

# Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> January 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, R. Hill, G. Ings, G. Jeans, J. Jordan, B. Norris, R. Pester, R. Sims, Mrs. K. Symonds & Mrs. L. Traves

**Also:** R. Stone, D. Stone, D. Morris, Jenny Seward, G. Avory, C. Churchill

Meeting convened at 7.30 pm with Public Session

*The Chairman convened the meeting wishing everyone a Happy New Year and read out the consent notice for names of members of the public to be recorded in the Minutes.*

Jenny Seward said that she was experiencing difficulties coming out of her driveway due to cars being parked on the street either side of her gates and reducing visibility. The Chairman agreed to have a look at the location etc but felt that there was not much the Town Council could do unless the cars were parked on the street illegally. He suggested having a chat with PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky about the matter too.

Glen Ings reported a broken fence post that is causing a trip hazard at the end of Barnes Place.

John Jordan would like to thank everyone that was involved in judging the Christmas lights. Cllr. Jeans said that he had persuaded the Clerk of Kilmington Parish Council who lives in Bourton to do the judging.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllrs. R. Coward, A. Mead and E. Mitchell

## **98. 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 Minute No. 105a)
- Cllr. Jeans declared a personal interest in planning application Ref: 20/00109/TCA

**99. Minutes – RESOLVED** to approve Minutes of Town Council meeting held on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Colman and carried with a unanimous vote of those present on 2.12.19

## **100. Matters Arising**

**a) Insurance claim update** – The Clerk reported that little has happened since the December meeting although she has met with an assessor from a window company provided by our insurance company to quote for repairs to the chapel windows. However, he seemed to think that it was unlikely that they would be able to quote for the work as it was too specialised but he would be able to provide an assessment report for the insurance company.

**b) Purchase of machinery** – the Chairman explained that, as agreed at the last Council meeting, we took measures to set up a Hire Purchase agreement in order to purchase the new RTV vehicle for the grounds staff, having previously taken advice from Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) on whether this would be acceptable and would be outside the need to seek Loan Permission from the Secretary of State. The advice received was that this was outside the scope (as Minuted last month). However, the finance company rejected the application advising that Councils are unable to take out Hire Purchase or Lease agreements without permission from the Secretary of State. This has opened up a whole can of worms and WALC is taking up the matter with central government. Other Town Councils seem to have provision or have taken out Hire Purchase and so it may prove to be an interesting issue. Anyhow, it appears that

there may still be two options open to us: One is to have an Operating Lease for the vehicle – this is accounted for as a revenue expense and is where we would effectively ‘rent’ the equipment for the duration of the agreement and hand it back to the supplier at the end of the term. However, after reviewing their calculations, it would appear that this is not financially viable. Alternatively, we could just buy the vehicle outright and use other allocated reserved and/or budget headings with a view to replenishing at next year’s budget and this is the option which he was making as a proposal. Cllr. Colman asked whether the Town Council had obtained 3 quotations in accordance with Financial Regulations and the Chairman confirmed that 3 quotations had been received – one for a Polaris, one for a John Deere and one for a Kubota. The Chairman’s proposal was carried with a unanimous vote of approval

## **101. Reports & Consultations**

**a) Neighbourhood Policing Report** – Cllr. Sims said that there had been a number of local thefts and burglaries.

**b) County Councillor’s report** – Cllr. Jeans reported that over the Xmas holiday period, someone had reversed into the doctor’s surgery building with a vehicle that had a tow hitch which has caused considerable damage to the building. Investigations are ongoing.

**\*c) Seeds4Success Annual Report & introduction from Chair of Trustees, Ben Williams** – The reported, which was distributed to members with their agenda papers was duly noted and the Trustees, along with Jaki and her team were congratulated on the work achieved during the year.

**d) Report on Butt of Sherry Preservation Society meeting held on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> January** – Cllr. Jordan reported that the Town Council Chairman had attended the meeting, as did Cllr. Jeans. The meeting was well organised and well attended. Cllr. Jordan reported that the issue seems to have captured people’s interest and many of the people who attended the meeting took forms away to complete. The committee have applied to the Plunkett foundation who help community groups and this meeting formed part of the community engagement process. The committee will need to draft a business plan and then issue a share offer to the community. The ambition is to raise enough money to put in a successful bid for the premises although it may be necessary to apply for a small mortgage. Chris Churchill, who is funding Chair of the Butt of Sherry Preservation Society Committee was present at Town Council meeting.

