

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 8th January 2018 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, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Ings, G. Jeans, A. Mead, E. Mitchell, B. Norris, R. Sims & Mrs. L. Traves
Also: PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky (Wiltshire Police), Mr. Michael Streeter (Gillingham & Shaftesbury News) Sally Brett, Annie Harris & Dick Morris.

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. Dick Morris of Downside Close said that he thought the standard of Xmas lights was exceptional this year. He said that he had put his own Xmas lights outside his house and had put a bucket outside asking for donations to Mere & District Linkscheme and was pleased to report that he had raised £140 which had now been passed on to the Linkscheme. He also reported that, with reference to the dispute between residents of Downside Close and the Management Company, he had been to court on 22nd December and had won the case. The residents will now be forming their own management company and it will be by the residents for the residents.

Annie Harris of Water Street said that the traffic flow and volume of traffic over The Lynch and onto Pettridge Lane was increasing. The road was being used as a 'rat run' early in the morning and later in the evening and also at school collection times. She said she had seen a model in Gillingham (off Wyke Road) where a bollard closed the road off for through traffic and she thought that this may work in Mere but wondered how this could be moved forward. The Chairman said that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

Roy Sims said that, on behalf of the residents of Prospect Place, he would like to thank the Clerk and grounds staff for delivering the salt and also for writing to residents regarding overgrown foliage causing an obstruction to the pavement.

Apologies for absence received from Cllr. P. Coward

93. 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. Norris declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 100 a) [recipient]

94. Minutes – RESOLVED to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 4th December 2017 (with amendment – Minute No. 83 [8th line] ...on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr.

Mrs. Symonds and carried with a vote of 6.....) on proposal made by Cllr. Sims, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 4.12.17

95. Matters Arising

a) WW1 Commemorative Tree Planting – The Chairman thanked Cllr. Alan Mead for helping to go out and choose the tree. He also thanked Cllrs. Hill & R. Coward for helping to select the planting spot. The tree will be planted in the triangle area at the south of the cemetery and we would like to have it planted before the end of February. It was agreed that all councillors would be present and that the press would be invited for photographs/publicity. The Clerk would arrange for the grounds staff to make preparations. The Chairman said that he would find an appropriate day and inform members.

Cllr. Jeans said that in order to mark the centenary in the year 2000, he had planted 2 oak trees in the Recreation Ground that had been donated by a resident. Unfortunately, one of these oak trees looked very unhealthy but another resident, Sheila Maddams, had donated a replacement oak tree. Cllr. Jeans asked for permission to replace the sick oak tree with this one. All agreed.

Cllr. Sims said that with reference to the lamp post poppies discussed last month, he felt that it would make a good impression if there was a large poppy on every other lamp-post from Castle Street up to the fire station and that he had calculated that we would need 60 poppies. The Chairman said we had discussed this at the last meeting and it was decided that we should buy 25 large poppies for the lamp-posts. It was agreed that the Town Council will provide 25 poppies, as originally agreed, and that if Cllr. Sims can get sponsorship for more poppies then he can order others. The Chairman also suggested that Cllr. Sims should speak to other people within the town who are organising commemoration events to mark the end of the First World War.

b) Recommendations regarding parking & parking restrictions – Report from Chairman – The Chairman reported on a recent working group meeting as follows:

Most comments and complaints from residents are about the general matter of parking restricting the flow of traffic throughout the town. Specific points which are most mentioned are the eastern end of Salisbury Street, Hazzards Hill and Boar Street with parking identified as creating unsafe conditions for traffic flow.

We discussed the matter and recommend the following course of action:

This is a police issue – judging whether cars parked are infringing traffic law. We will ask Pete Sparrow, Sector Inspector for South Wiltshire Police, to inspect the areas.

- *If traffic law is being broken, to take action.*
- *If laws are not being broken but parking is creating a hazard, we will request that police advise those who are parking that they are creating a hazard.*
- *We will request that these problem areas are regularly checked.*
- *If these steps have no effect or the police advice is that no laws are broken, we shall ask the police for recommendations which would have an enforceable effect on traffic safety.*
- *We will consider the police recommendations and, if deemed appropriate, take them to wider consultation.*

We will inform residents of what is being done and intend having done all the above by April 2018.

Cllr. Mead felt that this would not change anything and said that people should drive to road conditions.

Cllr. Jeans said that he has many people complaining that traffic is going too fast and want measures to slow traffic, particularly in The Square.

