

# Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019 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, P. Coward, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, R. Hill, G. Jeans, A. Mead, E. Mitchell, R. Sims, & Mrs. L. Traves.  
Also 22 members of public

## 1. 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. Hamish Bell, President of Mere & District Chamber of Trade made the following statement: 'Would anyone in this room willingly agree to have their blood supply cut off for an hour? You might think that is perhaps an over-dramatization of what will be happening to this town over the next few weeks. Mere is effectively a one-street town. Blocking off that street during business hours is very much the same as being subject to throttling. For the retail businesses of the town, the financial loss of passing trade, or even reasonable access by locals, can be crippling. To be given a notice in Mere Matters and a Facebook statement by the Town Council without any prior discussion seems to the Chamber to be a gross lack of understanding of the delicate existence that our shops have to endure. We do not want to stand in the way of road surface improvement; we would like to have had some discussion as to the probable business impact and to have had the opportunity to discuss possible means of ameliorating the situation. It may be too late for the present, but in future, discussion would be welcomed.'

Mrs. Penny Wilds wanted to mention the dangers of the roundabout on the junction of Walnut Road & Shaftesbury Road. She said that there had been several near accidents where drivers had driven onto the roundabout from Walnut Road and nearly been wiped out by drivers hurtling along Shaftesbury Road. Mrs. Wilds said that the signage was poor and the road markings were faint and had nearly disappeared.

Sarah Collins from Sprout & Flower said that she wanted to endorse what Hamish Bell had said. She said that many businesses in The Square & Salisbury Street were reliant on passing trade and that earlier notice of these road closures might have helped the businesses. As there is obviously now no opportunity to negotiate or consult on the road closures, some of the business owners had arranged an impromptu meeting in The George on Wednesday evening and they would welcome anyone coming along to help come up with some positive ideas on how they can encourage people to come into Mere whilst these road closures are taking place.

John Elvin – this morning, as a result of the post on Mere Matters, I went on the Wiltshire Council website that says there will be further traffic disruption on Castle Street in order to work on a gas main and so he concluded that having completed the road surface, it will then be dug up again. However, when he spoke to the Highways Department about this they said that it was not the same road.

Dick Morris reported that one of the slabs is loose on the steps leading from Upper Old Hollow to Lower Old Hollow and he was worried that this could be dangerous.

Annie Harris said that she noted that some councillors were making faces whilst some members of the public were speaking and she felt that this was disrespectful. She wanted to make a point about the development of the Beaumonts site and the loss of the art gallery. She also said that she did not know why the school could not take over the Childrens Centre as it would be very difficult to have any other service in the building as you could not have public coming in and out of the building.

Ben Avery raised concern from residents of Castle Hill Crescent about proposal to build behind houses and the impact this will have on parking for residents.

David Drewitt said that the development of Beaumonts Business Park and the old Hill Brush Site along Woodlands Road would add 200 cars journeying along the roads around Woodlands and asked if the town had a plan to deal with this.

Diane Pringle pointed out that the old Conservation Area included the beech trees along Manor Road/Castle Hill Lane. Also, regarding the development of the Beaumonts Business Park – if Mere becomes too big then we may get to the situation where businesses may have to pay higher business rates.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllrs. Mrs. J. Hurd, G. Ings & B. Norris

#### **245. 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. P. Coward declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 252a)
- Cllr. Mitchell declared a personal interest in planning application 19/01963/PNCOU
- Cllr. Jeans declared a personal interest in Minute No. 247 e)

**246. Minutes – RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of Town Council meetings held on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019 on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 4.2.19