**e) Chairman’s Report on visit from BBC Wiltshire Sound** – the Chairman reported “the week before Xmas I was contacted by BBC Wiltshire Sound about participating in their Xmas show but they wanted me to go all the way to Swindon for a 3 minute slot on Mere which I was unable to do. However, I eventually persuaded them to come to Mere and Ben Prater, the Breakfast Show presenter, came along the next day and to see how Mere celebrates Xmas. The show was aired on Xmas eve and mentioned various businesses and their wares along with the Xmas lights and festive spirit of Mere.”

## **102. 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: 19/11560/FUL  
Application for: Full Planning  
Proposal: Single storey extension  
At: 1 The Copse, White Road, Mere. BA12 6EX

**RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Sims, seconded by Cllr. Jordan 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: 19/11056/LBC

Application for: Listed Building Consent  
Proposal: Proposed removal of stud partition wall to create a larger and more accessible toilet, installation of new boiler with flue through roof, widening of internal door frame, removal of stud wall to create a larger kitchen, installation of velux type window to match existing, repair of wall around old boiler flue. Associated plumbing and electrical works.

At: Tower View, Church Street, Mere. BA12 6DS

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Symonds 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: 19/12167/TPO

Application for Work to TPO Trees

Proposal: T1 – Weeping Ash tree – deadwood removal, 1.5m max reduction of lateral branches over the road to clear traffic, street furniture and balance the tree

At: The Manse, Boar Street, Mere. BA12 6DD

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

Application Ref: 20/00109/TCA

Application for Work to Trees in Conservation Area

Proposal: Conifer (T1) – Dismantle the tree, leaving the stump at a height of around 2-foot due to fence.

At: 1 Fives Court, Angel Lane, Mere. BA12 6DH

RESOLVED to recommend approval of the above application on proposal made by Cllr. Ings, seconded by Cllr. Hill and carried with a majority vote. Cllr. Jeans declared a personal interest in this application and abstained from voting.

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

#### **a) Parking and Waiting Restriction requests** – suggested locations:

- Outside Brimble Cottages in Castle Street
- Manor Road south of junction with Denes Avenue (on-street parking has contributed to accident in last year)
- Hazzards Hill west of junction with White Road (Mere Social Club road)
- Upper Water Street close to junction with Salisbury Street/Hazzards Hill

There was a general discussion as to whether or not the Town Council wanted to submit requests for any locations. Cllr. Mrs. Symonds said ‘if you prevent people from parking in these places you have to consider where they will be displaced and whether it will make the situation worse’. There was a general feeling that the Town Council needed to research this matter in more depth and provide the opportunity for public engagement. RESOLVED to raise this on the next agenda with a view to setting up an advisory group to carry out further research and to make recommendations to the Town Council.

**b) Update on issues for MyWiltshire Reporting App, jobs for Parish Steward + identification of new issues & jobs** – Members noted the update. No new jobs were identified.

**c) Future of Street Lighting in Mere** – Cllr. Jeans reported that Wiltshire Council is proposing to convert most of the county’s street lighting to LED units over the next two years and Mere is scheduled in the scheme for May 2021. Cllr. Jeans said that there would be the opportunity to dim the lighting during off-peak periods & switch them off individually at certain times. Although we are within the AONB Dark Skies area, that does not mean that we cannot have street lights - the LED lights are intense but they are made so that the light is directed downwards and it does not reflect back up into the sky. However, Cllr. Jeans can foresee some problems occurring with this programme and already, where old SOX lights have been

changed to LED lights, he has received complaints because they are so much brighter. For example, one resident in Salisbury Street has had a light replaced outside his bedroom window and the intensity of light is causing sleep disruption but a solution could be found by adding wings to the lights to redirect the light. It is also possible that some of the street lights may be removed and one has already been removed from the corner of Copenhagen Lane (the lane that runs from Church Street to Castle Street). Cllr. Jordan said that decisions are being made which have a profound effect on us, for example the light from Copenhagen Lane has now disappeared and this was in a location where a light was desperately needed and then outside the Dilly House they have replaced a light which is now so bright that your shadow from it is still visible when you get the next streetlight. RESOLVED to write to Peter Binley to ask for some kind of consultation on what they are planning to do in Mere and to ask for the opportunity to have some input.

