

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 2nd September 2019 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW

Present: Cllrs. C. Hazzard (Chairman), E. Mitchell (Vice-Chairman), A. Colman, R. Coward, G. Ings, G. Jeans, A. Mead, B. Norris, R. Sims and Mrs. L. Traves.

Also: R. Stone, D. Stone, G. Avory, Jenny Seward, Dick Morris & Bill Coltham.

Public Session

The Chairman convened the meeting and read out the consent notice for names of members of the public to be recorded in the Minutes.

Jenny Seward wanted to raise her concern about the lack of progress on the issue relating to the legal status of the public footpath leading from North Street to The Square and also about pedestrian safety using the alternative route in between the old Lloyds Bank and Walton Antiques where the road was extremely narrow with no pavement. She said that she had spoken to our MP who seemed to think that nothing would be done to improve pedestrian safety unless there were a few accidents. She asked if there were any plans to improve pedestrian safety between the bank and Walton's Antiques and asked if a white line could be painted on the road to define a pedestrian right of way.

Bill Coltham wanted to speak about an item on the agenda relating to the flying of the flag at half-mast and said that, as a retired police officer, when he had heard about the death of PC Andrew Harper, he felt it was an occasion when we should fly our flag at half-mast. He said that there was no protocol and he didn't think that it was too late for Mere to show its solidarity and wondered if we could fly the flag at half-mast on the day of PC Harper's funeral. He said he had spoken to Thames Valley Police today and they had confirmed that there was no date set for his funeral yet.

Glen Ings spoke about the condition of Pennybank Lane which was overgrown and untidy.

Brett Norris said that the drains along Warminster Hollow road ought to be cleared before the winter.

Roy Sims said that he was currently raising funds for the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Rodney Coward said that he agreed with the concerns for safety of pedestrians along Manor Road as the road was used by huge lorries and huge tractors with trailers and said that it would be better if the footpath from North Street to the Square could be available for public use.

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. P. Coward, R. Hill, J. Jordan, R. Pester & Mrs. K. Symonds.

53. 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.

54. Minutes – **RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 1st July 2019 on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Colman and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 1.7.19. **RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 12th August 2019 on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Colman and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 12.8.19.

55. Matters Arising

a) Local Government Boundary Review – The Clerk updated members as follows: 'Over the last year, the Local Government Boundary Commission has been consulting on a Review of electoral arrangements for Wiltshire. Previous draft recommendations have not affected us and, indeed, have accorded with our wishes in that the Mere ward remains the same. However, at the last minute the boundary commission decided to hold a period of further limited consultation prior to publication of its final recommendations

and these affected divisions in south and south-east Wiltshire. This turn around seemed to relate to objections received from Laverstock and Firsdown and, unfortunately, in order to accommodate these objections and to keep electoral equality in terms of the number of electors per ward it resulted in the move of West Knoyle to the Nadder & Deverills Ward and the move of Maiden Bradley from the Warminster ward into the Mere Ward. Obviously, this created a lot of upset in West Knoyle and Maiden Bradley and a campaign was mounted which resulted in a lot of residents writing in letters to object to the new proposals. Mere Town Council submitted a response in support of West Knoyle remaining in the Mere Ward and Maiden Bradley remaining in the Warminster Ward. The Local Government Boundary Commission will publish its final recommendations on 1st October.'

56. Reports & Consultations

***a) Neighbourhood Policing Report (report attached)** – The Clerk distributed copies of the Community Policing Team Report for May/June which she had recently received. Cllr. Sims reported that Angus McPherson, the Wiltshire Police & Crime Commissioner, will not be putting himself forward for re-election in May 2020.

b) County Councillor's report – Cllr. Jeans reported that the proposed Modification Order for the path leading from North Street to The Square (adjacent to The Boardroom House) to become a public right of way was on the Planning Committee agenda for discussion on 19th September. He said that there were a large number of people in support of the proposed Modification Order and the landowners were against it but that the decision seemed to rest on whether or not evidence can be produced to say that the path has been available for people to use without being challenged for a number of years. Cllr. Jeans said that this was not going to be straightforward. Cllr. R. Coward said that he would attend the meeting and the Chairman said that he would try and attend to represent the Town Council but if not, he would delegate this representation to Cllr. R. Coward. Cllr. Jeans also reported that he would be attending a course being run by the Cranborne Chase and W. Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on how planning applications impact the AONB. Cllr. Jeans said that the current delay in attending to the repair of street lights was causing a high level of concern. A high percentage of people in Mere wanted the street lights working and he would appreciate it if the Town Council could write to Peter Binley and inform him that current situation is unacceptable. (There is a street light out just outside the Butt of Sherry in Castle Street and another further up the road near the Industrial Estate that is on all day).

