

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** held on Monday, 8TH May 2017 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. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Ings, G. Jeans, A. Mead, E. Mitchell, Mrs. K. Symonds & Mrs. L. Traves
Also: Mr. Roy Flower, Annie Harris, Ted Henson, Dick Morris, D. Stone, R. Stone, Tony Traves

Meeting convened at 7.31 p.m.

The Chairman congratulated councillors on being re-elected and congratulated and welcomed new councillors to the Town Council. He also congratulated George Jeans on being re-elected as Wiltshire Councillor for the Mere area.

1. To elect Chairman of Mere Town Council for 2017/18 and to receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr. Hazzard proposed that Cllr. John Jordan be elected as Chairman for the ensuing year. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

2. To elect Vice-Chairman of Mere Town Council for 2017/18 and to receive the Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr. Jordan proposed that Cllr. Mrs. Kate Symonds be elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year. Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said that she would be very happy to take on the role of Vice-Chairman but wanted to make it clear, before a vote was taken, that she would not be prepared to stand as Chairman after serving as Vice-Chairman. She said that she would quite understand if the Town Council wanted to elect someone else as Vice-Chairman that was prepared to go on as Chairman afterwards. Cllr. R. Coward suggested that Cllr. Mrs. Symonds be elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year and that the situation be reviewed again next year. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a unanimous vote.

Cllr. John Jordan in The Chair

The Chairman and Councillors showed their appreciation to Cllr. Brett Norris for all the work he had carried out as Chairman to the Town Council. The Chairman said that he was aware that, during Cllr. Norris's term as Chairman, he had received some emails that were 43 pages long and he had read them all which proved how diligently he had carried out his role. The Chairman introduced the two new councillors, Cllr. Glen Ings and Cllr. Alan Mead and welcomed back Cllr. Rodney Coward. He also proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing councillors – Cllr. Nick Beale, Mark Cassidy, Richard Hughes and Bob Parsons – and said that the work they had carried out during their time on the Council was much appreciated by the Council and the community.

3. 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.

- George Jeans – Pecuniary Interest in Minute No. 20 a)
- Eric Mitchell – Pecuniary Interest in Minute No. 20 a)
- P. Coward – Pecuniary Interest in Minute No. 20 a)
- L. Traves – personal interest 17/02106
- The Clerk declared a personal interest in Planning Application 17/03084/FUL but said that she did not wish to speak in the public session on the matter.

Meeting adjourned for Public Session

Public Session

The Chairman will re-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. Ted Henson circulated some photographs he had taken of notices that British Gas had erected on a pipe under the bridge at Mill Lane. He said that he found it difficult to understand why they had put 4 signs on a piece of pipe that is 4m long and obviously, their concern is that the piece of pipe is pre-war, cast iron with an old flange on it and there is gas in there. However, what they should have done, he said, is to protect the pipe if they are concerned about people standing on it, by putting it on some brackets which would have been cheaper and quicker than erecting 4 signs on it.

Mr. Dick Morris said that he would like to thank the previous council for their help in sorting out the problems at Downside Close and to congratulate the new councillors on being elected.

Mrs. Annie Harris from 2 Water Street said that she had been to the new Visitor Centre at Hill Brush and wanted to say how fantastic this was and what a wonderful facility this was for Mere to have. John Jordan pointed out that this was listed in Visit Wiltshire also and so it was helping with the promotion of Mere.

Mrs. Symonds said that she wanted to encourage people to come along to next week's AGM for Mere Rivers Group. The meeting would be held at 8.00 pm in the Grove Building on 19th May and there would be information available from Wiltshire Wildlife. Mr. Rodney Coward said that he would be unable to make the meeting but was curious to know what Wessex Water's response was to proposals for large developments in the area. Mrs. Symonds said that they had put these questions to Wessex Water on many occasions but they always responded that it would not affect us but what we would really like to do is get planning permission contingent on some kind of water saving methods. She also pointed out that, despite being told otherwise, the new water supply pipe from Christchurch, seems to be avoiding Mere and they do not understand why.

