

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 2nd March 2020 at 7.30 p.m. in The Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW

Present: Cllrs. C. Hazzard (Chairman), A. Colman, P. Coward, G. Ings, G. Jeans, J. Jordan, A. Mead, B. Norris, R. Pester, R. Sims, Mrs. K. Symonds.

Also: G. Avory, R. Stone, D. Stone, Carol (Vicar) Jenny Seward, Mr. & Mrs. Johnson + D. Clowser

Meeting convened at 7.30 p.m. with Public Session

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

Jenny Seward of Mere Northsiders said that the group recently held a well-attended meeting and it was unanimous amongst those present that they should employ the use of a barrister and within half an hour from the start of their meeting enough money had been raised to cover the barristers fee. Mrs. Seward confirmed that the barrister's secretary thinks that he will be down to talk to the group within a month. Carl Johnson speaking in support of the planning application to convert an annex at the rear of Yew Glen House said that he was aware that there was a question mark about parking but very rarely is the garage space at the Coach House used for parking for Yew Glen House. The reason that it is not used is because of the distance between the Coach House and Yew Glen House and the fact that we are able to park on Castle Street in front of our house or, if necessary, there is free parking provision in the car park in Castle Street. Mr. Clowser said that he had moved into Shaftesbury Road and was actually a retired traffic officer and he could not understand why the speed limit is 40mph half way along Shaftesbury Road. He said that traffic authorities were required to keep their speed limited under review and that the criteria for a 30mph speed limit in this location was certainly met. He said that the visibility at Balmoor Close fell way below the minimum for a 40mph speed limit. He said that repeater signs were in place and the costs for the traffic order and the physical changes for the roundels in the road would not be significant for the Highway Authority to change this to a 30mph speed limit. The Chairman confirmed that the Town Council would be discussing this during the meeting.

Chairman reported that prior to the Council meeting this evening, the Annual Carnival Meeting was held and he read out the Carnival Committee Chairman's Report.

Cllr. John Jordan reported that the Butt of Sherry Preservation Society had held a very successful auction and managed to raise £1550 which will be extremely useful as they have had to pay for a valuer and one or two legal items.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. R. Coward, E. Mitchell, R. Hill & Mrs. L. Traves

118. 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. Jeans declared a pecuniary interest in planning application 20/00661/FUL

119. Minutes – RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Monday, 3rd February 2020 on proposal made by Cllr. R. Sims, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 3.2.2020.

120. Matters Arising

a) Railway Modellers Club Insurance Valuation – the Clerk said ‘Members will recall that our chartered surveyor had recently applied a reinstatement valuation to the Railway Modellers Club building of £98,000. Under the terms of the lease of the building the Railway Modellers Club are responsible for insuring the building and so I had contacted Mr. Snook who had said that the building was insured for £20k and he was confident that this would allow for reinstatement as he had been to Sparkford Sawmills who had told him that a similar wooden structure would be £15k and he is allowing for an extra £5k to clear away the debris after, say a fire or similar disaster. At the last Town Council meeting, you asked me to ask the Railway Modellers Club to find out how much the extra premium would be to increase the buildings sum insured to £98k. Mr. Snook has asked his insurers and confirms that it would cost an extra £129.’ Cllr. Norris said that he is well aware that the Railway Modellers Club have saved the building although they do rent it for a peppercorn rent. **RESOLVED** to write to the Railway Modellers Club to say that we would prefer it if they provided buildings insurance cover to reflect our chartered surveyor’s insurance valuation but if they are not prepared to increase the sum insured then they need to understand that if the sum insured is not enough to replace the building then it may not get replaced. Proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. Kate Symonds and carried with a vote of 8 for and 2 against.

b) VE Day Celebrations – the Chairman reminded members that a lot of the programmed events seem to be taking place on the Bank Holiday which is Friday, 8th May. Rev. Carol Green said that she would be planning a church service for the Sunday afternoon of that weekend followed by a street party at the end of Church Street. She said that the Church Community and Fives Court would make some scones. Cllr. Sims said that neither the RBL nor Mere School were planning any events. The Chairman said that this would be raised again next month for an update.