57. 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: 19/07759/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Demolish outbuilding and redundant chimney, new single storey dining room extension and first floor en-suite bathroom and convert attic as study room.

At: The Malt House, Castle street, Mere. BA12 6JE

Cllr. Mead said that he did not think this extension would cause any overlooking issues for neighbours and would not have any impact on the frontage of the house. **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mead, seconded by Cllr. Ings and carried with a majority vote in favour. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

b) Invitation to Wiltshire Local Plan Review Consultation Events – September/October 2019 – The Chairman said that he would book this in his diary provisionally (the nearest meeting to be held in Tisbury on Wednesday, 25th September) and the Clerk said that she would ask one or two members who were also in the Neighbourhood Planning Group.

58. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

***a) New gully emptying service** – Members noted the information that had been distributed with their agenda papers. Cllr. Jeans said that there was a gully that needed emptying on entrance to Southbrook Gardens. Also there was a gulley outside The George and two outside the Post Office layby. Cllr. Norris also said the gulleys along Warminster Hollow should be emptied before the winter and rainy weather sets in.

b) Dropped kerbs in Clements Lane – The Chairman requested that discussion on this matter be deferred until next month when Cllr. Jordan is here. Cllr. Jeans said that he had received complaints about cars and vans being parked in front of dropped kerbs and asked ‘What is point of having dropped kerbs and then someone parks in front of them?’

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

a) Model Railway Club (old Band Hut) request for £750 for refurbishment work to toilet and new exterior door – Cllr. Ings said he would be interested to know what the refurbishment work involved but the Chairman pointed out that the Club had already set a precedent in being good guardians of the building. The Clerk informed members that the amount of money requested was within the budget allocation for the building and it was RESOLVED to offer them the grant money requested on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. R. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote.

b) To set policy for flying flag at half-mast on Castle Hill – The Clerk said that the Town Council received a request from a resident to fly the flag on Castle Hill at half-mast following the killing of PC Andrew Harper from the Thames Valley Police Force. Whilst the Town Council has every sympathy for PC Andrew Harper’s family friends and colleagues and feel a sense of horror at this tragic loss, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman & Cllr. Jeans took the decision not to fly the flag at half-mast. In the past, the only times that the flag has been flown at half-mast has been when a member of the Royal Family has died and until their funeral and on one other occasion when Lance Corporal Matty Hull was killed in Iraq. Matty Hull was from West Knolyle and played football for Mere Town. It would be helpful if the Town Council could set a policy for flying the flag at half-mast so that, if these questions arise again, we know what to do. Cllr. R. Coward said that he felt that flying the flag at half-mast should be reserved for members of the Royal Family and he said that tragic though this was, he feared that we could be up and down the hill lowering the flag on a regular basis if we set a policy to fly it at half-mast when a member of the emergency forces or armed forces was killed. Cllr. Colman and Cllrs. Mrs. Traves said that they supported this and it was RESOLVED that the union flag on Castle Hill should be flown at half-mast only on the death of a member of the Royal Family and on days when flying the flag at half-mast becomes a national event or on the tragic death of a parishioner who has served in the armed forces, emergency services or served the community in some other way. Cllr. R. Coward made the proposal which was seconded by Cllr. Mead and carried with a majority vote. (Cllr. Jeans abstained from voting).

c) Car Park at Wellhead Allotments & d) Abandoned car park at Wellhead Allotments– the Clerk explained that a resident of North Row had left a vehicle in the Wellhead Allotment Car Park which had no tax or MOT. Indeed, it had been untaxed since 1st May 2017 and had no MOT since 7th May 2019. In line with the Town Council’s policy, the Clerk had authorised a notice to be placed on the car and the owner had emailed back to say that he would remove the vehicle but this was on 5th July and, unfortunately, the untaxed vehicle was still in the allotment car park nearly 2 months later. At the same time, the resident had emailed about the state of the surface of the car park at Wellhead Allotments, stating that his daughter had tripped and fallen due to the uneven surface. The Chairman explained that he and Cllr. R. Coward had visited the site and although the surface of the car parking area was less than perfect, he wondered about whether it was appropriate for the Town Council to spend a large amount of public money on improving the car parking area which was, in effect, private parking for residents of North Row and Wellhead. The Clerk informed the Town Council that at the time the car parking area was created, it was done so at the request of the residents of the area and the Council had set policies for the use of the car parking area which were agreed with the full co-operation of the residents of the area who formed a residents group to create the car park and provide the surfacing. RESOLVED to erect a sign with the

wording 'Wellhead Allotment Car Park – Users of this car park do so at their own risk. Mere Town Council will not accept responsibility for any damage, accidents or losses.' Also to write to residents of North Row and Wellhead informing them of the policy and conditions of use of the car park and to ask if they would like to form a residents group to raise funds and provide materials to improve the surface of the car parking area and to gauge the importance or use of the car parking area to residents and/or allotment holders. With reference to the untaxed vehicle, members RESOLVED that the Town Council should proceed to the next level and have the vehicle removed, either by the police or by ourselves. The Chairman said that he would prefer to personally approach the resident before going to this level of enforcement.

