + £1500 for this work. Members agreed that the work needed to be done and that it could cost much more money to dig the floor of the building up. Members also agreed that the Clerk should ask Wessex Water to move the water meter so that it was nearer the building and so that it would be easier to incorporate it into a routine reading programme.

75. Finance, Policy & Resources

a) Payments – **RESOLVED** to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached.

b) To approve Budget/Expenditure report for period ending 30.9.16 – **RESOLVED** to approve the Budget/Expenditure report for period ending 30.9.16.

c) Business rates – draft rateable values for 2017 – the Clerk said that she had received information from the Government's Valuation Office Agency stating that they had completed the revaluation of rateable values and had published the draft rateable values online. The Clerk had been online to view the draft rateable values and estimated bills and pointed out the two significant differences to the Council:

- Cemetery – 2017 draft valuation is 2175 (current valuation 860), estimated bill £444 (last year's bill £416.24) – the Clerk did not know why the valuation had increased so much and yet the estimated bill had not.
- Band Hut – 2017 draft valuation is 1275 (current valuation 790), estimated bill £408 (last year's bill £0)

Members agreed that the Clerk should make enquiries with Wiltshire Council about the cemetery revaluation/bill and also asked the Clerk to inform the Mere & District Railway Modellers Club about the change in valuation for the Band Hut.

d) To set date, time and membership of Annual Budget Meeting to set Precept for 2017/18 – The Clerk confirmed that she had received the Council Tax Setting Timetables from Wiltshire Council and notification of the draft 2017/18 Council Tax Base figures. It was agreed to email all councillors with potential dates and see who is available for the annual budget meeting. Meanwhile the Clerk informed members that she had already started work on the draft budget figures and would appreciate it if members could contact her with any new project schemes or expenditure items that they would like included so that she could incorporate them into the spreadsheets and draft figures etc.

e) To authorise signature of Direct Debit Mandate for Auto-enrolment Pension Scheme (NEST) – Yes OK.

76 General Items

a) Report on Seeds4Success AGM – The Chairman reported: On Wednesday, 2nd November, I attended the Seeds4Success AGM. I am pleased to inform the Council that the charity is doing well and has so far achieved all the goals set out at the start. From April 2015, the Charity's main base has been Mere Youth Centre although 2 sessions a week are delivered from Wilton and other venues such as Tisbury Sports Centre are used, as required. Jaki Farrel, the service manager, was initially working part time. In January this year, however, she became employed by the charity full time. The charity also employs 6 part time staff to deliver youth services in this area. A copy of the annual report is available to councillors on request. At the AGM Seeds4Success expressed their gratitude to Mere Town Council for their financial support as well as providing them a base in which to operate.

b) Request to hold Annual Parish Meeting 2017 in Grove Buildings – the Clerk said she had received a request from Mrs. Rachel Hyde to hold the Annual Parish Meeting at the Grove Building. She said that if the cost is an issue, they would be willing to donate an amount to help with this and if it would attract more interest, she was willing to make a cake or two and was sure that other people would help too. Mrs. Hyde said that she sincerely hoped that the councillors would consider this as a number of issues

about the future of Mere should concern us all. The Chairman said that he did not feel that this year's Annual Parish meeting, being held in the Andy Young Pavilion, felt like a special meeting. RESOLVED that the Town Clerk should book the Grove Building for next year's meeting, if it is available.

77. Forthcoming meetings/events

- Wiltshire Assembly (Delivering housing provision in Wiltshire), Thursday, 10th November, 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m., The Nadder Centre, Weaveland Road, Tisbury.
- Our Community Matters Conference, Wednesday, 16th November at 6.30 p.m., The Nadder Centre, Weaveland Road, Tisbury
- Wiltshire Association of Local Councils AGM, Thursday, 10th November, 6 pm for 6.30 pm, Council Chamber, Trowbridge Civic Centre

Note: Members are reminded that the Town Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.

MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No. 1093497

Trustees RESOLVED to approve the following payment:

Wessex Water – water supply to old cricket club (standing charge only 1.4.16 – 7.10.16)	13.01
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Meeting closed 21.08 p.m.