#### **Temporary Road Closures**

The Chairman said that he felt that some of the burden should fall on his shoulders because he had been shouting at the Area Board meetings and asking for Castle Street to be resurfaced for years. He also pointed out that as a member of the Carnival Committee, he was aware that when they needed to organise a temporary road closure, they were only allowed to do so after much consultation with local residents and businesses. It seems, however, that when Wiltshire Council want to make a temporary road closure order, there is no consultation at all and the first we know of it is when the official notice arrives. The Atkins notice says that there will be access for residents and businesses although there will be delays. Cllr. Philip Coward said that the Hill Brush Company had not received any notification. The Chairman said that it wouldn't be too difficult for Wiltshire Council to notify the businesses because they know all the addresses in order to send out the business rates bills. Cllr. Rodney Coward said that he had sympathy with local businesses but he was also aware of the need for the roads to be repaired. Cllr. Jeans said that he had been told that the contractors will have gate men (one at each end) to discuss access arrangements and that immediate access for emergency vehicles will be given. He said that he had been asked why it was necessary for the road to be closed and why couldn't they just work on one carriageway at a time with traffic lights to control traffic but he had been informed that they needed to use a smaller machine for this which would involve a join up the middle of the carriageway which would eventually break up a lot quicker and given the difficulty and length of time it has taken to get the road resurfaced, he did not really want it to be broken up again in 2 or 3 years' time. The Chairman said that he was supposed to be at a meeting in Warminster on Wednesday evening but he would attend the meeting with businesses to discuss how to encourage people into Mere during the temporary road closures.

With regards to the roundabout at the junction of Walnut Road/Shafesbury Road – the Town Council, at the time, did a lot of work and were successful in negotiating the release of extra land to widen the road but Wiltshire Council did not take up the idea. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said we tried everything but they don't, unfortunately, see it as a problem.

#### **247. Matters Arising**

**\*a) Proposals to expand Mere Model Railway Club (see Minute 236b)** – As distributed to Councillors, the Clerk confirmed that she had emailed Wiltshire Council's legal department on 19<sup>th</sup> February to seek advice

as to how the Mere Model Railway Club should take the next steps with its expansion proposals i.e. would Wiltshire Council lease or sell them the extra land they need to extend the building or allow us to sub-lease the land to the Railway Modellers Club. This was then forwarded to Wiltshire Council's Estates Manager who sent a response on 22.2.19 to say that it would seem to tie in with the proposals to transfer assets to Town & Parish Councils currently being rolled out across Wiltshire Council and he suggested that it should be dealt with as part of that process and said he would raise the request at the programme board next week.

**b) Permission to erect Speed Indicator Device in Castle Street (see Minute 236d)** – Cllr. Hazzard said he had been a keen advocate to get SID in Castle Street and he had found it in Barrow Street and discovered that someone had been shooting at it. The Clerk reported that she had managed to get a site visit from Atkins Street Lighting team to assess whether or not it was appropriate to erect the SID on the street light in Castle Street at the bottom of Bramley Hill. Unfortunately, he advised that this street light is one of the old type (two coloured) that is not suitable for apparatus to be attached. Therefore we have applied to the Highways Department to agree a location to erect a pole and can confirm that a location has been approved with the proviso that Mere Town Council accepts any liability for any damage caused to grass cutting machinery etc. as a result of the pole/apparatus being on part of the adopted highway verge. In the meantime, Wiltshire Council have submitted eligibility and deployment criteria for the SIDs which has raised some issues regarding liability considerations and so we have contacted our insurance company for advice on this. Our insurance company has confirmed that volunteers, councillors & employees erecting and/or relocating a SID are covered automatically by the policy. In the event of a claim for injury or damage being made by a third party as a result of the device and the council is found to be legally liable for the incident then the policy will respond to deal with this. As Cllr. Hazzard has pointed out, our SID, which had been deployed in Barrow Street, has been damaged. Apparently it is still in working order and the manufacturers have been very helpful and agreed to replace the screen if it does not work. Since we are only allowed to have the SID in situ for 14 days I would suggest that there is very little point in erecting the SID until the roadworks have been completed at the end of the month. However, it may be a good opportunity to erect the pole whilst the road closure is in place. Cllr. Hill said he was worried about the liability for contractors grass cutting equipment and Cllr. Mitchell agreed and said if they clip their blades or damage their mower then we would be liable. Cllr. Jeans said that you can get poles that have ground-fix sockets, the sockets are installed at ground level so that mowers just go over them. RESOLVED to purchase a socket/pole and install this and then take the pole down when the SID not in use.

