

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 3rd June 2019 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW

Present: Councillors C. Hazzard (Chairman), E. Mitchell (Vice-Chairman), P. Coward (from 8.08 pm), R. Coward, R. Hill, G. Ings, G. Jeans, J. Jordan, A. Mead, R. Pester, Mrs. K. Symonds & Mrs. L. Traves.
Also.: G. Avory, H. Bell, D. Drewitt, Dick Morris, Dr. W. Price, Mrs. L. Rich, Mr. A. Sainthill R. Stone & D. Stone + 1 other

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).

Please Note: *By entering the meeting room you are consenting to the use of your name being recorded in the Minutes. The meeting may also be recorded by the press or members of the public. Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast any meeting of the Council or its committees is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them so doing and by choosing to film, record or broadcast proceedings they accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.*

Mr. Dick Morris of Downside Close reported that Wiltshire Council had repaired the steps leading from Upper Old Hollow to Lower Old Hollow today and they had done a good job. However, he was not happy about the amount of time and effort it took to get this work done. Cllr. Jeans said that had it not been for Lindsey and I putting pressure on Wiltshire Council I'm not sure that the work would have been done at all as they had no intentions of doing this work whatsoever and no one wanted to claim responsibility for the steps or the land. The housing department passed on to the highways and the highways department passed on to the housing department and then they talked about sharing the costs of the repairs. I do not know what the outcome of this was but I am very pleased to hear that the work has been done.

David Drewett from Oak Lane asked if the Town Council had any plans for the expenditure of the Section 106 funds that it will be getting from the Woodlands Road Development and whether the people of Mere would have any input into how the money was spent and/or whether it would be part of the neighbourhood plan. The clerk responded that there were restrictions as to how the money was spent and that the town Council had earmarked two projects for expenditure one of them being the refurbishment of the Walnut Road play area and the second one being improvements to the footpath leading from Edgebridge to the town centre past the cemetery. However, there was a question mark over whether or not the second project met the criteria for expenditure laid down in the section 106 agreement. At the last budget meeting the Town Council had also agreed that a committee of the Town Council would meet to consider and suggest projects for expenditure that would meet the criteria as laid out in the legal agreement. The recommendations of this committee will be presented to the Town Council and I'm sure the Town Council will draw up a shortlist and asked the public for their opinions. With regards to the neighbourhood plan I don't think the timescales will fit in as the neighbourhood plan is a longer term project however I'm sure the neighbourhood plan will identify issues, facilities and projects that will require future expenditure that can be met from future 106 payments or Community Infrastructure Levy payments.

The Chairman said that he had received a letter complaining about out of date posters being left around the town. The Chairman said that he would include a note in his Mere Matters report reminding organisations to take their posters down when they are out of date or start looking tatty or become unreadable.

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. A. Colman, B. Norris & R. Sims

27. To receive Declaration of Acceptance of Office from co-opted member, Cllr. Richard Pester. Cllr. Richard Pester who was co-opted at last month's meeting but was unable to be present, signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Councillor & Undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct in the presence of the Council and Clerk.

28. 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. Pester declared a pecuniary interest in planning application 19/03565/FUL
- Cllr. Mrs. Traves declared a personal interest in planning application 19/03565/FUL
- Cllr. Jeans and Cllr. Hazzard declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 36a)

29. Minutes – RESOLVED to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 13th May 2019 subject to the following amendment to the third sentence of Minute No. 21b)

- (original sentence) Cllr. Mitchell said he did a car count last year and there was 1000 cars a day and he thought it would be a good idea to extend the 30mph limit along this road.
- (Amended sentence) Cllr. Mitchell said that the Highways Authority carried out a car count along Shaftesbury Road and there were nearly 1000 cars a day and he thought it would be a good idea to extend the 30mph limit along this road.

30. Finance, Policy & Resources (Agenda Item 11e brought forward)

Request from Dr. Price on behalf of St. Michaels Church for a contribution towards improving St.

