

# Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW

**Present:** Councillors John Jordan (Chairman), Mrs. K. Symonds (Vice-Chairman), A. Colman, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, G. Ings, G. Jeans, A. Mead, E. Mitchell (until 8.20 p.m.) & Mrs. L. Traves.

Also 5 members of public + 1 press

*Due to GDPR it is now considered good practice not to identify members of the public by name within these Minutes.*

Meeting convened at 7:30 pm 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).*

On behalf of the Town Council, George Jeans wanted to thank Graham Avory for all the work he had done over the last 12 years as editor of Mere Matters. This amounts to a tremendous amount of work and Graham has done an absolutely superb job and has always been impartial and fair. As Mr. Avory was present at the meeting, the Council gave him a warm round of applause and thanked him for all he had done as editor of Mere Matters over the last 12 years.

John Jordan said that the Mere Carnival had been very successful with some good floats, a cavalcade of walkers and majorettes. The collections amounted to over £1200 and there was a lot of volunteer help providing the committee members with assistance when needed. It was also very reassuring to have a police presence as well. The Chairman said that he also had the pleasure of speaking to 'Merely Women' last weekend and talked to them for half an hour on how the Town Council works, what the Town Council does and the role of chairman. The members there asked him to thank all the Town Councillors and staff for all their efforts for Mere.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllrs P. Coward, Mrs. J. Hurd, B. Norris & R. Sims

**193. 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. Mrs. Symonds declared a personal interest in planning application 18/08610/FUL
- Cllr. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 2001 a) Payments (recipient)

**194. Minutes – RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 on proposal made by Cllr. Mitchell seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 3.9.18

**195. Matters Arising**

**a) Centenary of the end of the First World War (Battle's Over – a Nation's Tribute) – update on progress for event commemorations and further requirements** – The Chairman had brought in an example of the mementos which had been made by volunteers ( a life-size painted wooden cut-out fashioned on the famous image of the helmet resting on a rifle). Each memento relates to a serviceman named on the town's war memorial and they will be hosted by residents who live at or near the home of the soldiers. A map, which has been produced by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, will make it possible for townspeople and visitors to seek out all of the mementos around the town. There will be a large cut-out soldier situated by the centenary oak tree at the

bottom of the cemetery and the week before Remembrance Sunday they will all be brought together in the town's Jubilee Gardens. The Clerk confirmed that the application for Temporary Road Closure for the Remembrance Service had been submitted and was now in consultation stages. Risk assessments for the day's events, including the lighting of the beacon, had been prepared, approved by the Council's insurers etc. The Chairman said that he would prepare a press release, detailing the commemoration events.

The Chairman wanted to update the Council on one or two other matters arising from the last minutes:

- Castle Street car park walls – The Chairman said that he and the Clerk had assessed and asked a local builder for an assessment and quotation for necessary work.
- Councillor briefing notes: No. 360 – This is about recycling and is very much in line with what Cllr. Jeans has told us previously. NPPF changes – this briefing note will be of interest to the neighbourhood planning group. One significant point I read was that if a developer wants to claim that their development is not viable to provide affordable housing then they will now have to make their reasons open to the public.
- Finally I went to 3 meetings to represent the Council: Community Safety Group meeting where I asked for a police presence at Mere Carnival. They also discussed the revival of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. I also attended the Area Board meeting and had the opportunity again to put forward our view that we would like the police to attend some Council meetings. Lastly, I went to a Community Land Trust meeting and learned about schemes whereby communities can try and organise the acquisition of land and sufficient money to design and build affordable housing in their community. These schemes are most likely to be successful if you have a benefactor but there is support available and possible funding.

## 196. Reports & Consultations

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** - None

**b) County Councillor's report** – Cllr. Jeans stated that with regards to Community Land Trust schemes you do need total support from the community and you need a nomination scheme that works for the community. He pointed out that the Duchy of Cornwall were helpful in securing a nomination scheme for the housing association at Jack Paul Close whereby priority is given to people living or working in Mere or having relatives in Mere. He also pointed out that the police have said that they do not have the resources to attend council meetings any longer but they will attend the Community Safety Panel meetings and were therefore urging Parish & Town Councils to use this as an opportunity to take forward concerns from residents. Cllr Jeans reported that Wiltshire Council had repaired a bridge at the Lynch but unfortunately it had subsequently been vandalised. Cllr. Jeans noted that the Town Council was no longer recording names of the members of the public in attendance at the meeting due to GDPR; he said that he had made enquiries with Wiltshire Council about this and their policy is to make a statement at the beginning of their meetings informing attendees that if they're not in agreement to having their name recorded then they can leave the meeting - in other words it is assumed that members of the public who stay at the meeting are happy to have their names recorded. Cllr. Jeans said that he is receiving daily complaints about on street parking which is now a big problem, especially around Water Street, Upper Water Street, Church Street and The Lynch and wondered if this should, perhaps, be raised as a future agenda item for the Town Council to discuss.