c) Water bottle refilling station – Cllr. J. Jordan said he had carried out further research but was concerned that it would be more costly to have a filling station inside the clock tower as he did not know where the nearest water supply was. He therefore wondered whether it might be better to consider installing a station outside the public toilets and he felt it would be very visible in this location. He confirmed that a surface mounted filling station is between £500 & £600 and a stand-alone pedestal filling station is approximately £1000. He was also wondering whether it might be possible to get sponsorship to help with the costs of the project. Cllr. Norris said he thought it was worth investigating to see where the water supply is at the clock tower as members felt that there was one nearby. Following a show of hands, the clock tower location was favoured over the public toilets by 5 to 4. Cllr. Jeans said he abstained from that vote because he lives next door to the toilets. The Chairman and Cllr. Jordan agreed to do more investigations and raise again for next month’s agenda.

121. Reports & Consultations

a) Neighbourhood Policing Report – Cllr. Sims said that scams were causing an issue of concern.

b) County Councillor’s report – as published in Mere Matters.

122. 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: 20/00424/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: To convert the 1 bedroom annexe into a 2 bed cottage using the double garage space below the annexe property.
At: Yew Glen House, Annexe, Castle Street, Mere. BA12 6JE

Cllr. Mead said that there was no provision for parking which would push parking elsewhere and exacerbate the problem in Manor Road or other nearby roads. Cllr. Norris pointed out that the Town Council was clear in its objection to the conversion of Lloyds Bank into flats due to the lack of parking provision. RESOLVED to object to this application on grounds that there is insufficient off-road parking: conversion of the annexe into a 2-bed cottage would result in the loss of two off road parking spaces and by increasing the capacity of the development, it could increase the need for more off-road parking spaces. Proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mead and carried with a vote of 5 for, 1 against and 4 abstentions. Cllr. Jordan abstained as he was a near neighbour. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting).

Application Ref: 20/00444/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Single storey side and rear extension
At: Spree, Rook Street, Mere. BA12 6FD

The Chairman said that he had carried out a site visit and pointed out that the extension would be visible from the neighbouring property on the eastern side. Cllr. Norris said that it was all single storey and he did not think it would cause significant residential impact. RESOLVED to recommend approval on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Pester and carried with a majority vote. (In order not to compromise his position as Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Jeans abstained from discussion or voting).

Application Ref: 20/00661/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: Single storey rear extension
At: Birchlea, Boar Street, Mere. BA12 6DD

Having declared a pecuniary interest in this planning application, Cllr. Jeans left the room whilst this item was considered and took no part in discussion or voting. RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Ings, seconded by Cllr. P. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote of those present.

Application Ref: 20/00787/FUL
Application for: Full Planning
Proposal: First Floor extension to side of property
At: Barn Cottage, Wellhead, Mere. BA12 6EH

The overhead projector would not work and so the downloaded plans could not be seen and members were relying on the plans printed off Wiltshire Council's planning website. Unfortunately, the plans were of such poor quality that when printed out, they were inadequate and showed insufficient detail. Members therefore felt unable to comment and asked the Clerk to pass on this information to the planning authority.

Application Ref: 20/01141/HRN
Application for: Hedgerow Removal Notice
Proposal: Removal and reinstatement of hedgerows
At: Burton, Mere.

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

****b) Protocol for dealing with developers in respect of pre-planning application developments (per NALC legal advice LCR Summer 2015)*** – A draft policy had been prepared by the Clerk and distributed to

members with their agenda papers. **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy without amendment on proposal made by Cllr. P. Coward, seconded by Cllr. R. Pester and carried with a unanimous vote.