Michaels Church as a Community Facility to be made from S.106 funding applied to the Woodlands Road Development – Cllr. Jeans reported that he had received confirmation from the officer that deals with

S.106 payments that it would not be possible to use this money for the church as the criteria within the legal agreement was for the money to be used towards the provision, maintenance and improvement of Open Space in the parish and for outdoor sports & leisure facilities such as sports pitches which includes changing accommodation and outdoor gym equipment. He pointed out that buildings would not be covered under this contribution. However, he had also held a conversation with the officer who deals with Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments who had said that providing there was some legal agreement with heads of terms that were approved by the Town Council & Wiltshire Council, then it may be possible to use any future CIL payments towards improving St. Michaels Church to use as a Community Facility. Cllr. Jeans said 'the time has come where we need to work seriously with the church and it is not going to be that easy but I would suggest that we write to them to ask them if they would like to accept a representative from the Town Council to sit on their committee with a view to discussing and promoting their long-term prosperity.' Cllr. Mead said he thought that promoting the use of the church for other community activities could be good for Mere and business and trade. Cllr. Hill said he was in favour but agreed that the Town would need some say in when and what the Church could be used for if public money was being used. Cllr. Jordan said that during his time as chairman of the Town Council he had received many requests for places where physical activity could take place but his understanding was that it would not be easy to remove pews from the middle of the church. If the request is for a substantial sum like 60,000 which is about a quarter of what the town Council will receive then there would need to be legal agreements as to when and what the building could be used for, who owned what etc. The Chairman said that the Town Council often receives requests from a number of people and organisations for funding worthy causes and we do our best to help. The Town Council also helps St Michael's Church by carrying out the maintenance of the churchyard. Cllr. R. Coward said he was not against the idea but we are talking about a large sum of money and I don't think this is something we need to rush into. **RESOLVED** to invite the Mere Parochial Church Council to accept a representative from Mere Town Council to their

meetings with a view to discussing and securing the future prosperity of the building. Proposal made by Cllr. Jeans, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with the unanimous vote.

31. Matters Arising

***a) Water abstraction from Mere – response from Environment Agency (see Minute No. 262c)** – Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said that Ian Sheppard had telephoned to say that he was sorry he could not attend the Town Council meeting but had pointed out that there were inaccuracies with that letter. There is no way that the rivers group would not want to continue a dialogue with the environment agency or with Wessex water. Members discussed the contents of Ian Withers letter, particularly the last paragraph. It was agreed to defer further discussion and any response until we have had a chance to speak to Ian Shepherd and that the Town Council should invite Ian Shepherd to the next meeting.

32. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report - None

b) County Councillor's report - None

33. 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: 19/03927/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Erect agricultural building for the storage of machinery, equipment, materials and fodder
At: Land at Burton, Mere.

Cllr. Mitchell said that it would not be possible to store silage in a barn of that height and he thought it was a strange place to put such a big barn for storage purposes as the design is not something he would use for agricultural purposes. Cllr. Mrs. Traves felt that the barn seemed extraordinarily large and Cllr. Jeans pointed out that the Town Council would need to find valid planning reasons if it wished to object to this application as, in the case of agricultural applications, the applicant needs to provide the planning authority with a holding number and also the justification and in this case the applicant has stated that the barn is required for storage machinery equipment and fodder. **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Ings and carried with a majority vote. (Cllr. Mitchell abstained from voting).

Application Ref: 19/03565/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Front porch
At: 62 White Road, Mere. BA12 6EX

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. R. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Jordan and carried with a majority vote in favour.

Cllr. Pester, having declared a pecuniary interest in this application, left the room whilst the application was discussed and took no part in voting.

Cllr. Mrs. Traves, having declared a personal interest in this application, refrained from discussion or voting. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

Application Ref: 19/04633/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Loft Conversion with new dormer to front elevation, alterations to window & door on ground floor.

At: 8 Balmoor Close, Mere. BA12 6BU

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

Application Ref: 19/04461/FUL & 19/04793/LBC

Application for: Full Planning & Listed Building Consent

Proposal: Partial demolition of rear lean-to extension and erection of 2-storey and single storey extension to provide a ground floor kitchen & family room and a first floor bedroom and en-suite bathroom with sundry internal alterations.