## 197. 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: 18/08525/HRN  
Application for: Hedgerow Removal

Proposal: Removal of 5m of hedgerow

At: Land to rear of Haxnicks, Woodlands Road, Mere. BA12 6BT

The Chairman explained that this application had been submitted by Wessex Water who want to remove a 5m section of the hedgerow to allow for the installation of a new sewer to be installed from the boundary of the developers site to an existing manhole. The hedgerow will be reinstated after the work has been completed.

RESOLVED to recommend approval on proposal made by Cllr. R Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with the unanimous vote.

Application Ref: 18/08610/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Proposed loft conversion with front and rear dormers

At: 6 Lovage Way, Mere. BA12 6RU

Members noted that the Duchy of Cornwall had approved the proposal and members agreed that the building will look similar to others on the development, some of which have false dormers. RESOLVED to recommend approval on proposal made by Cllr. Colman, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a vote of 9 for and 2 abstentions. (Cllr. Symonds, having declared a personal interest, abstained from voting and in order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

Application Ref: 18/08981/FUL

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Ground and first floor extension to the side, a timber deck & garden room.

At: The Thatched Cottage, Steep Street, Mere. BA12 6ED

Members noted that there had been one objection made to Wiltshire Council although no objections had been sent to the Town Council. The Chairman said that he had visited the site and noted that the neighbour's window would be obstructed by the bridge effect of the timber decking coming out from the first floor window. Furthermore, the bridge would also cause restrictions to access and would make it very difficult to bring large items of furniture under the bridge and into the neighbouring property. This may also restrict access for emergency services to Glenleigh, should it be necessary. Members also felt that the wooden effect of the extension was not in keeping with the character of the cottage and would be out of keeping with the historic character of the surrounding area. RESOLVED to object to the application for the reasons given above on proposal made by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a vote of 10 for and 1 abstention. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

**b)Ref: Planning Application 16/12217/OUT** – Update on Public Inquiry for Appeal by Richborough Estates for Outline Planning to develop land at Castle Street, Mere – The Chairman announced, for those that didn't already know, that the appeal had been dismissed. He said that he had read the Inspectors Report in full and noted that the Inspector had stressed the importance of the landscape character of the area and the setting of Mere Conservation Area and views from Castle Hill. The Chairman stressed, however, that Richborough Estates could apply for a Judicial Review of the Appeal Decision and pointed out that one resident had suggested that the Town Council ought to look at purchasing the field with a view to using it for community events.

**c) Enforcement issues** – The Chairman said that over the past 5 or 6 weeks, the Clerk and himself have been made aware of a number of planning enforcement issues or planning infringements and so we have gathered them together as a list and passed them over to Cllr. Jeans who has spoken to the enforcement officer about them. The Chairman said that he didn't really want to discuss these individual cases at the meeting but wanted the Council's approval to officially approach the Enforcement Officer and ask for a formal update on these enforcement or infringement issues. The Clerk said that, in the past, the Council's policy had been that

the Town Council should not become involved in reporting infringements as we are not a planning authority and any individual complainants should be advised to contact the planning authority's enforcement officer direct. Also, she was aware that, in the past, the Enforcement Officer had asked for a copy of the Minutes of the Town Council meeting proving that the Town Council has been authorised to request enforcement action. Cllr. Jeans said that he did not approve of Town & Parish Councils acting as a go-between to report planning infringements to the enforcement officer and said that it was down to the person in the street to report them and be prepared to put their name to their complaint. He said it was all too easy for people to use the Town Council to hide behind and keep their anonymity and he had experiences of smaller parish councils getting into trouble. Cllr. Hazzard felt that the Town Council could unwittingly be dragged into disputes between neighbours. **RESOLVED** that, unless it is a major issue, parishioners be advised to report any planning infringements or planning enforcement issues direct to the enforcement officer themselves. (Cllr. Mitchell left the meeting at 8.20 p.m.)