e) Request for shed on allotment at Southbrook (size of shed falls outside Clerks delegated authority) - The Clerk said that an allotment holder at Southbrook would like to erect a shed (wooden with felt roof) 12ft X 8ft alongside the path at the back of the allotment plot. RESOLVED to grant approval for the shed on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.

60. Finance, Policy & Resources

***a) Payments –** RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached.

***b) Report on town enhancement jobs identified by staff (report attached) –** members noted the information in the report which had been previously distributed. The Clerk apologised for the mistake on page 2 in which she had mistakenly named John Jordan as the Chairman of the Footpath Group. This should have been Alan Mead. The Clerk said that she was also going to add repainting and cleaning up the telephone box in The Square to this list so that it would be smart and accessible to take the Public Access Defibrillator and also mentioned that the Town Council had been provided with some free paint by AkzoNobel (Dulux Decorating Centres, Blandford) a member of the British Coatings Federation.

c) Quotations for Chartered Surveyors to carry out property valuations – the Clerk reported that in line with the Council's policy and insurance requirements, she had asked local chartered surveyors for quotations to value the Town Council's assets. The quotations had come in at £1750 + VAT and £725 including VAT. The third company contacted had not responded. RESOLVED to proceed with the £725 quotation from Mark Godwin of Gillingham, Dorset.

***d) Childrens Funeral Fund –** members noted the information which had been distributed with their agenda papers 'under the Children's Funeral Fund Scheme (CFF), bereaved parents, guardians or carers will no longer pay the fees charged for a cremation or burial of a child under the age of 18, or certain associated expenses. Fees and expenses will be met instead by government funding with providers (burial/cremation authorities and funeral directors), in the main, claiming from the CFF the fees and expenses they would have otherwise charged to families.

61. General Items & Consultations/Briefing Notes

a) Nominations for Community First AGM Awards – the Clerk informed members that she had received nomination forms from Community First for their AGM awards. She reminded members that she had completed a nomination last year for Mrs. Adrienne Howell who had won the Arthur Laflin Volunteer Award and she suggested that the Town Council might nominate Jaki Farrell for the President's Club which is awarded to the club member or youth leader who has contributed most to their community. Members thought this was an excellent idea and Cllr. Jeans said that he thought Mr. Tony Taylor also deserved some recognition for his volunteer community work and local fundraising efforts as he had dedicated a good portion of his life to community work.

***b) Community Governance Review – expressions of interest sought from parishes -** the Clerk reported that the Electoral Review Committee of Wiltshire Council had requested that all parishes within the council area be approached to see if there are any changes to their governance arrangements that they believe should be undertaken at some stage. This is known as a Community Governance Review. In short, changes to be requested can include amending the name of a parish or its wards, the total number of councillors, the amendment or creation of wards, changes to external boundaries of the parish, or creation/abolition/merger/grouping of parishes and other such changes. RESOLVED to request that the Parish Boundary be changed to extend in a westerly direction to encompass the triangular piece of land bordered by the A303 to the north and the B3092 on the south that encompasses Norwood House and the

new Visit Hillbrush centre. Members felt that this change would reflect the community identity of Mere as very few people realised that this area was not within the parish boundary and that it would also be helpful for the Neighbourhood Planning Group to encompass the employment allocation within the parish boundary. Proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Norris and carried with a unanimous vote.

c) Licensing Act 2003. Statement of Licensing Policy. Draft for Consultation – Members noted that Wiltshire Council's Public Protection unit was consulting on the draft Statement of Licensing Policy for 2019-2024 copies of which can be obtained from the Licensing Section of the Council.

***Briefing Notes:**

- Briefing Note No. 19-019 – Polling District and Polling Place Review Consultation
- Briefing Note No. 19-020 – Wiltshire Council achieves top marks for work with children and families
- Briefing Note No. 19-021 – Proposal to increase Downland School Capacity
- Briefing Note No. 19-022 – Wiltshire Housing Land Supply
- Briefing Note No. 19-023 – Representation on Special School Provision

62. Forthcoming meetings/events

a) Invitation to attend Community First AGM to be held on 9th October 2019 at The Town Hall, Devizes.

63. 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

Meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.