

# Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW**

**Present:** Councillors: B. Norris (Chairman), J. Jordan (Vice-Chairman), N. Beale, M. Cassidy, C. Hazzard, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, R. Parsons, R. Sims, Mrs. K. Symonds & Mrs. L. Traves  
Also: Mr. Dick Morris, Mr. R. Flower, Mr. R. Cleal, M. Liddicoat, V. Phillips, Judy Phillips, Tim Burden, Jonathon Burden & Mr. G. Avory

## **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. Vernon Phillips of Pettridge Lane said: 'Mere Matters always encourages the public to come and hear what our councillors are doing for the community. I would like to address roads, pavements and street furniture. I've been here long enough to notice things that are clearly wrong and need attention, but not so long that I can shrug my shoulders and just walk on by. Visitors to Mere I talk to comment that it used to be such a cared for village, but more recently, it looks run down and neglected. They are right – it looks tired and unloved. My own observation is that the road surfaces, particularly in Castle Street and Boar Street/Pettridge Lane are in a shocking state of disrepair and have been since I came here 2.5 years ago. Road markings in many places are almost disappeared. The pavement I am most familiar with from Pettridge Lane through Boar Street and The Square and down Church Street is an obstacle course of broken surfaces, dogs mess, chewing gum and other stains. They need steam cleaning for a start. Gutters are full of last year's leaves, drains blocked, weeds growing in collected mud (pinch point at top of Pettridge Lane). Weeds grow along pavements at the foot of buildings and retaining walls almost anywhere. Lamp posts and signs have protective coating peeling off, iron inspection plates rusted. Street signs are oxidised and unclear. The Clements Lane sign is lying on the ground, Shaftesbury Road hanging on one post, Southbrook which was vandalised two years ago is absent. Letter box in Pettridge Lane is turning green. If I was a businessman thinking of locating to Mere, I'd be put off by the appearance of a town apparently with poor administration. The same applies to prospective house buyers. I don't know why I'm doing this – does anyone on this council have a role responsible for such matters? Clearly not or we would not be seeing this decline. Remember, you are presiding over this state of affairs – don't let it be your legacy. Can we please have some action?'

Cllr. Jeans said that he has been urging Wiltshire Council for some road surface repairs and has just received confirmation that they will carry out a 20m stretch of resurfacing in Castle Street. He is also hopeful that he can get some resurfacing work carried out in Old Hollow. He said that Wiltshire Council had no money allocated for road markings unless they were an emergency although the Area Board has set aside some funds for white lining. Drains are a big problem and Wiltshire Council has confirmed that they will not empty drains and gulleys unless there is a threat of flooding. He also confirmed that the Clements Lane road sign has been reported as broken.

Mr. Tim Burden commented on Planning Application 16/12085/FUL at Ashwell Nursery and said that his was opposed to this application because the proposal to rebuild an existing barn was for a much larger footprint than the old tin shed that it intends to replace. He also pointed out that the applicant only owned half of the shed so it would involve cutting it in half. Mr. Burden said that the proposal would be much higher and larger and would be out of character with the surroundings. He felt that the height should be reduced to match existing buildings. He said 'when considering this application I would ask you to refer to S/2012/1587/FUIL – in that planning permission the existing building which is now going to be extended was itself the subject of a barn conversion. Permission to that was granted on the grounds that an equine dentist business would be established and there was a requirement for someone to live on the site. The stables detailed in the approved plans have not been built although a much smaller building has been built instead. If the stables had been built there would be no need for a new hay barn because there was hay storage included within the original proposals.' Mr. Burden felt that the planning conditions attached to the 2013 permission should first be met

and the equine dentist business should be established and stables built before further planning applications are considered for the site.

Mr. R. Cleal spoke in objection to the application at Ashwell Nurseries and said that there was a dispute over the access ownership to the property.

Judy Phillips said that she presumed the Town Council was going to discuss the revised Outline Planning application for land at Castle Street during the meeting. She said that she had not been able to find out what the doctors thought of this revision.

Cllr. Hazzard said that he would be declaring an interest on this topic but with regards to the GP surgery, as far as he was aware, there had been no contract or formal agreement between them and the applicants.

Mr. Sims said that the police had informed him about their 'Force For Good Initiative' designed to help and support community projects in the local area. Cllr. Sims had written to them to ask for help with the outdoor gym project at Duchy Manor. Cllr. Sims also said that the community had now raised nearly enough money for the Town Crier's uniform.

