

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

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

Present: Councillors J. Jordan (Chairman), Mrs. K. Symonds (Vice-Chair), A. Colman, P. Coward, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill (from 7.48 p.m.), Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Jeans, A. Mead, B. Norris, R. Sims & Mrs. L. Traves

Also: Mr. R. Flower, Mr. R. Jefferies, Mr. Dick Morris, Annie Harris & Mrs. Beal. Also Mr. M. Streeter (Gillingham News).

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).

Mr. Roy Sims reminded those present that Mere Cancer Research would be holding their Xmas Fair at 6.00 p.m. on Friday, 1st December. He also pointed out that next year would mark the end of the First World War. Mr. Sims said that Wincanton had large poppies on their lamp posts which he thought was very striking and the Chairman confirmed that they also had these in Warminster. Cllr. Sims said that he was a member of the RBL and that he would ask what the cost may be. Mr. Sims also said that Prospect Place does not have a salt bin & pointed out that there was overgrown vegetation obstructing the footpath outside No. 4 Homefield.

Apologies for absence received from Cllr. G. Ings & Cllr. E. Mitchell

71. 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. 78a)
- Cllr. Jeans declared a personal interest in Minute No. 76 c) & a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 78a)

72. Minutes – RESOLVED to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 2nd October 2017 on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 2.10.17

73. Matters Arising

74. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – Cllr. R. Sims said that illegal hare coursing was still an issue for the local police. The Chairman said that he was disappointed that there was no police presence at the Mere Carnival and said that one policeman at the Carnival means that 1000 people see a police presence. Cllr. Jeans said that he would mention this at the Community Safety Partnership meeting.

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – Cllr. Jeans said that if anyone knows of any family that wants to move from a 3-bed or family house to one of the bungalows in Bramley Hill then he would suggest that they contact him as the whole idea was to decant people from larger homes in Mere into these bungalows, thus freeing up the family home for other local families in need.

75. 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 No: 17/09628/CLE
Application for: Certificate of Lawfulness
Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness for use of land as domestic garden
At: 3 The Bartletts, Shaftesbury Road, Mere. BA12 6DX

The Chairman said that it would appear that the field is a garden from what he had seen on Google Earth. Cllr. P. Coward said that this land was always agricultural land and thought that it would have needed Change of Use permission to change from agricultural to residential or domestic garden. RESOLVED to submit a 'No Comment' response to the planning authority on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

Application Ref: 17/09892/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in Conservation Area
Proposal: T1 – Yew – Crown lifting as per specification
At: St. Michael The Archangel Church, Church Street, Mere. BA12 6DS
RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.

Application Ref: 17/10299/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in Conservation Area
Proposal:
1. Beech – Raise canopy so 1.2m clear of fence, & roof by 2-2.5m
2. Conifer – Fell
3. Yew – Remove growth up to 2.5 metres
4. Lime – Remove lower 2 branches
5. Beech – Raise canopy to 1.2m clear of fence top
6. Yew – as Tree 3
7. Yew – as Tree 3
8. Beech – Raise canopy to 5m above driveway
9. Beech – Raise canopy to 6m over driveway
At: Bramley House, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JN
RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

Application Ref: 17/10334/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in Conservation Area
Proposal: T1 – Yew Tree – overall reduction of 2m-3m, balance crown & deadwood
G2 – 5 fruit trees – fell
At: The Chantry, Church Street, Mere. BA12 6DS
RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

Application Ref: 17/10804/TCA
Application for: Work to Trees in Conservation Area
Proposal: T1 – Sycamore tree – fell
At: The Chantry, Church Street, Mere. BA12 6DS
RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried with a vote of 8 for and 5 abstentions.

Application Ref: 17/10129/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Erect portal framed grain storage and drying barn, with removal of made ground to original levels.
At: Pitching Piece Farm, Mere. BA12 6AP

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

b) Notification of Planning Appeal

Planning Public Inquiry to be held in respect of Land at Castle Street, Mere – Outline Planning application for residential development, ref: 16/12217/OUT

Deadline for comments to the Planning Inspectorate is 15th November

(No date, venue or time for the Public Inquiry has been established as yet but we will be informed once they are confirmed)

Cllr. Jeans confirmed that he had sought advice from Wiltshire Council who had agreed that it would be safe to reiterate our existing objection for the time being. It was therefore agreed to reiterate our existing objection with further qualifications and that in the New Year the Town Council should consider the appellant's statement and seek further advice on how to take part in the appeal process.