Meeting re-convened

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. Aubrey Colman and Roy Sims.

4. Minutes – **RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 3rd April 2017 on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote of those present. **RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of extra Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday, 26th April 2017 on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, seconded by Cllr. R. Hill and carried with a unanimous vote of those present. **RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of meeting held to Review and Assess the Effectiveness of internal control measures held on Wednesday, 3rd May 2017, on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 3.5.17.

5. To approve and adopt the Standing Orders for Mere Town Council – **RESOLVED** that the Standing Orders, previously adopted on 9th May 2016 (see Minute 131) be re-adopted with no amendments.

6. To approve and adopt the Financial Regulations for Mere Town Council – **RESOLVED** that the Financial Regulations as adopted by Mere Parish Council in 2006 and subsequently revised and re-adopted in 2013, should be re-adopted with no amendments.

7. Internal Audit

- **To appoint/re-appoint an Internal Auditor** – it was unanimously agreed that Mrs. Mary White should be re-appointed as Internal Auditor for the ensuing year subject to her being happy to continue.
- **To consider the effectiveness of the Internal Audit** – the Clerk confirmed that this had been reviewed at a Risk Management meeting held on 3rd May 2017 and that the Minutes of this meeting were to be considered by the Town Council later on during this evening's meeting

8. To review Committee Structure and to appoint members, decide terms of reference etc. – it was agreed that the Town Council would continue with the present arrangement of having an Annual Budget Committee + Staffing Panel & Appeals Committee with members drafted near to the meeting and an ad-hoc structure of Working Groups as and when considered necessary and required.

9. To appoint/re-appoint representatives to outside bodies/organisations:

Organisation	2016/17 Representative	2017/18 Representative
Youth Club, Seeds4Success, CAYPIG (Community Area Young People)	Cllrs. C. Hazzard, B. Norris, J. Hurd, N. Beale & Mr. R. Coward	Cllrs. C. Hazzard, B. Norris, R. Coward and possibly Mr. N. Beale (if interested)
Cricket Club	Cllr. M. Cassidy	Cllr. G. Ings
Health & Community Care	Cllr. R. Hill	Cllr. R. Hill
Tennis Club	Cllr. G. Jeans	Cllr. G. Jeans
Football Club	Cllr. R. Sims	Cllr. G. Ings
Public Transport	Cllr. R. Sims	Cllr. R. Sims
Mere & District Linkscheme	Mrs. Adrienne Howell	Mrs. Adrienne Howell
Museum Committee	Cllr. Mrs. K. Symonds, Cllr. Mrs. Hurd & Cllr. R. Parsons	Cllrs. R. Hill, Mrs. Hurd & Mrs. Symonds
Footpaths & Rights of Way	Mr. Peter Button & Cllr. Jordan	Mr. Peter Button, Cllr. Jordan & Cllr. A. Mead
Chamber of Trade	Chairman	Chairman & Cllr. A. Colman
Friends of Mere Museum	Cllr. Beale	Cllr. Mrs. Hurd
School Governor	Cllrs. Hazzard, Jordan & Beale	Cllr. C. Hazzard & J. Jordan
Mere Bowling Club	Cllr. R. Hughes	Cllr. B. Norris
Carnival Committee	Cllrs. Cassidy, Hazzard, Sims, Beale & Jordan.	Cllr. C. Hazzard, J. Jordan & A. Mead
Area Board	Chairman & Vice-Chairman	Chairman & Vice-Chairman
Mere Film Shows	Mrs. Mary White	Mrs. Mary White
Rivers Group	Cllr. B. Norris	Cllrs. B. Norris & Mrs. K. Symonds