***c) Wiltshire Council's Spatial Planning – Green Infrastructure and Open Space collaboration & Household Survey** – the Clerk informed members that Wiltshire Council had sent a Green Infrastructure and Open Space Survey along with bespoke PDF maps. This was an important survey as the data collected will be used to understand the current provision of existing open space within the county and will form the evidence base necessary to underpin a new Green Infrastructure Strategy and Open Space Strategy which will, in turn, help with the future provision of formal and informal recreational space and green corridors for walking, cycling and could be used as a catalyst for a wider discussion around Green Infrastructure. The survey needs to be completed and maps annotated and returned to Wiltshire Council by 31st March. It was agreed that delegation be passed to the Clerk, Chairman, Cllrs. Jeans, Mead and Pester to complete the work requested by Wiltshire Council. The Clerk said that she would arrange a meeting with the councillors concerned. The Clerk also confirmed that Wiltshire Council was seeking assistance from Parish & Town Councils to publicise a household survey to residents so that they can comment on the spaces that they care about. The Clerk asked members how the Town Council could try and a) reach householders and b) encourage householders to fill out the survey and return it. As this survey needed to be returned by 31st March, it was too late for Mere Matters but the Clerk suggested she could publicise on the Mere Matters group on Facebook and also suggested we send an email to all known group contacts, i.e., Chamber of Trade, School, Seeds4Success, Sports Groups, Footpath Group and ask them if they wouldn't mind forwarding it to their members to complete. The Clerk said that she could also print off copies to give to allotment holders when they come into the office to pay their allotment rents in late March. Members agreed with the Clerk's suggestions.

123. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths, Traffic & Transport

a) Update on issues for MyWiltshire Reporting App, jobs for Parish Steward (10th & 11th March), jobs for Sparkle Team visit (16th – 19th March) + identification of new issues & jobs relating to streetscene, highways and footpaths.

Jobs identified:

- Speed signs need washing along Woodlands Road
- Street Light out in Castle Street by the bus stop at the bottom of Bramley Hill
- Accumulation of mud on footpaths & highways:
 - Footpath between Wellhead and Steep Street (below allotments)
 - Footway between Spinners Way and Fennel Road
 - Footpath between Springfield Road & Prince of Wales Club
 - Lower Old Hollow Road – needs leaves and mud clearing from carriageway and continue on to footpath leading over bridge at the bottom of Steep Street and then go on to clear mud from the Waterside path – from Steep Street to Upper Water Street
 - Burton Path (from Mere School to Burton Mill)

The Clerk also reported that the Traffic Engineer had said that she would try and arrange for the gang to re-mark the parking bays in The Square when they carry out the marking scheme at Water Street/The Lynch. With regards to the request for a centreline along Castle Street near The Square – the Traffic Engineer had reported that they aren't generally used at this type of location as the road isn't wide enough and defining the lanes can lead to an increase in speeds.

b) To set up Advisory Group to research and carry out community engagement on future Parking and Waiting Restriction requests. (deferred from last meeting) – with reference to the decision made at the January 2020 meeting (Minute No. 103a), and the Chairman's subsequent report in Mere Matters, the Clerk said that she had already received a number of requests from members of the public. Cllrs. Richard Pester, Brett Norris & George Jeans agreed to form an Advisory Group along with Mr. Clowser who also

volunteered to join the group. The advisory group to carry out further research, provide opportunity for community engagement and made recommendations to the Town Council for consideration.

***c) Request to extend 30mph speed limit along Shaftesbury Road** – Mr. D. Clowser had submitted a report which had been distributed to members with their agenda papers. The Chairman said that this matter was discussed by the Town Council in May last year when a decision was made not to request an extension of the 30mph speed limit along Shaftesbury Road as there were other priorities but to install a Speed Indicator Device within the existing 30mph limit. Cllr. Mead said that his recollection was that a road survey was carried out last year which revealed that there was no significant speeding. He suggested that the Town Council could ask for another traffic survey to be conducted. Cllr. Jeans said that any project requested to the CATG would require a 25% contribution from the Town Council. He felt that this was likely to cost in the region of £5000 and would therefore require a contribution of £1250 from the Town Council. **RESOLVED** that this is not pursued further for the time being as the Town Council has other priorities but that 'Speed Limits along Shaftesbury Road' would be raised annually for consideration. Proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Ings and carried with a vote of 5 for, 2 against and 3 abstentions. Cllr. P. Coward said that there was nothing to stop Mr. Clowser from taking it up with Wiltshire Council independently.