**d) Review of Wiltshire Core Strategy (renamed Wiltshire Local Plan) for the period to 2036 – Invitation to consultation event + Councillors Briefing Note No. 368** – The Clerk explained that Wiltshire Council is reviewing the Wiltshire Core Strategy (now being called Wiltshire Local Plan). They are now holding a number of parish events in October to help develop their thinking on how Wiltshire can deliver 44,000 new homes to 2036. Unfortunately, it is apparent that Wiltshire Council have organised these town focused events based on the proposed Housing Market Areas and from their accompanying map, they are still considering us to be within the Trowbridge Housing Market Area and our Chairman has made representation to Wiltshire Council about this. They have assured us that no firm decisions have been made following the consultation last year which is being taken into consideration as part of the Local Plan Review process. The Clerk, Chairman & Vice-Chairman had booked to attend the consultation event to be held in Trowbridge on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> October & Cllr. Jeans said that he would be attending that meeting along with the one in Salisbury.

**e) Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan – Focussed consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Changes and associated evidence documents (including revised Sustainability Appraisal and an update to the Addendum to the Habitats Regulations Assessment)** – the Clerk reported that In July 2018, Wiltshire Council submitted the draft Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (the Plan), along with a 'Schedule of Proposed Changes' and supporting evidence to the Secretary of State for independent examination. Planning Inspector, Steven Lee BA (Hons) MA MRTPI has been appointed to undertake the examination. In August 2018, Wiltshire Council received a procedural letter from the Inspector. In response to that letter and is now undertaking a consultation on the 'Schedule of Proposed Changes' to the Plan, along with the revised Sustainability Appraisal, update to the Habitats Regulations Assessment Addendum and associated evidence documents.

This further round of consultation will take place for six weeks from **9am Thursday 27 September to 5pm Friday 9 November** to give all interested parties the opportunity to comment on the published materials before the Inspector commences the formal public hearing sessions. Further information is available at: [http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/portal/spatial\\_planning/sites\\_dpd/proposed\\_changes\\_on\\_draft\\_whsap/schedule\\_of\\_proposed\\_changes\\_to\\_the\\_draft\\_whsap](http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/portal/spatial_planning/sites_dpd/proposed_changes_on_draft_whsap/schedule_of_proposed_changes_to_the_draft_whsap)

**f) Cranborne Chase AONB: Our bid for dark sky reserve status** – the Clerk confirmed that she had received an email from the Cranborne Chase AONB which contained information about their bid to be an International Dark Sky Reserve. They aim to submit the bid in the first part of 2019 but want to engage with local people, including parish & town councils as representatives of the AONB's communities. The AONB team were asking for a letter of support from Parish & Town Councils. Cllr. Jeans said that this is a contentious issue as the majority of local people wanted street lights in Mere and he did not want this to be used as an excuse to lessen our street lights. Cllr. Jeans said that he was happy to support this in the open countryside i.e. smaller villages that do not have street lights, but was not able to support it for Mere. Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said that local lighting means that she cannot see the stars but, on the other hand, she may not feel quite so safe if there was no street lighting. She also pointed out that Mere had prominent buildings floodlit at night. **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should ask the AONB team for some more information on this and whether or not it

would involve removing street lights or floodlights on buildings in the town, or indeed, restricting street lighting in new developments within the town.

**198 a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward, Wiltshire online reporting & street lighting faults:** The following issues were raised for reporting or delegating to the Parish Steward

- Blocked drain outside The George
- Blocked drain in Boar Street
- Overgrown hedge in Castle Hill Lane (Cllr. Jeans said that he had emailed the Housing Revenue Dept. about this)
- Numerous street lights out

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

**a) Request from street orderly to order cigarette bins for outside walls of businesses in Mere** – the Clerk confirmed that the Town Council's street orderly had asked if it might be possible to have some cigarette bins outside businesses in Mere as he was always having to clear up cigarette ends from the pavements and footpaths outside particular locations. Members felt that they did not want to encourage people to stand outside smoking, especially the public houses which had other dedicated smoking areas. However, it was agreed to liaise with Mere Co-Op to see if they would be agreeable to installing a cigarette bin outside the store in order to help keep the town tidier and to order & pay for one cigarette bin if they have no objection.