Cllr. R. Coward said he felt this was a reasonable recommendation but did not want any more yellow lines. PCSO Tcherniawsky said that the police can create a priority which means that officers will prioritise parking problems and deal with them whenever they are in and around Mere.

RESOLVED to adopt the recommendations of the working group, as reported above, as it will demonstrate to the community that the Town Council has thought of every possible way to approach the current on-street parking problems. Proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd and carried with a vote of 13 for and 1 abstention.

96. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – Copies of the Community Policing team newsletter were distributed. PCSO Tcherniawsky said that there had been recent criminal issues at Bramley Hill and that these are being dealt with. There had been a number of burglaries to outhouses and break-ins to vans recently. Thieves are looking for copper and power tools etc. Thefts of goods from vehicles at Alfreds Tower are still common. Victims are usually people from outside the area and although we put up warning signs around the car parks, they tend to ignore them.

Cllr. Norris asked - There have been a couple of incidents where cars without tax & insurance are being driven about locally. Is this happening across Wiltshire? – PCSO Tcherniawsky replied that this was a local problem with one or two individuals who seem to think it is OK to buy a cheap car and drive it around without MOT or insurance. The police do not have the powers to remove the car unless it is being driven.

If it is just parked on the road, they will put a sticker on it and inform Wiltshire Council who will remove it after the statutory notice period.

b) Wiltshire Councillor's Report – Cllr. Jeans reported that Wiltshire Council was looking at ways it could generate revenue i.e. selling advertising space on buildings and roundabouts etc. Cllr. Jeans had noted that Yeovil had purchased buildings with the aim of generating income. Cllr. Jeans said that there were numerous reports of street lighting faults and pot holes at present.

Cllr. Hazzard asked about the highway works at Zeals and the costs involved and whether it was considered to be value for money knowing how hard we had to fight to get 20m of resurfacing work carried out in Mere. Cllr. Jeans said £0.25m every year can be used for substantive projects and the Area Boards put forward suggestions to use these funds. Zeals put a case forward to the Area Board which, initially, was not supported. However, it was represented with support for speed restrictions and since the work has started, I have hardly heard one positive comment. Unfortunately, it would appear that no-one took the time, locally, to take much interest.

97. 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: 18/00193/TCA – Work to trees in Conservation Area
Proposal: T1 – Weeping Pear tree – fell
T2 – Honey Locust tree – crown lift to 2.5m
T3 – Lawson Cypress tree – fell
T4 – Apple tree – reduce crown by up to 30% & shorten peripheral branches by up to 2.5m

Address: Warwick House, Church Street, Mere. BA12 6DS

The Chairman said that he had viewed the site and that the Cypress tree appeared to have been planted next to a wall and now engulfed telecommunications pole and encroached on electricity cables. RESOLVED to recommend approval of the application on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

b) Ref: Planning Application 16/12217/OUT - Next steps in appeal process for Appeal by Richborough Estates for Outline Planning to develop land at Castle Street, Mere – Cllr. G. Jeans reported that the Town Council had already sent in its written submission which was a reiteration of its previous objection with additional qualifications. He informed members that the Appeal Inquiry would be held between 15th to 23rd May with the first day being at the Salisbury Methodist Church and the remainder being held at The Red Lion Hotel (the first day being registrations). Cllr. Jeans suggested that the Town Council should decide who is going to attend the Inquiry to represent the Town Council and suggested that one or two people should be appointed. Wiltshire Council will be required to submit their final written submission during March and so it would be a good idea for the Town Council's representatives to meet with the planning officer (Matthew Legge) during that month. It was agreed that the Chairman would attend the Inquiry with Cllr. Norris & Cllr. Mrs. Traves as back-up representatives. It was further agreed to raise this as an agenda item for the March meeting for further updates.

***c) Response to Wiltshire Local Plan Review & Joint Spatial Framework** – A copy of the Town Council's consultation response had been submitted with the agenda papers. The Chairman thanked Cllrs. Norris & Mrs. Symonds for helping put the argument together. He also thanked Michael Streeter for publicising the issue and said that the Clerk had sent out copies of the Town Council's response to various groups and organisations asking for support. Cllr. R. Coward said that he thought it was an excellent response and thanked all those involved.

98. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward & street lighting faults - the following issues were reported:

- Potholes in Denes Avenue (at Manor Road end)
- Potholes on junction between Castle Street & Barton Lane
- Road surface issues along Manor Road (from Castle Hill Steps)

***b) Highways Newsletter January 2018** - noted

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

a) 150th Anniversary of Mere Town Clock – Cllr. Hazzard confirmed that he had been in contact with the Duchy of Cornwall who have forwarded his enquiry to their archivist in London. Groundsmen have tried jetting drainage pipe. The Chairman said that he wanted to get a feeling from councillors as to how big an event they wanted this to become. The Lord Lieutenant will come along (depending on the date) and it is still possible that HRH the Prince of Wales could be persuaded to come along but what did we want to do to celebrate this event? Cllr. Hazzard wondered about approaching the local press to see what they could find out about the original opening of the clock tower and mentioned that the Town Council had talked about inviting the school to take part in an art competition. He said that we would obviously want to arrange this for the summer when the weather was nicer. Cllr. Mrs. Traves pointed out that whatever the Town Council decided to do, the location of the building would cause a restriction and it would probably be necessary to organise a road closure. Cllr. Sims said that it was not a big issue to organise a road closure for the area of road outside Mere Co-Op and Church Street. It was agreed to discuss the possible road closure idea at the next meeting.

b) Allotments – Policy on Beekeeping – The Clerk reported that she had been approached twice, in the past year, with enquiries about the Council’s policy on beekeeping on allotments. The Town Council has no such policy and so the Clerk had been in touch with the National Allotment Society who had provided her with some advice and beekeeping policy examples. The advice being:

- Bees make a wonderful addition to any allotment site as they play a critical role in the pollination of so many plants, especially fruit crops. Higher yields and better quality produce will result from having hives near your site.
- Bee-keeping on an allotment must be carried out by someone with experience and knowledge. Local branches of the British Bee Keepers Association (BBKA) run 10 week beekeeping for beginners’ courses and offer advice, advanced training and examinations to their members; they also offer public liability insurance and supply a handy leaflet for allotment beekeepers.
- Beekeepers should be members of their local association and new beekeepers should have an experienced mentor to assist and support them.
- NAS would recommend that allotment authorities who allow beekeeping on their sites should be able to supply aspiring beekeepers with a beekeeping policy, examples are available from the NAS office.

On obtaining the example policies, the conditions on the siting of the hives had worried the Clerk because they suggested that hives should not be permitted on individual plots (as they may be in close proximity to neighbouring tenants) and they should be on an area of the allotment land sited as far as possible from any public road or path, or jointly used road or path within the allotment site and that hives are NOT permitted if an allotment is adjacent to a school or livestock holdings. The Clerk said that she was concerned because all the allotment sites were adjacent to public roads, footpaths and/or cattle grazing land. She also felt that other conditions within the recommended policies were restrictive such as stand-by arrangements and insurance.

The Chairman said that, as an allotment holder himself, he liked having bees around but felt that it didn’t seem a feasible option to permit hives on the Council’s allotment sites and he wondered whether or not there may be other suitable land available for would-be bee-keepers to use within the Town. Cllr. R. Coward said that there was an area of land at the end of Manor Road which belonged to Mr. Charles Spencer which had some beehives on it. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that it did not seem that the allotments were feasible sites for beekeeping. Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said that she didn’t think that the Town Council could make a policy and that because of the reasoning above, potential beekeepers would understand that

we weren't just being obstructive. **RESOLVED** not to permit beekeeping on the Town Council's three allotment sites on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a majority vote in favour. (Cllr. Mrs. Hurd abstained from voting).

c) Wall at Pennybank Lane – the Clerk pointed out that it had been brought to her attention that part of the wall along Pennybank Lane had been removed and replaced by a fence. The Clerk had always understood that the Town Council owned the walls along both sides of Pennybank Lane and she recalled that the Town Council had paid to have repairs carried out to both walls in the recent past. However, the Clerk had no deeds or other documented evidence of ownership. The Clerk had therefore written to the owner/occupier of Potters Croft and it transpired that James Chalke, who owns Potters Croft, did not know if he owned the wall or not and was going to investigate further. However, he had removed part of the wall to make it safe as it was starting to lean but all the bricks have been kept in order that it can be rebuilt and he would be very happy if the Town Council want to carry out repairs and rebuild the wall going forward. Members suggested that the Town Council should wait to hear the results of Mr. Chalke's investigations and to also make some enquiries with the Methodist Church as it was said that the community had contributed money for this path in order to get to the Methodist Church. Cllr. Mrs. Hurd said she thought the church records would be at Trowbridge.

d) Public Access Defibrillator in Castle Street – the Clerk informed members that there had been an issue with the defibrillator in Castle Street in that the case was rusting. Although she had not been able to investigate fully, she had discovered that it was not being used by the ambulance service at the present time and she was wondering whether this was the reason (the rust issue had been reported on their online reporting page). As the Town Council had decided, during the Annual Budget Meeting, not to purchase a separate defibrillator for the telephone box in The Square, the Clerk wondered what members thought about the idea of moving the Castle Street defibrillator to the telephone box which may stop the rust problem from recurring. Members agreed that this was a good idea and instructed the Clerk to investigate the feasibility of moving it. (i.e. electricity supply, installation, new case, maintenance & reporting issues).