124. Buildings, Open Spaces, Play Areas, Sports Grounds, Car Parks, Allotments & Cemeteries,

125. Finance, Policy & Resources

***a) Payments** – **RESOLVED** to approve payments set out in payment schedules attached. The payment schedule was signed by the Chairman and RFO in the presence of the Council.

b) Resolution for Chairman & Vice Chairman to sign Legal Side Agreement relating to S.106 contributions for Woodlands Road development and the provision of off-site facilities and open space in Mere – The Clerk reported that Roger Taylor of Wellers Hedleys had confirmed that the intention of the Agreement is that the contributions that are paid to Wiltshire in respect of the off-site facilities and open space are to then be paid to the Town Council who will have the responsibility to comply with the terms upon which the contributions are made. He confirmed that the side agreement mirrors provisions in the original Section 106 agreement and is normal. The original agreement provides that Wiltshire can transfer the contribution to a third party (which includes the Town Council) and the Town Council indemnifies Wiltshire that the contribution will be held and disbursed properly. **RESOLVED** to sign the document on proposal made by Chairman and approved with a unanimous vote.

c) To set date & working group members to review and assess the effectiveness of internal control measures – Cllrs. Mrs. Symonds, Mrs. Traves and A. Colman agreed to form a committee to discuss this and make recommendations to the Council. The Clerk said that she would set a meeting time and date to suit those members.

d) CATG Scheme – Dropped Kerbs on Clements Lane – the Clerk confirmed that the dropped kerbs on Clements Lane had been completed in February and the good news was that the final cost came to £1549 and therefore the Town Council's contribution will be £387 instead of the £750 originally estimated.

e) Website Accessibility requirements – quotations for creation of website to meet statutory requirements – As I reported to you earlier last year, we have until 22nd September to make our website compliant with legislation requirements WCAG 2.1 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) although it is not clear what penalties will be levied on Town & Parish Councils if their websites are not compliant by that time. We have received details on the guidelines and I have forwarded these onto our existing web manager and have contacted some others who are out touting for business or who are currently providing new websites or updating websites for Town & Parish Councils in the area:

Firstly, it seems that I did underestimate the amount of work that was required when we carried out the budgets (this would appear to be a common mistake amongst my colleagues as we were all led to believe that websites could just be upgraded but this appears not to be the case and most websites will need to be re-made)

All quotations are for a website that uses a Wordpress Content Management System allowing us (the client) to update content areas themselves.

Quotation 1:

Install and set up new website with Wordpress	£650.00
Data migration from old site	£630.00
WP Template	£ 62.81
Total	£1342.81
SSL certificate (Secure site)	£59.99 per year
Hosting	£157.20 per year

Quotation 2:

Transfer of domain.org migration	£ 9.99
Migration of existing site to new complaint template	£1870.00
Total	£1879.99 + VAT

Hosting (recurring costs) – annual cost: £240.00

Quotation 3:

Full design and build of a bespoke responsive website that ties in with WCAG 2.1 2975.00 + VAT

(Free hosting for first year)

Things to think about for the future:

The Clerk reported that there may be certain advantages in the future of having a gov.uk address (there may also be some disadvantages). Another issue arising out of this is that under the GDPR guidelines it is also suggested that all Town & Parish Councillors should have their own dedicated email addresses i.e. clivehazard@merewilts.org or clivehazard@merewilts.gov.uk – the reason for this is that if there were to be a data breach investigation then your private email addresses would need to be investigated if you did not have a dedicated one for town & parish council correspondence.