**b) Available Section 106 funds, CIL funds & R2 funds and guidelines for use** – the Clerk reported that after trying for nearly a year, she had finally got some response to our query relating to the S106 agreements on the development of the Old Brush Factory site at Woodlands Road.

I can confirm that the S.106 agreement seeks:

- 1) £109,616 for the provision of youth and adult open space and leisure in the area to serve the development (land at Woodlands Road – S/14/06780)
- 2) £155,578 for the provision/maintenance and improvements to open space in the parish of Mere (land at Woodlands Road – S/14/06780)

It is also confirmed that the money is paid in instalments, when the 20<sup>th</sup> house is built in phase 1 and the 20<sup>th</sup> house is built in phase 2. Wiltshire Council have informed us that in the past, where large sums of money are involved, Wiltshire Council have entered into a side agreement with the Town/Parish Council to allow them to hold the funds and disperse them which helps with cash flow. I have asked to have a meeting with the relevant officer to discuss this further as it will, no doubt, have implications for our impending budget meetings. From the response received from Wiltshire Council, the Clerk confirmed that the Town Council's proposals to redevelop the play area at Walnut Road would comply with the criteria for use of the S106 funds and we can either do this with an application process or with a side agreement. I can also confirm that the Town Council's thoughts on widening and improving the footpaths 66/10 and 50/10 that run from opposite the Walnut Tree Public House and up past Mere Cemetery into town to make it a safer route would **not** comply with the conditions of the S106 as this is not considered to be Open Space. Unfortunately, the Clerk had not received an up-to-date Policy R2 statement but will push to receive this before the budget meeting.

**c) Clearance of old swimming pool site** – the Clerk said that she and the Chairman were anxious to make some headway with the refurbishment of the old swimming pool site because it is such an eyesore. One of the problems is that it has been very difficult to get quotations for the same thing. We originally wanted to get one company to provide us with a quotation to fill in the swimming pool, level the site and provide and install the equipment necessary for an outdoor gym & leisure area. However, we were only able to get one quotation for this and that came in at over £100k. This quotation is no longer valid. We have had another quotation to install the equipment once the site has been cleared and levelled but again, this quotation is no longer valid. A third company declined to provide a quotation at all.

More recently we have had a quotation from a local company to level the site and just leave it with a usable level surface of scalplings. We could afford this work within the Council's budget allocation. A second quotation, also from a local company would level the site, provide fencing, tarmac the site & install the equipment and table-tennis table which we would need to purchase ourselves, direct from manufacturers. We could afford this option if WC would allow us to use the S106 funding mentioned previously. One of the difficulties with this project is that we do not have an approved specification or the specialist knowledge with which to write a specification in order to achieve quotations of the same standard or level of work. Cllr. Jeans said that he felt very sad that the swimming pool was being filled and he would like some kind of memorial stone erected to say that it was the site of the old Mere Swimming Pool which was a Second World War Memorial. Cllr. R. Coward said that the swimming pool was a money pit and that the Town Council was left with no choice other than to fill it in as a starting point. He said that the Council should do the work one step at a time, get it filled and levelled and then we will be at a point when we can get quotations & funding. RESOLVED to obtain three quotations to provide the Council with a level site on proposal made by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Mead and carried with a vote of 10 for and 1 abstention.

**d) Report on Annual RoSPA Play Area Inspections** – The Clerk reported that Playsafety Ltd, who are affiliated to RoSPA, have carried out an inspection on the Council's three equipped play areas + the skate park on 10<sup>th</sup> September. The Clerk has copies of the completed inspection reports in the office which are also available electronically but can confirm that there have been no actions identified as being of high risk or even medium risks although there have been a number of remedial tasks identified which would bring the risk factors down to a minimum. Our grounds staff have received a copy of the reports and are presently considering which remedial tasks can be carried out 'in house' and which tasks may need to be contracted out.