**c) Consultation on improving our management of water in the environment – response from Mere Rivers Group (see Minute 242c)** – The Clerk informed members that the Town Council had not yet received a response from Mere Rivers Group. It was therefore decided that the Chairman and Clerk be delegated to make a response to this consultation document on behalf of the Town Council after liaising with the Mere Rivers Group.

**\*d) Wiltshire Council Highways & Streetscene Initiative funding to improve the appearance of towns and rural areas (see Minute 239b)** – the following 'Top 10' submission was submitted to Cllr. Jeans on 28<sup>th</sup> February.

- Resurface end of Boar Street and top of Barton Lane
- White line remaining junctions in The Square
- White line in centre of road in The Square outside Manor Road entrance to try and alleviate drivers cutting the corners in Castle Street and causing an accident for people trying to come out of Manor Road
- Replacement guard rails in Salisbury Street at end of Pennybank Lane (existing ones are all bent)
- Kerbs along The Lynch – got to be designed to take some weight.
- Repairs to wall on side of road along The Lynch.
- Cutting back of verge/hedges on junction with The Lynch/Pettridge Lane.
- Resurface White Road (I know it's just been pothole filled but it is so uneven it is downright dangerous) and add white Lines to delineate footpath along White Road (from White Road junction to Recreation Ground entrance) – George, I guess this will probably go as a CATG project but it may be possible to fund it from here instead?!?

- Cut back verges & resurface footpath 66/10 between Clements Lane and Lordsmead House
- Cut back verges and resurface Burton Path

**e) Children's Centre Rationalisation – Councillors Briefing Note No. 19-002 (see Minute 242b)** – The Chairman said that due to reductions in funding, Wiltshire Council were working with children's centre service providers to identify underused buildings and were now proposing to offer Mere Children's Centre back to the school and find a new community venue to provide the service. The Chairman pointed out that the Town Council had a vested interest in the use of the building as it is where the Town Council's office is based. The Clerk confirmed that the Children's Centre was currently only used for 1 morning and week and 1 afternoon a month. Cllr. Rodney Coward said that with the current and future building of 200 or so houses, there may be a lot more children to provide services for. The Clerk said that she had been communicating with the school and with the Children's Centre to see if there were any issues and considerations that they would like the Town Council to include within its consultation response or whether there are any other ways in which the Town Council can help in retaining a service in Mere i.e. identify community venues. Cllr. Jeans said that he wanted to declare a personal interest because his grandson goes to Little Learners. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk be delegated to make a response to this consultation document on behalf of the Town Council.

## 248. Reports & Consultations

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** – PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky was present at the meeting and said that the Community Police Team have problems getting the written report ready for first Monday of the month so, unfortunately, it will always relate to the previous month. The Chairman said that that there was local concern relating to drugs and young people at the present time and PCSO Peter said that if anyone suspects that drug dealing is taking place then they should ring 999 but if you are not certain then ring 101. Cllr. Sims asked about the change in the Lost & Found policy & PCSO Pete said that this information was available online but there would be a report on it in the next newsletter. Cllr. Hazzard praised the services of the police and said that when he needed some help recently, PCSO Pete was on hand within 5 minutes.

**b) County Councillor's report** – Cllr. Jeans said that his report had been published in Mere Matters.

**c) Report on Emergency Planning meeting held on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> February** – Cllr. P. Coward said that two meetings had now been held. The group was being Chaired by Mr. Richard Jefferies and had been discussing proposals and strategies. Cllr. Coward said that he would provide a report after the next meeting.

**d) Report on Southern Area Planning Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> February** – The Chairman reported that both he and Cllr. Jeans had objected to the planning application for 4 flats with 5 parking spaces at Lloyds Bank. Unfortunately all the committee members, except Cllr. Jeans, had voted in favour of the application and said they couldn't find a reason to go against it. The Chairman said that the committee did not seem to be concerned at all about parking. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said it would be well to note how powerful Highways Department is in terms of planning applications.