Members unanimously agreed to proceed with Quotation 1 and agreed that the website should be a 'Mere Town Council' website rather than a generic 'Mere' website. It was agreed to request Search Engine Optimisation. It was felt that the future issues could be considered at a later date.

***f) Internal auditors report on interim internal audit carried out 25th February 2020** – Members noted the contents of the letter written by Mrs. Mary White, Internal Auditor, dated 26th February 2020: 'On 25th February I carried out an internal audit of the Town Council's Financial Statements for the year ending 31st March 2020. I am of the opinion that proper accounting records have been maintained by the Council and that financial statements have been properly prepared. Once again for the purpose of this audit the Town Clerk, Lindsey Wood, provided every assistance and everything necessary was to hand and in excellent order.' Members expressed their gratitude to Mrs. White for spending time on the internal audit assessment and for the reassurance given.

g) Application for fingerpost sign grant – Members were shown a photograph of a fingerpost sign that had recently been made and installed at Swainsford by the grounds staff. It was agreed to apply for a grant to replace a damaged or missing fingerpost sign at Barrow Street Lane/Charnage junction. The Chairman asked for it to be noted in the Minutes that we are very lucky with our grounds staff team and appreciate what a tremendous job they do.

***h) Hills Waste Collection Price Review** – members noted the 2020 price review and the fact that waste collection would go up by 6% next year. The Clerk pointed out that the office annually researched for

cheaper alternatives but in the last round of investigations, carried out in October 2019, had not been able to find anything cheaper.

***i) Action Plan for pending Town Council projects** – the Clerk reported that she had been feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work that is pending and number of projects on the go and had therefore devised an action plan of projects so that some kind of priority order could be agreed between members and staff. She was suggesting that this would be an ongoing spreadsheet that would be updated monthly and presented to councillors for comment at each meeting. Members felt that this was a good idea and agreed with the priority order of projects as listed in the spreadsheet.

126. General Items & Consultations

a) Annual Town Meeting

- Date & Venue of Meeting (Grove Building booked for Wednesday 22nd April 2020)
- Programme for meeting & Agenda

The Chairman said that he was desperate to think of some way that we could make the Annual Town Meeting more interesting. Cllr. Jordan said that Graham Avory had created a directory of people and we should contact him for information to get more people to attend the Town Meeting.

b) WALC Newsletter – February 2020 - noted

***c) The Great British Spring Clean 2020** – Cllr. Norris said that he would be happy to organise a litterpick for April and said that he would arrange details with the Clerk. Cllr. Coward said that Hill Brush would donate litter picks.

d) Coronavirus – Advice & Information, Risk Assessments & Emergency Planning? – It was agreed that the Town Council should follow NHS & Government guidelines and that we needed to wait and see what was being advised before we could think about Risk Assessments and Emergency Planning.

127. Future agenda items

Cllr. Mead - outside lighting for the Andy Young Pavilion Car Park.

For Information Only

***Briefing Notes:**

Briefing Note No. 20-09 – Changes to Kerbside Recycling Collections

Briefing Note No. 20-10 – A summary of the governments £220m “better deal for bus users” and how to make suggestions for improved or enhanced bus services in Wiltshire

Briefing Note No. 20-11 – Working in partnership with Town & Parish Councils

With regards to the “better deal for bus users” – it was agreed to delegate this to Mr. Stone to make suggestions.

Forthcoming meetings/events

- Employment & Careers Event – Wednesday, 18th March 2020 between 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm at The Nadder Centre, Weaveland Road, Tisbury SP3 6HJ
- South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting – Wednesday, 18th March 2020 at 5.30 p.m. at The Nadder Centre, Weaveland Road, Tisbury SP3 6HJ
- Highways Meeting – Monday, 1st June 2020 between 1900 hrs to 2100 hrs (venue to be advised)
- Wiltshire Council Flood Plan Workshop – Wednesday, 25th March 2020 at 7.00 pm. In the Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

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