At: Longmead, Barrow Street, Mere. BA12 6AB

Cllr. Mitchell explained that the Town Council had considered and recommended approval of plans for an extension at this address in December last year but that these proposals had not been approved by the Listed Building officer who wanted the extension to be built in more modern materials to contrast with the original building. Cllr. Mitchell said that he considers this to be a good design, will not affect anyone as it cannot be seen by neighbours etc. and therefore proposes that the Town Council should recommend approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Jordan and carried with a unanimous vote (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

Application Ref: 19/03956/FUL (revision)

Application for: Full Planning

Proposal: Proposed single storey rear extension

At: 22 Bramley Hill, Mere. BA12 6JX

The Chairman pointed out that the Town Council had considered this planning application last month but it has subsequently been amended, possibly due to some issues raised by the neighbour. The chairman said that he had visited the site today and also visited the neighbours who have raised some concerns, mostly about the construction method but also about possible loss of light. Cllr Mrs Traves pointed out that due to the slope of Bramley Hill, number 22 (the applicant site) is much higher than its neighbour and therefore the height of this extension causes more of an issue to the neighbours. Having said that the extension is on the northern aspect of the neighbours' property and the revised plan shows the slope of the roof has been reversed so it is now at its lowest on the neighbouring boundary. However the footprint of this rear extension is approximately 1.2 m longer and 1.2 m higher than the existing conservatory. RESOLVED to recommend approval of this application but to mention concerns regarding the possible loss of light to the neighbours in view of the fact that the houses were on a steep slope with the proposal address being much higher than the neighbouring property resulting in the overall height of the single storey extension being higher from the ground level of the neighbouring property than it is from the proposal address. The Town Council also suggested that a condition should be included to require a construction method plan to demonstrate delivery of materials, storage of materials and construction working hours so as not to cause disruption to surrounding residents and obstruction of parking areas. Proposal made by the Chairman and carried with a vote of 3 for, 2 against and 6 abstentions. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

Application Ref: 19/05262/TCA

Application for: Work to Trees in a Cons. Area

Proposal: T1 – Fell 3 lime trees, T4 – Hard prune lime, T5/6 – Fell Cypress, T7 – T13 – Fell 7 spruce trees, T14 – Reduce yew tree by 2 – 3m, T15 – Fell Cypress

The Clerk informed members that this application had only been received this morning and it had therefore not been possible to put it on the agenda. However, the consultation period expired on 22nd June. RESOLVED to delegate authority to Cllrs. Mitchell, Hazard & Jordan to look at these trees and inform the Clerk if there were any concerns before 22.6.19.

The Clerk also informed members of the withdrawal of planning application 19/03057/VAR for the variation of plans to allow for changes to the design and site layout of 2 proposed dwellings at Old Hollow/Downside Close, to which the Town Council had raised objections at last month's meeting.

b) Report on Mere Neighbourhood Plan meeting held on Wednesday, 29th May 2019 – Cllr. Jordan reported that the meeting had been very constructive. The Group members all agreed that the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan was a long way from where they wanted it to be but also agreed that the way forward would be to seek new group members who would help share the workload and to advance the project at a faster pace. At present the group has no Chairman or Secretary. The existing group had been tasked with contacting various people who were considered to be prime movers and encouraging them to get involved.

34. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Highways England – The A303 Trunk Road (Chaddenwick Hill) (Prohibition of U-turns and right turns) Order 2019 – The Clerk confirmed that she had received a copy of a draft Order that Highways England proposes to make which will have the effect of prohibiting vehicles from making U-turns on the A303 at the top of Chaddenwick Hill. It will also prohibit vehicles turning right out of the lay-by adjacent to the A303 eastbound at the top of Chaddenwick Hill. Cllr. Pester said that he had been into the office to view the plans and proposals and he thought that this may be help to reduce the number of collisions as he had attended quite a few accidents in this location. RESOLVED to write back to Highways England to say that the Town Council is in support of the draft Order.