***c) Wiltshire Core Strategy Review Briefings** – The Chairman and Cllr. Norris agreed to attend the meeting. Cllr. Jeans said that the Core Strategy was changing to encompass Swindon and that there were proposals to change the planning areas. It was pointed out that this current consultation would end on 19th December and that therefore members would need to be aware of the facts in order to comment accordingly at the next meeting.

d) Neighbourhood Planning – Cllr. Norris confirmed that a meeting had been held on 9th October and that Wiltshire Council had now appointed a link officer, Richard Nash. The first steering group meeting had been held on 1st November 2017 where it had been agreed to base the principles of the Neighbourhood Plan on the principles of the old Mere Parish Plan. Community engagement had been discussed, grant funding had been discussed and tasks had been assigned. The committee would be looking to design a questionnaire and investigate public events that can help with the community engagement.

76. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

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

- Street light out on footpath leading from Castle Street to Church Street (Cllr. Mrs. Hurd)
- Footpath outside 4 Homefield is obstructed by vegetation (Cllr. Sims)

***b) Highways Newsletter (November 2017)** – Noted. The Chairman said that the link to Wiltshire map gives some curious results.

c) Waiting & Parking restriction requests & deadlines – Members felt that they needed some clear suggestions to consider. Cllr. Norris proposed that double-yellow lines should be painted from the Salisbury Street Car Park entrance to the Social Club junction on White Road along both sides of the road. Cllr. Jeans felt that this may cause issues for Yapp Brothers when they need to load and unload wine and would need consultation with them in advance. Cllr. Jeans declared a personal interest in this matter. Cllr. Mead suggested that double-yellow lines should be installed to 10m around all junctions. Cllr. Jeans said he would support this but felt that something needed to be done to control the speed of traffic. Cllr. Hazzard pointed out that he had spent many months, even years, consulting with people and discussing parking restrictions prior to the last traffic management review in Mere and he hoped that the Town Council was not thinking about retracting its previous decision. He said that he was the one who had originally brought up concerns about cars parking on Salisbury Street opposite Jeans and the car park entrance but he said that any proposals needed proper consultation. Cllr. R. Coward said that he thought the Town Council should maintain the status quo as he had never found it impossible to drive through the town and was not aware of any accidents having occurred. The Chairman said that he was often hearing requests for double-yellow lines at Boar Street so that there is somewhere for people to pull in and wait at the pinch point and the other suggestion that was often being made to him was to have a 20mph speed

limit. The Chairman suggested that volunteers might sketch out a consultation document. Cllr. Norris said that he had made a proposal: to look at putting double-yellow lines from the Salisbury Street Car Park entrance to the White Road junction for Mere Social Club on both sides of the road, following consultation with Yapp Brothers. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves but not carried with a vote of 2 for, 6 against and 5 abstentions. **RESOLVED** to form a working group to look into all issues to do with parking and parking restrictions on proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried with a vote of 12 for and 1 abstention.

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

a) Maintenance of Public Toilets (drainage) Quotation for replacement sewer pipes at Public Toilets –The Chairman said that the Clerk had received a quotation from Abbotts but we are going to see if we can get Wiltshire Council to undertake the work as, under the terms of our lease, we did not appear to be responsible for the drainage.

b) Report on Annual RoSPA Play Area Inspection – the Clerk reported that the inspection had taken place on 18th September. There were no issues raised of High Risk and no urgent work identified. The Clerk would be discussing the reports with the grounds staff to try and improve the risks and undertake repairs where possible and within financial limitations.

c) Professional Tree Inspection Report – the Clerk reported that the Tree Inspection Report had been received and that she was very pleased to have such a comprehensive assessment of the trees within the Town Council's responsibility. The report had identified work to be carried out, some of which was fairly urgent. The Clerk would need to seek advice from Wiltshire Council's Arboricultural Officer as much of the work was to take place within the Conservation Area before seeking quotations from tree surgeons. Mr. Astill, the tree specialist, however, had indicated a need for some detailed decay mapping and/or aerial inspection on 4 trees for which he had quoted £300. Members agreed that this work should be carried out.

d) Memorial bench to be donated: Kingsmere Open Space or Long Hill? – the Clerk pointed out that family had donated a memorial bench on behalf of Susan Birch. The Clerk had originally indicated that the memorial bench could be situated along Kingsmere Open Space but had subsequently wondered whether it could be situated on the top of Long Hill, on the western side overlooking Zeals and the new brush factory. Members thought this was a good idea.