100 Finance, Policy & Resources

***a) Payments** – **RESOLVED** to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. Ings and carried with a unanimous vote of those present. As Cllr. Norris had declared a pecuniary interest in this item, he left the room and was not present for discussion or voting on this item.

***b) To review Financial Regulations and Standing Orders (attached)** – **RESOLVED** that the Financial Regulations & Standing Orders be agreed with no amendments: proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

c) New General Data Protection Regulations and requirement for Data Protection Officer – the Clerk informed members that she was attending a briefing meeting on 23rd January and would hopefully prepare a report after the meeting. It was agreed to defer discussion until the Clerk had attending the briefing and the report had been prepared.

d) Website updates – The Clerk said that she had received an email from the webmaster stating that he will need to charge for updates to the merewilts website as from 1.1.18 as the workload has increased and he can no longer do it free of charge. He would make a nominal charge of £25 per quarter. The Clerk confirmed that the amount of information being displayed on the website had increased substantially since the introduction of the Transparency Code. Members felt that this was a fair charge and all agreed to accept the charge of £25 per quarter.

101. General Items & Consultations

a) Westminster Memorial Group – Dorset Healthcare's Community Services Reference Group – The Clerk informed members that the above group has been formed in order to discuss service provision at Westminster Memorial Hospital in Shaftesbury and it had been brought to her attention that there were no parish or town council representatives from Wiltshire involved. Members were in general agreement that it would be in Mere's interests and asked the Clerk to request that Mere Town Council be involved in some way.

b) Judging of Xmas lights – Cllr. Ings said that he and his children did the judging and that the standard was extremely high but in the end they chose the Foster family from Bramley Hill as the winners. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Ings for this work and said that it was a tough job as the quality and quantity is getting better and bigger every year.

c) Consultation on Policing Precept 2018/19 – The Clerk informed members that she had received an email from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon regarding a consultation on the policing precept for 2018/19. The consultation launched on 2.1.18 and is looking for the views of Wiltshire residents on the proposed increase of £12 a year. Currently the average band D household contributes £14.19 per month to local policing, but if residents back the proposal then this would rise to £15.19 per month. The increase will enable the protection of frontline services from further reductions and to maintain the current level of service. The consultation closes at midday on 31st January 2018. Members agreed to make no response to the consultation.

d) Nominations for Buckingham Palace Garden Party 2018 – the Clerk informed members that Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) were, once again, seeking nominations for the Wiltshire allocation to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party which will take place on 5th June 2018. The allocation for Wiltshire is three councillors and their accompanying guests (1 per nominated councillor). Invitations are in recognition of PAST service as Chairmen of Parish Councils and Town Mayors in England and guests should not have previously attended a Garden Party. Members unanimously voted for Cllr. Raymond Hill to be nominated in recognition of his long service as councillor and being past Chairman. Cllr. Hill said that he would be honoured to attend, if successful.

102. Forthcoming meetings/events

- South West Wiltshire Community Area Transport Group (CATG) meeting – Nadder Centre, Tisbury, Wednesday, 10th January 2.00 p.m. – the Chairman said that he would try and attend this meeting.
- Mere Film Show – Dunkirk – Thursday, 11th January, Mere Lecture Hall at 7.30 p.m.

103. Future agenda items

- Dog fouling and dog warden – Cllr. A. Mead
- Traffic along Water Street & The Lynch (arising from Public Session)

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

Meeting closed at 20.55 pm

MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No. 1093497

To approve Annual Return 2017 for submission to the Charity Commission

Charity Commission Annual Return 2017

The Clerk said that she had prepared the figures for the Annual Return 2017 showing receipts of £8500 being a donation from Mere Town Council, and Payments of £8350 being payments to Wessex Water and to Mere Town Council for maintenance. The balance at 31.3.17 (which agrees with the bank statements) was £485.70

RESOLVED to approve Annual Return 2017 & submit to the Charity Commission on proposal made by Cllr. Jeans, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.