**e) Report on Community Area Safety Group meeting held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> February** – Cllr. Jeans said that he Chaired this meeting and we have already talked about two of the major aspects discussed.

## 249. 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: 19/01750/TPO  
 Application for: Work to TPO Trees  
 Proposal: T1 – Walnut tree – crown reduce 3m & crown thin  
 At: 14 Clements Lane, Mere. BA12 6DF

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

Application Ref: 19/01662/FUL  
Application for: Full Planning  
Proposal: Retrospective application for outbuilding to rear of property.  
At: 40 North Road, Mere. BA12 6HQ

Cllr. Colman said that he had looked at this application which amounted to 60 square metres of additional development and his recommendation was to recommend refusal of this application. Cllr. Jordan said that there were no objections raised by neighbours online and none had been sent direct to the Town Council. Cllr. Jeans gave some information on permitted development rights relating to outbuildings but Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that she hated retrospective applications and noted that the property had been subject to much recent development. Cllr. Colman proposed that the application should be recommended for refusal on the grounds of it being a retrospective application and overdevelopment. The Clerk advised that the Town Council should not recommend refusal on grounds of an application being retrospective as this was not a valid planning reason. That said, Cllr. Colman's proposal remained on the table and was seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves. However, it was not carried with a vote of 4 for, 5 against (the Chairman used his casting vote to vote against the proposal) and 4 abstentions.

Cllr. P. Coward proposed that the Town Council should respond to the planning department to say that the Town Council feels it is not qualified to recommend a decision on this planning application but would add that in the interests of fairness, the relevant planning laws should be applied by the planning authority in determining this application. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hill and approved with a vote of 9 for, 0 against and 3 abstentions. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

Application Ref: 19/01963/PNCOU  
Application for: Prior Notification on change of use  
Proposal: Prior Approval of Proposed Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings 3 no. Dwelling houses (Use Class C3), and for associated operational development  
At: Church Farm, Wet Lane, Mere. BA12 6BA

The Chairman pointed out that this application is a renewal of one that had been previously approved but approval was expiring. Cllr. Jeans pointed out that the government had revoked sustainability as an issue for consideration in PNCOU applications. RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. Mead and carried with a vote of 11 for and 1 abstentions. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr Jeans abstained from discussion or voting)

**\*b) Community Led Housing in Wiltshire** – members noted this information that had been distributed with their agenda papers.

## **250. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport**

### **a) Highway & footpath issues for Parish Steward, Wiltshire online reporting & street lighting faults**

**rural areas** - The Clerk was asked to report that the following street lights are out on the Wiltshire online reports:

- 32 – outside Tanners, Salisbury Street
- 35 – outside F. J. Chalke
- Steep Street, near Croquet Club
- Salisbury Street Car Park, south, adjacent to Dark Lane
- Victorian Street Light outside 'Lous It' although we do not want the Victorian Street Light taken down and replaced with a modern LED light

**b) Snow Clearance – should the Town Council make provision for third party contractor snow clearance around the town** – Cllr. George Jeans personally feels certain that the tax payers of Mere would pay us to have some means of clearing snow from the streets. He had spoken to a local, reliable farmer who said he would drive round in the middle of the night and clear these roads and Cllr. Jeans had been told by an officer that we would be well advised to provide our own blade for these purposes. It was resolved to find

out the cost of a snow blade and put it on a future agenda for further discussion. Cllr. Jeans was asked to arrange for the replenishment of grit and salt bins.

**c) White lines to delineate footpath along White Road (from White Road to Recreation Ground behind Mere Social Club)** – Cllr. Jeans said that he had attended a Brownies meeting recently and at this meeting, the young people had asked for the footpath along White Road, at the back of Mere Social Club, to be delineated so that cars are not always parking on it. Cllr. Jeans said that there were historic highway & parking issues in this area but it was quite clear that a footpath existed on this route and if the footpath could be painted either side with white lines and little people painted on it to show that it is a public footpath, it might stop drivers from indiscriminately parking and blocking access etc. RESOLVED that this should be raised as a CATG issue.