Mr. Jordan said that, after spending 3 years complaining about the state of the road along Castle Street, he was pleased to hear that 20m of Castle Street would be resurfaced. However, he had been gobsmacked that the road through Teffont had over 140 metres resurfaced.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllrs. P. Coward, R. Hill & R. Hughes.

#### **108. 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 personal interest in planning application 16/12217/OUT (Revised)

Cllr. C. Hazzard declared a personal interest in planning application 16/12085/FUL

Cllr. G. Jeans declared a personal interest in Minute No. 113 b)

**109 Minutes** – RESOLVED to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017 on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs Hurd, seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 6.2.17

#### **110. Matters Arising**

**a) Update on adoption of road at Downside Close** – The Clerk reported that they had received correspondence from Wiltshire Council to say: 'I am pleased to inform you that a Notice under Section 228 of the Highways Act, 1980 was posted on site on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February. In simple terms, this section of Downside Close will be declared as a highway maintainable at the public expense at the end of one month from the date of display unless the owner(s) of the street objects. After this time we should be able to formally adopt the remainder of Downside Close.' The Clerk reported that they had made a note, in the office, to follow this up with Wiltshire Council after 14<sup>th</sup> March.

**b) Submission to Dorset CCG regarding Consultation Document 'Improving Dorset's Healthcare.'** – A copy of the Town Council's response to the Consultation Document had been distributed to members. The Chairman said that he has been involved in meetings about this consultation since 16<sup>th</sup> September but did not know, until the SWW Area Board Meeting in February that Wiltshire residents and Mere Town Council could participate in the consultation. Shaftesbury Town Council have been trying to get the consultation period extended. Both Local MPS, Simon Hoare & Dr. Andrew Murrison have complained about the consultation process. It was unanimously agreed that the Town Council should lodge an official complaint about the consultation process also.

**c) Local Government Elections – Timetable of Proceedings, Nomination forms & other information** – The Clerk had received information regarding the unitary and parish elections to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> May. The main changes in legislation were that nomination papers could no longer be delivered by post, fax or e-mail, as they have to now be hand delivered by either the candidate or somebody appointed by them. The Clerk confirmed that both Cllr. Norris & Cllr. Jeans had volunteered to hand deliver nomination papers on behalf of candidates. Nomination papers can be brought in by hand from 16<sup>th</sup> March but the closing date is 4<sup>th</sup> April. Nomination papers can be received at the 'Electoral Services Nomination desk' at:

- County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge BA14 8JN
- Monkton Park, Chippenham SN15 1ER
- Crossmolina Buildings, Snuff Street, Devizes SN10 1FG
- Five Rivers Health & Wellbeing Centre, Hulse Road, Salisbury SP1 3NR

Full details and a timetable of proceedings were in the nomination packs. The Clerk had printed off packs of nomination papers which were left with councillors. The Clerk informed members that she would be posting information on the elections on the website and Social Media pages.

## 111. Reports & Consultations

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** – Cllr. Sims reported that tractor fuel has been stolen this month.

**b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report** – Cllr. Jeans reported on the fact that he had been liaising between residents, Wiltshire Council's planning department & C. G. Fry & Son to try and alleviate concerns about construction traffic. He had requested that traffic should come off the west side of the A303 but if they make a mistake they must turn round at Quarry Fields Industrial Estate. He had also requested a sign at the top of The Lynch. Cllr. Jeans reported that C. G. Fry were not prepared to hold a residents meeting before they start work. However, Mr. Vernon Phillips said that he had arranged a meeting with C. G. Fry & Son.

## 112. 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: 16/12217/OUT (Revised)  
 Application for: Outline planning  
 Proposal: Application for residential development (including affordable housing) and GP surgery, in addition to associated open space, infrastructure and attenuation features with all matters reserved, except access  
 At: Land at Castle Street, Mere.