78 Finance, Policy & Resources

***a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a majority vote of approval. (Cllrs. Hazzard & Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room whilst this matter was discussed and took no part in voting).

b) Request to issue refund and release Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial for Cremation Plot 189 – Members agreed to issue a refund and release the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial for Cremation Plot 189.

c) Conclusion of audit – the Clerk informed members of the external auditor's report dated 31.8.17: 'On the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met. Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the smaller authority are that the Internal Auditor has answered 'Yes' to Objective F in relation to petty cash. This should state 'Not Covered' as the Authority does not operate a petty cash system. The Authority should ensure that the Internal Auditor's Report is reviewed before sending the Annual Return to the external auditors. The Authority should minute this process. If there are any errors in the Internal Auditor's Report it should either be amended by the Internal Auditor, or the Authority should provide an explanation for the error.' The Clerk said that it had been believed that the Annual Return had been completed correctly by both the Internal Auditor and the Council but she would make further enquiries regarding the 'Petty Cash System'.

d) Staffing issues – The Chairman informed members that Mr. Josh Suter had handed in his resignation which takes effect next month. This had fortuitously coincided with someone expressing an interest in his job which had then resulted in a small group of councillors holding an interview with Mr. Ben Rowland who had some experience in landscape gardening and grounds maintenance. Mr. Ben Rowland had subsequently been appointed as groundsman on a 3-month probationary period starting on 13th November.

79. General Items & Consultations

***a) A Legacy of – CREATIVE MERE 2017**– Mr. Richard Jefferies said that many people hated to see all the fly posting and banners around the town but it was necessary to advertise all the events that took place in Mere. After a recent event publicising & celebrating the creative arts in Mere, money had been raised and it was their preferred option to use the funding towards a project to provide permanent supports for banners to be displayed in and around the town. Mr. Jefferies had indicated 3 locations for these permanent banner supports. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that she thought this was a brilliant idea and Cllr. Colman agreed but said that it would be necessary to check with planning and highways first. Cllr. Jeans said that, whether the supports were to be erected on private property or not, they would still need consent from the Highways Authority. RESOLVED to endorse this project on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds and carried with a vote of 10 for and 2 abstentions.

***b) Application for naming of new streets on old Brush Factory Site off Woodlands Road** – Cllr. Jeans pointed out that there were a number of roads around the town that were named after people i.e. Jack Paul Close and Barnes Place. RESOLVED to put forward the following suggestions for road names: Coward, Salmon, Broom, Bristle & Brush on proposal made by Cllr. Jordan, seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried with a vote of 11 for and 2 abstentions.

c) WWI Commemorative Tree Planting – The Chairman said that Wiltshire Council had entered into a project with the Woodland Trust to give away trees in Wiltshire, via the Area Boards. Wiltshire's aim was to plant 10,000 trees in the county. Cllr. Mead asked for some new beech trees to plant in the hedge line along the Recreation Ground. Cllr. Hill said that we have often been offered trees in the past but the problem is that we don't really have suitable land or locations to grow trees. Cllr. Norris said that he wondered if there might be an opportunity to plant some trees in the new cemetery to draw the water out of the ground. Cllr. Jeans wondered if the town could have one significant tree planted as a WW1 Commemorative Tree. RESOLVED on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Jeans to purchase an oak tree of significant size with a metal tree guard. The tree to be planted in the new cemetery. Proposal carried with a vote of 12 for and 1 against. Also to see if we can get two trees to replace the ones that will be removed in Jubilee Gardens and some beech trees to go in the hedge line in the Recreation Ground.

***d) Community Right to Bid – Assets of Community Value** – Members noted the information.

***e) Water Saving Initiative – Wessex Water** – Cllr. K. Symonds said that the Rivers Group had received a presentation from Wessex Water in February about this initiative. They are sending out letters and technicians will be knocking on doors to do a Free Home Check service where they will identify and fix simple leaks, fit water saving products and advice on ways to reduce household utility bills. This service is completely free. Cllr. Mrs. Symonds asked members to spread the word and hoped it would be a successful initiative.

f) Website – Cllr. A. Colman said that there were some errors on the website which said that the Mere Recreation Ground had 3 toilets and a pavilion.

80. Forthcoming meetings/events

a) Confirmed date for next Community Safety Partnership meeting – Wed 22nd November 2017, 6pm at Nadder Centre.

b) Mere Town Council Annual Budget Meeting – Wednesday, 22nd November 2017, 7.00 p.m. at Town Council Offices

c) CATG meeting– Wednesday, 7th November 2017, 2 – 4 p.m., Nadder Centre, Tisbury

*d) Seeds4Success Annual General Meeting – Wednesday, 29th November, 7 – 9 p.m. at Mere Youth Centre – Cllrs. B. Norris & J. Jordan said that they would be attending the Seeds4Success AGM.

81. Future agenda items

- None

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.

*Further information on these items enclosed/attached