10. To appoint/re-appoint Trustees for Forest Charities – the Clerk informed members that there were 6 nominative trustees (4 from Mere Town Council and 2 from Zeals Parish Council) and a further 2 co-opted trustees (appointed by existing trustees). Our four trustees do not have to be Town Councillors but need to be appointed by the Town Council. The only obligation of the Forest Charity to the Town Council is to present the annual accounts. There are three charities - the Forest Charity has 100 acres of land and a farmhouse. The allotment charity has a 20 acre field at Horsington Lane (near Hincks Mill) and the United Charities which have very small assets in Zeals. Members agreed that the four nominative trustees from the Town Council should be Mrs. Myrene Coward, Clr. Rodney Coward, Cllr. George Jeans and Cllr. Eric Mitchell. It was pointed out that Mr. Richard Hughes was also an existing Trustee and the Clerk agreed to ask him if he wished to continue.

11. To appoint members, including the Chairman, to serve on the Staffing Panel & Appeals Committee – it was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman + Cllrs. G. Jeans, Mrs. L. Traves, A. Colman & B. Norris would serve on the Staffing Panel & Appeals Committee for the ensuing year.

12. To consider bank accounts & signatory arrangements – it was agreed that the existing bank accounts should remain extant and that signatories should be amended to: any two signatories of the following councillors – Chairman, Vice-Chairman, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, G. Jeans and E. Mitchell. (The Clerk to be given authority to arrange transfers between the Council's accounts and to carry out payments from the Imprest Account for PAYE and wages electronically).

13. To review the Council's insurance policy and discuss/decide on alterations – the Clerk confirmed that this had been reviewed at a Risk Management meeting held on 3rd May 2017 and that the Minutes of this meeting were to be considered by the Town Council later on during this evening's meeting

14. To fix the dates and times of ordinary meetings of the Council and Committees for the ensuing year – it was agreed that the Town Council meetings would continue to be held on the first Monday of every month

unless it is a bank holiday, in which case the Town Council will meet on the following Monday. The Town Council does not have a scheduled monthly meeting in August. Meetings will start at 7.30 p.m.

15. Matters Arising from last meeting

Downside Close – The Chairman reported that the Town Council was still awaiting confirmation on the final adoption but it would appear that Wiltshire Council have already notified residents that adoption has taken place.

Old Ship Hotel – Cllr. Norris said that he attended the Southern Area Planning Committee meeting and confirmed that the Town Council had achieved the majority of the conditions that we requested but we did not get the S.106 agreement and we did not get agreement on the bin storage. We did however, get a condition that they protect tree roots of the mature tree because Cllr. Norris had calculated that they wouldn't get car parking spaces in without going into bank where tree is growing.

Cllr. Jeans pointed out that there are 4 flats in the old ToCH building, 2 in the annexe and Ostlers Cottage that have nowhere to put their bins and that the planning committee showed no interest in where the bins for the new flats should be stored. It was agreed that the Town Council should write to the Waste Department at Wiltshire Council (Cllr. Jeans would find Portfolio Holder's name) and inform them that this planning application had been approved with no facility for the new flats and existing flats to store their bins (48 bins in total) and to ask what can be done to stop them from being left out on the highway.

16. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – None

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – The Chairman congratulated Cllr. Jeans on his re-election. Cllr. Jeans said that it was thanks to all the candidates involved that Mere had the highest turnout of electors in the whole of Wiltshire. He gave a report as follows:

- Wiltshire Council given all councillors new computers. Everything moving to cloud base – been given computer with no storage capacity.
- Boeing may invest money in the south.
- The next 4 years is going to be hardest because the rate support grant will be eradicated and there are millions of pounds that they need to save.
- It has been reported to him that there are pedestrian safety concerns for visitors and workers walking back from the new Hill Brush Company site as visibility from traffic coming from the right at Gillingham Corner junction is very poor.
- Planning Committee meetings will now be held at 3.00 p.m. instead of 6.00 p.m. which will be very inconvenient for those who work.