**d) Wiltshire Council's Strategic Depot Implementation Plan** – the Clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Council were conducting a strategic depot review. Wiltshire Council's Strategic Depot Implementation Plan explains that they have aspirations to close the Mere Depot and operate from Warminster. One of the reasons for this is that the salt storage is not covered and concerns have been raised by the Environment Agency relating to contaminants associated with open storage of salt. However, the document states: 'the A350 strategic road towards Shaftesbury and communities in the far south of the county will no longer be able to be effectively served from gritting operations solely based in Warminster and High Post. The high ground in the area presents the greatest vulnerability to extremes of snow in the Authority. This area is modelled as a separate climatic domain receiving separate weather forecast data.' Therefore, they are considering proposals for a new, small-scale satellite winter depot in the area, which may involve the purchase of a small area of third party land and the building of a covered salt storage depot. The document identifies the creation of a new winter depot somewhere between Willoughby Hedge & Hindon and the capital required would be £2.5m. The document also says that the closure of the Mere Salt Depot may result in a capital receipt of circa £0.300m. The Town Council felt that this proposal was completely ridiculous not only from a financial point of view because Wiltshire Council could easily build a covered salt storage building in the Mere Depot and save themselves the money and trouble of purchasing extra land but also because, during times of heavy snow, it may not even be possible for their gritting lorries to reach the area between Willoughby Hedge & Hindon because it can only be reached via the high ground with the greatest vulnerability to extremes of snow in the county. RESOLVED to write a strongly worded letter of objection to the leader of Wiltshire Council and to the Area Board and to copy in our MP.

**\*e) Highways Newsletter December 2019** - noted

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

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

**\*a) Payments** – RESOLVED to approve payments as set out in the payment schedule attached. Cllr. Jeans, having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, left the meeting room and took no part in discussion or voting. The Chairman explained that he and Cllr. R. Coward and the grounds staff had been to see and test drive various RTV models and had chosen the Kubota model from E. G. Coles which was, in fact, the cheaper of the three. RESOLVED to purchase the machine from E. G. Coles on proposal made by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Coward and carried with a unanimous vote.

**b) To consider introduction of electronic payments** – The Clerk explained that she had recently come across two contractors/suppliers that did not take cheques and she was finding that it was becoming increasingly necessary to use her own personal account to purchase goods for the Town Council in order to buy them cheaper and then claim reimbursement. The Clerk already has delegated authority to make payroll payments from the Imprest Account with Lloyds Bank and asked the Town Council to adopt a system of making electronic payments for purchases & supplies that would be compatible with its general duty to maintain an effective system of internal control. RESOLVED that investigations be made with Lloyds Bank to find a means whereby the Town Clerk can set up payments electronically with a signatory councillor then authorising those payments on a third party device.

**c) To consider provision of water refilling station** – Cllr. Jordan said that the notion was to find someone that would be prepared to install a water refilling station into their premises. He said that it might be possible to get a grant from Wessex Water to pay for this but the grant applications close at the end of March. The Chairman suggested that the Clock Tower might be a suitable location as it is central, the building is open during the day and locked at night so there would be less opportunity for misuse and vandalism and there is an existing water supply to the building. He raised concerns about legionella testing though but Cllr. Jordan said that Wessex Water would inspect the units regularly for water quality. **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Jordan pursue this project further with Wessex Water and make further recommendations for the Town Council to consider.

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

**a) Action Plan for pending Town Council projects** - deferred

**b) To consider events to celebrate 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day (the end of World War II in Europe)**

**between 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020** – The Clerk reported that Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> May marks the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) and this day has been designated by the Government as a Bank Holiday with licensing hours extended to enable people to join in the VE Day 75 celebrations and organise events over the VE Day weekend of the 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May. There will be encouragement for church services, street parties, celebrations at pubs, clubs, hotels and halls providing people with the opportunity to pay a personal tribute to those millions at home and abroad who gave so much to ensure we all enjoy the freedom we share today. The Clerk added that the Town Council had allocated a small sum of money to help with any celebrations that may be planned by either the Town Council or other organisations. Cllr. Sims said that he was sure the School would come on board with this. **RESOLVED** that the Chairman would raise this in his Mere Matters report stating that the Town Council would be interested in hearing from groups and organisations, streets and residents groups on what they are planning to do to celebrate this occasion.

### **\*Briefing Notes:**

Briefing Note No. 19-039 – Community area Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Briefing Note No. 20-01 – Community Governance Review – Survey

## **107. Forthcoming meetings/events**

a) Community Safety Group Meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> January at 6.00 p.m. at The Nadder Centre, Tisbury

b) Cranborne Chase AONB open day – Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 between 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. AONB Office, Rushmore Farm, Tinkley Bottom, Tollard Royal, Wiltshire SP5 5QA

c) Employment & Careers Event – Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 between 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm at The Nadder Centre, Weaveland Road, Tisbury SP3 6HJ

## **108. 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

Meeting closed at 9:04 pm