**d) Proposed Temporary Closure of The Square for Mere Cancer Research UK – May Fayre – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019** – Members noted the temporary closure and had no comment to make.

**e) Blocked 'footpath' at White Road** – Cllr. A. Colman said that he had asked for this to be raised as the footpath was still blocked with a padlocked gate. The Clerk confirmed that she had written an email to the housing officer to ask for an update on this situation and Cllr. Jeans reiterated that it was not a public footpath but that Wiltshire Council had acknowledge that it has been open for use by members of the public and therefore had decided that they would have the padlock removed. It was agreed that the matter would be raised again at next month's meeting.

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

**a) Green Dog Code** – The Clerk confirmed that the Green Dog Code Scheme was now 'up and running' and that Cllr. Mead was co-ordinating the scheme and had been provided with the required leaflets, badges and other equipment.

## **252. Finance, Policy & Resources**

**\*a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached on proposal made by Cllr. Hazzard, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a vote of 11 for. Cllr. P. Coward, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the room whilst this item was considered.

**\*b) Report in interim internal audit** – Members noted the contents of the letter written by Mrs. Mary White, Internal Auditor, dated 7.2.19: 'On 5<sup>th</sup> February I carried out an internal audit of the Town Council's Financial Statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. I am of the opinion that proper accounting records have been maintained by the Council and that financial statements have been properly prepared. For the purpose of this audit the Town Clerk, Lindsey Wood, provided every assistance once again and was necessary to hand and in excellent order.'

**\*c) Wiltshire Council's Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Programme** – with reference to the information distributed to councillors it was RESOLVED to write back to say that the Town Council would be keen and interested in exploring this further but it largely depended on the schedule or 'menu' of service devolution and asset transfer that may be on offer.

**d) To set date, time and membership of Annual meeting to Assess Internal Control Measures/Risk Assessment/Insurance etc.** – The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Colman and Cllr. Mrs. Traves agreed to form a committee to discuss this and the Clerk said that she would set a time and date to suit those members.

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

**a) Annual Town Meeting – venue booked for Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019. To discuss requested change of format** – The Chairman confirmed that the meeting would be held in the Grove Building but asked councillors if they wanted to change the format in view of the disapproval following the last Annual Town Meeting. There were no suggestions forthcoming from members. The Clerk suggested that half the presentations made by groups/organisations should be provided in written format only and the other half spoken (alternating the following year) and this was agreed. The Chairman said that he would put some thought into arranging some kind of speaker/choir/visual presentation.

**b) The Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Consultation on draft boundaries for Wiltshire (also see Briefing Note No. 19-003 attached)** – the Clerk confirmed that the recommendations for Wiltshire now being made by the Boundary Commission were in line with the Town Council’s response to their previous consultation i.e. unchanged in the Mere ward.. RESOLVED to respond positively to their recommendations in this round of consultation (closes 15<sup>th</sup> April)

**c) Wiltshire Council £6k local fund for initiatives to help older people living in isolation** – The Chairman said that the Footpath Group had applied for some of these funds to try and get elderly people to walk around Mere. Cllr. Jeans reported that he had spread the word that this funding is available.

**Briefing Notes:**

- Briefing Note 375 on the Polling District and Polling Place Review.
- Briefing Note No. 19-003 – Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council – Draft Recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
- Briefing Note No. 19-004 – Final States of Draft Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan
- Briefing Note Number 19-005 - Digital Access to Council Tax Records & Applying for Housing and Council Tax Reduction On-line

**254. Forthcoming meetings/events**

- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority – Notice of Wiltshire Local Performance & Scrutiny Committee Meetings
- Invitation from Salisbury Civic Society to “Promoting Our Heritage” Workshop (see email 21.2.19)
- South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting, Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at The Nadder Centre, Weaveland Road, Tisbury at 6.30 pm

**255. Future agenda items**

Cllr. Colman asked for a financial update on the sponsorship of the car parks.

**Meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.**

*Note: Members are reminded that the Town Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.*

\*Further information on these items enclosed/attached