**e) Grazing of Council land adjacent to new cemetery** – the Clerk reported to members that, with reference to the suggestion made at the March 2018 meeting in which members asked the Clerk to ask Mr. & Mrs. Wilson if they were interested in leasing some of the land for sheep grazing during the summer period she could now report that she had met with Mr. Wilson on site and agreed, in principle, that grazing the land adjacent to the new cemetery could be viable subject to the Town Council's grounds staff having access etc., a rental fee being paid and a grazing licence agreement in place. The Clerk had agreed to find out about grazing rental fees and Mr. Wilson had volunteered to get a draft grazing licence. The Clerk had contacted various farmers/land owners and established that average rate for grazing is £70 per acre, per annum and that, after measuring the area on google earth, the Clerk had established that it is just over 2 acres. Mr. Wilson was content with £140 as a grazing fee. The Clerk had received a draft grazing licence from Mr. Wilson this morning and had not yet had a chance to read it in detail but had noted that the agreement was proposing restrictions on the Council's right of access and burning of waste. Members of the Town Council felt that it was not worth having restrictions imposed on the use of our own field for £140 per year, that the Council needed unrestricted access at all times and also that it would not be too long before the Council needed to start preparing some of the field with all the necessary drainage works for burial purposes in any case. RESOLVED not to enter into any grazing agreement whatsoever, to keep access at all times for our grounds staff and to look at possibility of selling off grass to a local farmer to cut. Proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

**\*f) Does Mere Town Council want to trial The Green Dog Code?** – Wiltshire Council's Dog Control & Animal Welfare Officer had sent a proposed 'Green Dog Code' which was an initiative to encourage dog walkers to clean up after their pets. Wiltshire Council were looking to trial this before using it in other areas of Wiltshire and wondered if Mere Town Council would like to run a trial. Cllr. Alan Mead said he would like to trial the initiative to see if it might help improve the situation in Mere. He volunteered to co-ordinate the scheme. RESOLVED to trial the 'Green Dog Code' scheme, submit publicity to Mere Matters and Social Media with Cllr. Mead as point of contact on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. Jeans and carried using Chairman's casting vote.

## 200. Finance, Policy & Resources

**a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds and carried with a unanimous vote of those present. (Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest, in the above item left the room was this item was discussed and took no part in discussion or voting)

**b) Audit – Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2018** – The Clerk confirmed that the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP had written to say that they had completed their review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Mere Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2018. The external auditors report stated: On the basis of our review of Sections 1 & 2 of the AGAR, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 & 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. The Notice of conclusion of audit, along with certified AGAR (Sections 1, 2 & 3) had been published on the Town Council's website.

**c) To set date, venue & membership for Annual Budget Meeting** – it was agreed that the Annual Budget Meeting would be held on Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00 p.m. and held in the Town Council Offices.

**d) Proposal to make donation to CPRE Wiltshire in recognition of support provided.** – Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said that she was given the impression that it cost the CPRE in the region of £6,000 to pay for professional advice to make representations and provide evidence at the public inquiry into the planning application for land at Gillingham Corner. She said that the Inspector's decision seemed to place great weight on the visual impact of the development from Castle Hill and other viewpoints in Mere which seemed to accord with the points that CPRE were making. Cllr. Symonds proposed that the Council make one-off donation to the Wiltshire Branch of CPRE of £500. Cllr. Jeans said that he was in agreement but stressed that it should not be seen as a reward. The Clerk said that she thought the Council would need to use S. 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 as authority to make the donation which allowed the Council to incur expenditure which is, in their opinion, in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. RESOLVED to make a S. 137 donation to CPRE Wiltshire of £500 subject to WALC approval that this is not a *ultra vires*. Proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

## **201. General Items & Consultations/Briefing Notes**

**a) Consultation Document: Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council – Councillor Briefing Note No. 366 - Update & Consultation on New Division Boundaries + letter from The Local Government Boundary Commission for England** – The Clerk confirmed that she had submitted a response to Wiltshire Council stating that Mere Town Council would like the Mere Ward boundary to remain unchanged along with justifications/reasons.

## **202. Forthcoming meetings/events**

a) Community First AGM 2018 – Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 5.30 p.m., Devizes Town Hall

b) Wiltshire Association of Local Councils AGM – Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October at 6.00 pm, Unit C2, Beacon Business Centre, Hopton Park, Devizes. (Please advise them of intention to attend)

## **203. 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

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**MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND**

Registered Charity No. 1093497

RESOLVED to approve the following payment. Proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.

Water2business	Standing Charge only for water meter by old cricket pavilion	
	27.3.18 – 12.9.18	11.62

Meeting closed at 9.24 pm