***b) Changes to submission of highway improvements and traffic survey requests. (Briefing Note No. 19-016)** – members noted the information contained in the briefing note. The Clerk pointed out that there had been no consultation on this new process which would result in more work for Town & Parish Councils. Cllr. Jeans said that, as far as he was aware, this was an interim measure until Wiltshire Council could move the system onto the new MyWiltshire App.

c) Wiltshire Council's Sparkle Days - The next sparkle days for Mere are the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th June – the Clerk informed members about this new initiative which allowed the town council to use a 2 x person crew supplied by Idverde who can work on issues that we would consider 'discretionary' such as hedge cutting, strimming, verge edging, path sweeping, litter picking, weed spraying and removal, sign cleaning, graffiti removal and weed ripping. It was agreed to ask for the following jobs to be done:

- Cut back hedge between junction of The Lynch and the bridge on Edgebridge (this is between river and highway)
- Cut back verges and hedges on junction coming out from Limpers Hill to Shaftesbury Road
- Cut back hedges encroaching onto highway along Castle Hill Lane
- Cut back hedges encroaching onto highway on Edgebridge
- Remove fallen twigs and branches from trees on areas by 'MERE' hedging and seating at the top of White Road (near Chetcombe Road junction)
- Remove fallen twigs and branches from trees on grassy area at the bottom of Castle Hill Lane and Manor Road
- Weed spraying and removal of weeds growing alongside walls in North Road, North Street and Water Street & Manor Road (up to Denes Avenue junction)

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

36. Finance, Policy & Resources

Cllr. E. Mitchell in The Chair

***a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedule attached on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Traves, seconded by Cllr. R. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote of those present. (Having declared a pecuniary interest in this agenda item, Cllr. Hazzard [The Chairman] & Cllr. Jeans left the room whilst this matter was considered and took no part in discussion or voting).

Cllr. C. Hazzard in The Chair

***b) To approve End of Year budget expenditure report for 2018/19** - RESOLVED that the Budget/Expenditure report for the financial year ending 31.3.19 on proposal made by the Chairman and carried with a unanimous vote.

***c) Audit of Accounts**

Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2018/19 – Part 3

- i) Annual Internal Audit Report - the Clerk informed members that on 28th May, Mrs. Mary White had carried out an independent examination of the Town Council's accounting records, its compliance with relevant procedures and its risk assessments and internal control procedures. Mrs. White had agreed that, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the council and had completed section 4 of the Annual Return, answered 'yes' or 'Not Covered' to all questions & had signed the Annual Internal Audit Report in the Annual Return accordingly. Mrs. White had written a letter: *'On 28th May, I carried out an internal audit of the Town Council's Financial Statements for the year ending 31st March 2019. It is my opinion that proper accounting records have been maintained by the Council and that financial statements have been properly prepared. I can confirm that I have responded 'Not Covered' to the statement relating to Petty Cash payments as the Council operates a reimbursement system rather than a petty cash float system. However, I can confirm that all petty cash reimbursements have been supported by receipts and VAT appropriately accounted for. Mere Town Council had a limited assurance review in 2017/18. In this Audit the Town Clerk, Lindsey Wood, provided every assistance and had, as ever, everything necessary to hand and in excellent order.'* Members expressed their gratitude to Mary White for carrying out the Internal Audit and the Clerk for preparing all the end of year accounting paperwork.
- ii) Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 – Points 1 – 9 of the Annual Governance statement 2018/19 (Section 1 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return) were read out to members and members answered 'yes' to each of the statements. The Annual Governance Statement was signed by the Clerk and by the Chairman in the presence of the Town Council.
- iii) Accounting Statements 2018/19 - members approved the accounts and supporting statements which included the bank reconciliation, identification of variances requiring explanation, reconciliation between boxes 7 & 8 and analysis of earmarked reserves which had been previously distributed to them with their agenda papers. From the information provided therein, the Accounting Statements 1-11 (Section 2 of the Annual Return) were completed and approved by the Town Council. Confirmation of approval of the Account Statements was signed by the Clerk and by the Chairman in the presence of the Town Council.
- iv) Notice of Public Rights & Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return - The Clerk confirmed that, as required by The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 the Town Council must now publish the unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return and the Notice for the Commencement of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights. Publication is on the parish website: www.merewilts.org