The Chairman said that, at the last meeting he had asked why Teffont had received a new road surface and he has since discovered that Chilmark has also been resurfaced. Cllr. Jeans said that highway resurfacing work is very contentious and that there were 4 criteria lists which needed to be satisfied one of which was skid resistance. He said that there were 5 schemes put forward for this area and he had asked that Castle Street be costed so that it could be considered. The costing was £250,000. In the end, they had agreed to carry out resurfacing of a 20m length or so of Castle Street. Cllr. Jeans stressed that it was important for the Town Council to send representatives to the CATG meetings in order to fight their case.

17. 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: 17/04285/TCA

Application for: Work to Trees in a Conservation Area

Proposal: T1 – Poplar tree – reduce by 50%

At: St. Anns, Church Street, Mere. BA12 6DS

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

Application Ref: 17/02106/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Proposed ground and first floor extensions with addition of chimney

At: Coachway, Old Hollow, Mere. BA12 6EG

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a majority vote. Cllr. Mrs. Traves abstained from voting. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

Application Ref: 17/02657/FUL & 17/03324/LBC

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Demolish outbuildings and build new kitchen extension to rear; replace rear windows as existing; re-position bathroom to first floor with new window; move internal partition walls on first floor; strengthen and refurbish roof with new conservation roof lights.

At: Crossways, Salisbury Street, Mere. Ba12 6HE

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

Cllr. Jeans explained that it would be inappropriate for him to vote on any planning applications in his capacity as a Town Councillor in case they were then brought to Wiltshire Council's Planning Committee for a decision. As a Wiltshire Councillor, he has a seat on the Southern Area Planning Committee and it is important for him to go into these meetings with an open mind.

Application Ref: 17/03084/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Single storey rear extension

At: 4 Duchy Cottages, North Road, Mere. BA12 6HG

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mead and carried with a majority vote. In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting.

b) Neighbourhood Planning – The Chairman gave a synopsis of the purposes of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr. Norris said that he had done a fair amount of work on this and although he was initially against the idea of producing a Neighbourhood Plan he had now come to realise that without one, we would become a dumping ground for developers. It was agreed that a group of councillors would meet to discuss the issue and present a report to the Council for the next meeting:

Volunteers: Chairman and Vice Chairman, Cllrs. Mrs. Hurd, B. Norris and Mrs. Traves.

18. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

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

The Chairman reported that the Footpath Group had some issues as to the exact whereabouts of FP19 from Sheepwash Cottage to Barrow Street & other complaints about the footpath being used as a bridlepath. Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way Warden would be coming along later in the month to assess the situation and try and define the footpath.

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

20. Finance, Policy & Resources

***a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedule attached on proposal made by Cllr. C. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a majority vote. (Cllrs. P. Coward, G. Jeans and E. Mitchell, having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, left the room and took no part in discussion or voting on this matter).

The Clerk said that she had some concerns about the water usage for the allotments at Jack Paul Close because she felt that the water bill was rather high, considering that the water had been turned off for most of the winter. However, she had asked the grounds staff to monitor the meter readings so that an assessment could be made as to whether or not there might be a leak.

Cllr. Norris asked about whether or not the Clerk was taking any steps to reap back the cost of the replacement parts for the multi-play unit in the Recreation Ground which was recently vandalised. The Clerk said that she had asked the police to enquire about this.

b) To approve S.137 payments for 2016/17 financial year – It was agreed that the S.137 Payments, as approved at the Annual Budget Meeting should be paid. [Section 137 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 is a statutory power. It gives council's the power 'to incur expenditure for purposes not otherwise authorised.' It is only used when there is no other specific power available; it is a 'power of last resort', it must benefit some or all inhabitants, not an individual, nor can it be made retrospectively.] Cllr. Jeans agreed to find out whether Wiltshire Good Neighbours still exists and delegation for this payment was passed to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

c) To adopt recommendations made by Working Group meeting to Assess Effectiveness of Internal Controls – as outlined in Minutes of Meeting held on 3rd May. RESOLVED to adopt recommendations made by Working Group on the Assessment of the Effectiveness of Internal Controls as outlined in Minutes of meeting held on 3rd May. Cllr. Jeans asked if the Council could get confirmation from our Insurance Company that we are covered for work on the highway i.e. erecting Speed Indicator Device, painting signs and street lights etc.