A letter from Darren Parker of RPS dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 had been distributed to members with their agenda papers. The Chairman explained that the planning application had now been revised to include the addition of a Doctors Surgery and that the Clerk had only been made aware of this revision on Wednesday. This matter had therefore been included on the agenda but the Chairman said that it may be possible to hold an extra meeting if members wanted more time to consider the plans. The deadline consultation had now been extended to 29<sup>th</sup> March but Richborough were not prepared to extend it further so that it could be considered by us at our April meeting. The Clerk also stated that she had asked the Planning Officer the following question 'Now that the plans are revised and an additional consultation period has begun, what impact does that have on all the objection letters that were received prior to the revision. Are they all still valid or does the community need to submit new comments?' The Planning Officer had advised that 'the comments were still valid and will be considered but the weight the Local Planning Authority (LPA) can give them could be called into question now that a revised scheme has been submitted i.e. if there is no additional comment the LPA will have to make a determination as to whether or not they think the revised scheme has now overcome previous concerns and would therefore be locally acceptable. My advice will be to have updated comments to reflect the most up-to-date proposal.' Members viewed the plans on the projector screen and noted the revisions. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd wondered whether the developers had been in communication with the doctors from the Mere Surgery or whether this was their decision to include a doctors surgery within the plans. Cllr. Mrs Traves said that the doctors, via MedCentres, had been in discussions with Richborough Estates.

Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that the Council's decision had been fairly unanimous and having heard what has been said tonight, I think we should re-submit our previous objection and write to all the people that have previously commented on the original planning application urging them to update their comments. Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said that just because something is proposed as a carrot, it doesn't necessarily mean it will be built. She said that she had read the letter from RPS and was concerned that they talked about the Brush Factory site as though it had been built already. She suggested that the Town Council should resubmit their previous

objection. Cllr. Jordan objects because it is a greenfield site and said that the only positive thing about the whole application was the 30% affordable housing. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that she was concerned that they seemed to think that the feeling of the February Town Council meeting was contrary to the feelings conveyed during the consultation event. Cllr. Jeans said that he would be abstaining from any vote because he sits on the Southern Area Planning Committee but I can convey some facts: Richborough have made it quite plain that they would take this to appeal. If you had a Neighbourhood Plan then you could decide what you want to do with this land. The updated Wiltshire Housing Land supply would suggest that we were safe with the 5-year housing supply and the document that I have recently distributed to Town Councillors makes it absolutely clear. It is not only outside the Housing Policy Boundary but also beyond the built environment. **RESOLVED** to object to the Revised Planning Application for the following reasons:

1. The South Wiltshire Core Strategy allocated a requirement of 285 houses for the Mere Community Area with 235 of those being provided in Mere itself for the period up to 2026. In Wiltshire Council's latest Housing Land Supply Statement (updated 1.4.2016) it states that 122 of those houses had been completed in the period 2006-2016 and that there were developable commitments for a further 143 houses for the period 2016-2026 leaving an indicative requirement of 0 houses. The Town Council feels that there is therefore no justification to build on this greenfield site as Mere will have exceeded its housing requirement. Furthermore, RPS contend that there is no five-year Housing Land Supply for South Wiltshire yet the updated Wiltshire Housing Land supply would suggest that there is 5.69 years of deliverable supply for South Wiltshire.
2. The proposed outline application is for the development of a greenfield site outside the Housing Settlement Boundary and within clear view of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is also within a very short distance of Historic England's Ancient Monument - Castle Hill – which is a local beauty spot known for its panoramic views over the Blackmore Vale. If justification for further housing commitments within Mere were to be proven, there are more suitable brownfield sites within the town that would be preferable for development and which would not broaden the housing envelope or built environment of the town.
3. As stated in the South Wiltshire Core Strategy 'access to services in the area is not of a high standard'. Indeed, since the South Wiltshire Core Strategy was published there have been further cuts to bus services and public transport in the area is now even more inadequate. The development of 134 houses is about to start on the Old Brush Factory site in Mere and this will inevitably put further pressure on services and infrastructure in and around the town. Furthermore, there has been no delivery on the 3 ha of employment land to the west of Mere and therefore the balanced needs of the community in terms of housing & employment, as identified within the South Wiltshire Core Strategy, are still not met. The potential delivery of another 130 houses will exacerbate this situation.
4. Whilst the inclusion of a new GP Surgery would undoubtedly relieve some of the pressure from the existing service provider, members did not feel that this would outweigh the pressure that 130 new houses in Mere will put on other services and infrastructure around the town and did not consider it enough of an advantage to compensate for the unnecessary development of a greenfield site.

It was unanimously to request that Cllr. Jeans call in this application to committee.