d) Is the Town Council happy to provide a 25% contribution (£750) towards the estimated cost of providing two additional dropped kerbs along Clements Lane? – With reference to Wiltshire Council's Community Area Transport Group report in which, at the meeting of 1st May, the group agreed to fund the provision of 2 dropped kerbs at Clements lane at an estimated cost of £3000 subject to a contribution of 25% (£750) from Mere Town Council. Cllr. Hill said that he was far from happy about this. Cllr. Jordan said he was surprised about the cost of this because his understanding was that the dropped kerbs were £1500 for the pair and not £1500 each. Cllr. Jeans said that he was fully supportive of the project and wants to see the footpath to the centre of town from Clements Lane improved and made more accessible and that he had warned the Town Council that it would be expected to pay for things like this. The Clerk pointed out that the developers of the Woodlands Road site were putting in 3 more dropped kerbs within their development and perhaps we could ask them to give us a price to install two more dropped kerbs. It was

agreed to ask the developers if they would be prepared to give the Town Council a price to install two more dropped kerbs on Clements Lane and to discuss further when a price is known.

37. General Items & Consultations/Briefing Notes

a) Request from Mrs. Margaret Durkee – ‘That the Town Council consider adding an environmental or ‘green’ clause when making decisions – members noted the request from Mrs. Durkee and the Clerk said that she considered that the Town Council does consider environmental issues when it makes decision. For example, the recent purchase of a solar powered Speed Indicator Device instead of a battery powered one. The HLS Scheme for Castle Hill & Long Hill is an environmental scheme where the Town Council is restoring a chalk grassland natural habitat and, by grazing the hills with goats, it also means that our grounds staff spend less time up there with petrol strimmers and machinery. Indeed, considering the items discussed during tonight's meeting – we are urging authorities to try and reduce the abstraction of water from Mere so that our natural environment is better protected for generations to come, the Mere Neighbourhood Plan would contain chapters on Environmental issues and how we can encourage a greener community and less environmental pollution. The Council's response to the request for a financial contribution towards dropped kerbs is another example – one would assume that it is more sustainable for developers working on the site adjacent to carry out any work nearby rather than to ask new contractors to drive miles to carry out the work. Cllr. Jeans said that the Town Council does look at environmental issues but pointed out that this has to be done on a level that is considered reasonable. ‘We do not want to find ourselves in a position where we have to provide a report on every subject in the way that Wiltshire Council do: they have to provide a report that proves that they have considered the environmental impact, the human rights issues, public protection issues etc etc’ Cllr. R. Coward said that he thought much of it was common sense and that the Town Council would automatically consider environmental implications of its services, functions and work along with the health & safety implications, costs to the ratepayers etc.etc. The Chairman said that of course, the Town Council must consider the environment when making decisions and that actually, we already do. Members unanimously agreed, on proposal made by Cllr. Philip Coward, to continue to consider the environmental implications where practical and reasonable, when making any decisions.

***b) High Streets located in Conservation Areas to benefit from government funding** – members noted this information and the Clerk was asked to send a copy to the Chamber of Trade and to Mere PCC

Briefing Notes:

***Briefing Note No. 19-015 – Spatial Planning Update** - Cllr. Jordan said he had read through the parts of this document that were relevant to Mere and he noted that Mere was the area with the highest number of completions from the Salisbury Area housing allocations.

13. Forthcoming meetings/events

14. Future agenda items

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

The Chairman closed the Town Council meeting and opened a meeting of the Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity

MERE PEACE MEMORIAL SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No. 1093497

For Trustees:

- a) To receive report on end of year accounts and approve end of year accounts and payment of maintenance charges of £15,689.90 to Mere Town Council.

RESOLVED to approve the End of Year Summary income/expenditure report (within Budget/Expenditure report) and to approve the payment to Mere Town Council for maintenance charges for 2018/19 of £15,689.90.

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- b) To sign new lease for Youth Club building
The Chairman signed the new lease for the Youth Club building in the presence of the Town Council. Cllr. Jordan said that he was worried about the quality of the building and asked if there were obligations for its improvement. The Clerk said that, as far as she was aware, there were no extra obligations within the lease but that the Charity would be obligated to ensure that the building was fit for purpose in any case.
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Meeting closed at 2110