d) Quotation for Tree Condition Survey & Risk Management Plan – The Clerk reminded members that a year ago, the Council had approved work for a Tree Condition Survey and Risk Management Plan to be carried out on trees on Town Council land. However, since that time, the company that quoted to carry out the work have now informed the Clerk that they are unable to do the work and have recommended an alternative contractor. The Clerk had therefore contacted the alternative contractor – Astill Treecare Ltd - (who also carried out Tree Condition Survey for Gillingham Town Council) and has received a quotation of £2,100 to carry out the work. RESOLVED to appoint contract on the basis of the quotation supplied. Proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and seconded by Cllr. Norris. Unanimous.

e) Procedure for service provision in respect of extra budget allowance made for street cleaning, weed clearance and general odd jobs to carry out around the town. – The Chairman reminded members that at the budget meeting held in November, £2000 had been allocated to spend on street cleaning, weed clearance and general odd jobs around the town during the 2017/18 financial year. At that time, Cllr. Jeans had been very much in favour of the Town Council employing a street cleaner but the Clerk had suggested that perhaps the Town Council could offer a similar scheme to the Parish Steward as she was not so sure that this extra work should be confined to just clearing litter and weeds but that there seemed to be a whole range of jobs that needed doing on an ad hoc basis that were no longer being provided by Wiltshire Council e.g. painting litter bins, railings, road name signs and street lights. The Chairman said that it would seem that the Town Council could employ someone for 4 – 5 hours each week of the year or perhaps 2 mornings for 6 months of the year. Cllr. Jeans said that he felt that the money should be spent on litter collection and that if other jobs like painting were added to the list, then the money would be spent too quickly. Cllr. Jeans proposed that the Town Council should advertise (in Mere Matters in the first instance) for someone who could carry out the removal of surface weeds, litter and dust for 4 – 5 hours each week during the whole of the year. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Kate Symonds and carried with a vote of 11 for, 1 against and 1 abstention.

Future agenda item – painting of litter bins, street signs, street lighting, railings etc. (G. Jeans)

21. General Items

a) Redistribution of spent bulbs from flower tubs – The Clerk said that she had been asked by Mrs. Maggie Durkee if it would be possible, once the tubs had been emptied, for volunteers to sift through the soil and bag up the spent spring flower bulbs so that they could be planted along the church path and others could be bagged and sold at St. Michael's Church Flower Festival. Members were happy to agree to this request.

b) Closure of Lloyds Bank – Cllr. Norris said that he would like to congratulate both Mrs. Adrienne Howell and Mr. Ted Henson on the article they had written in objection to the pending closure of Lloyds Bank in Mere. He confirmed that the bank would be closing on 25th September and said that he had telephoned the bank today but was told that there was still no further information on the future Mobile Branch service or the internet support service that they had offered. Cllr. Mrs. Traves pointed out that both HSBC and NatWest were closing their branches in Warminster. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said that she had met someone in the bank today who was quite distraught about its closure as they did not drive and could hardly walk and did not use the internet. Members of the Town Council unanimously agreed that Lloyds Bank had no social conscience at all and that this branch closure would seriously disadvantage the community and economy of our town. RESOLVED to write to Lloyds Bank, informing them of the Town Council's opinion and to ask them for further information on the following:

- Urgent information on the details of Mobile Branch – frequency, location etc.
- Urgent information on details of promised internet support.
- Proposals to enlarge and improve car parking facilities at Gillingham Branch given that closure of branches at Wincanton, Mere and Sturminster Newton will increase need.
- Whether or not they could consider providing a weekly free bus service to Gillingham Branch from Mere.

22. Forthcoming meetings/events

Both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman indicated that they would attend the Highways Meeting in Salisbury on Tuesday, 23rd May.

Meeting closed at 9.35 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.

MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No. 1093497

For the Council, as Sole Trustees of Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground to consider the following matters:

None