Application Ref: 16/12085/FUL  
Application for: Full Planning  
Proposal: Re-building of existing barn to form additional space for dwelling with mezzanine, and erection of single storey hay barn.  
At: Ashwell Nursery, Burton, Mere. BA12 6BR

Cllr. Jeans said that he had visited the site, seen the neighbours and the applicants. He invited the Town Council to ask Mark Williams and Mike Willmot to clarify the eligibility of the planning conditions for the previous application. The Chairman said that he would not be happy to support this application on this occasion because the shed is partly owned by a third party and he did not think it was possible to split it. He also thought that there was a dispute over the access of the site. **RESOLVED** to object to the above application for the following reasons:

- a) The Town Council believes that the plans are incorrect. The location plan shows the 'barn' as being an independent unit on the applicant's property only. Upon site visits, Councillors have

confirmed that the 'barn' is indeed a much longer building that extends north onto neighbouring property with the northern part of the building belonging to the neighbour. The design statement says 'The addition to the house will involve the demolition of a dilapidating timber framed, timber and corrugated steel clad existing barn.' However, it would seem unlikely that it is possible to demolish part of this building without causing damage to the remainder of the structure. The proposal would involve reconstruction, including excavations, within part of 'the barn' that belongs to a third party. The correct plans for this site can be better seen on the plans submitted to the previously approved application S/12/1587.

- b) The Town Council believes that this is more of a shed than a barn and is inappropriate for residential conversion. The present building has only an earthen floor and no excavations.
- c) The shed is in joint ownership and we do not believe that the correct certification has been issued. Furthermore, we believe that there are third party ownerships for access to the property and, again, certification may need correcting to address this problem.
- d) The proposed brick built addition will stand 3m higher than the building to which it will be connected to and this will be a visual intrusion in the open countryside. It will be somewhat higher than all surrounding buildings.
- e) The previously approved planning application S/12/1587 included the replacement of an existing glasshouse with an equine dental surgery building with associated hay storage and stabling to be constructed on the base of the existing glasshouse. The Town Council feels that this would be preferable to the erection of another building to provide hay storage.

#### **Informative:**

We understand that there is an issue with the access (ownership dispute) that needs resolving prior to considering any further applications.

We are concerned that conditions relating to the previous planning application S/12/1587 have not been met in terms of the business/occupational use for the premises.

The old boiler house has been converted into a substantial office with toilet facilities – this, as far as we are aware, has not been the subject of any planning application. It also brings into question the need for more living space as there is an office shown on the dwelling building within the planning application.

Application Ref: 17/01255/TCA  
Application for: Work to Trees in Cons. Area  
Proposal: Fell Norway Maple  
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. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

Application Ref: 17/00320/FUL  
Application for: Full Planning  
Proposal: Conservatory extension to rear elevation  
At: 12 Walnut Road, Mere. BA12 6FG

Chairman said that there have already been a couple of similar extensions on the estate and could not see that there would be any problems with this one. Cllr. Jordan said he had visited the site and confirmed that there was a high fence between this property and the neighbour and he said that the proposed conservatory was not particularly large so he could not see a problem. RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a vote of 11 in favour and 1 abstention (Cllr. Jeans). In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

#### **Emergency Item – Hill Brush Development site at Woodlands Road - Mere Transport Monitoring Group**

The Chairman explained that a group of residents had formed a group called The Mere Transport Monitoring Group – their purpose was to mitigate possible damage and disruption to Mere residents, visitors, businesses and infrastructure as a result of the construction phase of the former Hill Brush Site Development and to liaise with Wiltshire Council & C.

G. Fry & Son on their Construction Traffic Management Plan and they would like a Town Councillor to join their group. Cllr. Robert Parsons volunteered to join the group.

**b) Neighbourhood Planning** - The Chairman said that this had been raised at the last Town Council meeting. He explained that the Town Council had raised this issue a number of times in 2014 to see if there was any interest in producing a Neighbourhood Plan within the town but there had been no expressions of interest. He also said, however, that things had moved on since then and Neighbourhood Plans had become more useful and the process had become slightly easier and that there was probably more appetite for this locally with the current planning application from Richborough Estates. The Clerk said that she had also been in contact with a Neighbourhood Plan Consultant who had worked on other Neighbourhood Plans within Wiltshire and would act as a project manager in order to speed up the process and provide advice. Members felt that it would be a good idea to pursue this but felt that it would be better to discuss this after the elections in May. It was agreed that this matter should be raised on the agenda for the May Town Council meeting.

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

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

No jobs identified but Cllr. Jordan said that the Parish Steward was making some progress along Burton Path

**b) Quotations and layout plans for new markings in Salisbury Street Car Park** – The Clerk stated that she had obtained two quotations for re-marking the car park – she had tried to get three quotations but the third company (Ringway) did not bother to get back to her. The companies she had contacted are LMS Highways Ltd & Bournemouth White Lining – both have visited the site. However, neither of them have provided a survey plan – one has provided a sketch drawing taken from a google earth printout and the other has given an approximate number of parking bays to be marked out. The Clerk had asked both companies to set out the area in the middle so as to provide the maximum number of car parking spaces. They both said that a bank of double-ended parking bays should be situated in the middle with a road in between and another double ended bank of parking bays on the end. Both companies said that you would not achieve any more parking spaces with a herringbone design as this usually uses up more space. A fourth company that the Clerk had contacted wanted to come out and survey the car park in the first instance and this would have cost us £700. Other issues arising from this will be the timing of the work. Obviously, it is not possible to close the car park completely during a week day because it is necessary to provide access to the doctors surgery. Therefore, we could do the work in 2 shifts – closing half of the car park off at each visit or it could be done on a Sunday (closing the car park off completely except for access to residents). The Clerk was asked to read out the quotations (there was only £60 difference between them). Cllr. Mitchell questions whether or not the Town Council should be spending this money as the lease for the car parks had only another year to run. Cllr. Jeans declared a personal interest but said that he would like to stop people from parking there for more than 24 hours. RESOLVED to appoint the contractors to carry out the work as quoted on proposal made by Cllr.

Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Parsons and carried with a vote of 10 for and 2 abstentions (Cllr. Jeans abstained).

**c) Proposed Traffic Regulation Order for B3092 (outside Hill Brush Factory)** – The Clerk informed members that Wiltshire Council had forwarded the proposed Traffic Regulation Order to extend the 40mph speed limit on the B3092 (to encompass the new Hill Brush Factory) for consultation and confirmed that the proposal would be advertised in the Western Gazette on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and the consultation period would end on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. The Town Council had previously raised no objection to the proposed TRO and the Clerk was instructed to inform Wiltshire Council of the Town Council's support.

**d) Confirmation of Stopping Up of Highway adjacent to 3 New Cottages, Shaftesbury Road, Mere** – the Clerk said that she had received confirmation from the Magistrates Court at Salisbury that the highway had been stopped up accordingly (a one-metre width of verge is reserved for the public and situated between the carriageway edge and the adjacent hedge).

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

**a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedule on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

**b) Press Release on Wiltshire Council's agreed budget for 2017/18** - The Clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Council had agreed to raise council tax by 1.99% and raise the Social Care Levy by 3% so there would be an overall increase of 4.99%.

**c) Assessment of effectiveness of internal controls** - To set date for Working Group meeting to review and assess effectiveness of internal controls – It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Jeans and Cllr. Mrs. Traves would meet on Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March at 11 a.m.

### **115. General Items & Consultations**

**a) "Mere in Bloom" week** – Mrs. Janet Way had written to inform the Council that Mere Garden Club was organising an event around the week of June 10<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. 'The Friends of St. Michael's are arranging a Flower & Music Festival on the weekend of 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> June. The Friends and Mere Garden Club are organising an Open Garden weekend for 17/18<sup>th</sup> June and to link together these two events we are referring to the week as "Mere in Bloom". The Garden Club are planning to hold a hanging basket competition which will be judged during this week as an additional attraction for those visiting our "Hidden Gardens". A workshop has been arranged at Thorngrove Garden Centre on April 26<sup>th</sup> for people to get help in planting their tubs and baskets. We hope these combined events will highlight Mere in this special year.'

**b) To appoint a Dementia Champion (see email from S. Harris – 7.2.17)** – deferred. The Clerk was asked to clarify with Stephen Harris as to whether or not a Dementia Champion for Mere had already been appointed.

c) Wiltshire Housing Allocations Policy Consultation 2017 (see [http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parish\\_newsletter\\_13\\_february\\_2017.pdf](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parish_newsletter_13_february_2017.pdf) )

### **116. Forthcoming meetings/events**

a) Invitation to Tisbury Community Safety Partnership meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 6pm at the Nadder Centre in Tisbury + SWWABs decision to form a new Community Safety Partnership – Cllr. Sims said that he would be unable to attend this meeting.

*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.*