

# Mere Town Council

## Clerks Report for Town Council meeting 6.11.23

### Agenda Item:

#### **\*5c) Minute ref: 299 a) Community Governance Review (CGR) - Pre-Consultation - Information Gathering Survey (in Clerks Report)**

The Chairman and I had a Teams meeting with members of the CGR Committee to discuss our proposals. We have subsequently received the following information from the Community Governance Review Team.

The pre-consultation surveys for each of the CGR scheme areas are now available online and will remain open until 26 November 2023. Councils are urged to submit comments and to circulate and promote the link to the surveys locally where possible.

#### [Community Governance Review Information Gathering Survey 31 October - 26 November 2023](#)

The Electoral Review Committee will meet publicly on 13 December 2023 to consider each Review area. An information pack will be compiled from the data and responses available at the time. The Committee will then decide whether to make draft recommendations in line with CGR criteria.

[\(Electoral Review meeting page – view meeting dates, agendas and minutes\)](#)

At this informal information gathering stage of the process, we do not directly communicate with the individual households concerned, as should the ERC decide not to make any draft recommendations and to instead leave the boundaries as they currently stand, the review would at that stage go no further. For any areas where there are draft recommendations, any electors directly impacted by boundary changes, would be written to as part of the public consultation if they are recommended to be transferred from one parish to another.

People may also send representations to this email address - [CGR@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:CGR@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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#### **\*8b) Wiltshire Bus Review (Consultation ends 10.11.23) - see also Minutes of Shaftesbury & Gillingham Area Transport Forum meeting 19.9.23 (attached) (This information was previously sent out to members on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023)**

##### **Have your say on the future of bus services in Wiltshire**

We are asking you to have your say on the future of bus services and other public transport options.

Your comments will help to inform the council's draft Public Transport Policy, which aims to support road-based public transport countywide to help achieve the council's environmental, social, and economic goals, while also ensuring value for money public transport services.

The Public Transport Policy aims to:

- Ensure that residents can access essential facilities and services using public transport, promoting a high quality of life for all.
- Encourage residents to choose public transport for their daily journeys to and from work, reducing traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

- Provide reliable and convenient public transport options for visitors to Wiltshire, enabling them to explore the county's attractions without relying on private cars.

The consultation ends at 23:59 on Friday 10 November.

[Find out more and have your say](#)

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**\*9d) Street Tag Wiltshire (see email received 31.10.23) (attached)**

I have received the following email from an officer at the Public Health Team of Wiltshire Council:

“I am emailing to inform you of a programme coming to Wiltshire called Street Tag.

Street Tag is an interactive app to promote and enhance community-wide participation in physical activities, such as, walking, running and cycling through competitions and specific areas of interest.

The app turns the world around you into a virtual playground, points are gained by being physically active and collecting virtual tags.

Street tag is not limited to community participation but also, organisations and school engagement through internal and external competitions. Building on the success of a similar initiative ‘Beat the Streets’ which has previously come to Trowbridge and is set to return for a month in October 2023. These types of physical activity interventions have shown success in their adoption and use in Wiltshire. Street Tag will provide further app-based challenges for resident across the County of Wiltshire over a longer period.

[Street Tag](#)



[Street Tag](#)

Street Tag is a gamified healthy lifestyle app that promotes and enhances community-wide participation in physical activities.  
streettag.co.uk

Street Tag is set to go live in Wiltshire from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 for two years initially.

I am creating working groups to feed into the development of the app and the programme to make sure it is successful.

Please do contact me if you wish to find out further information but would also like to be involved. “

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**\*11 c) Offer to join Rural Market Town Group FOC until end February 2024 and thereafter approx. £100 p.a.**

I have received the following email correspondence:

Further to our chat this morning below if you can scroll down, please, is the earlier correspondence I was chasing up upon, both from me on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September and from Kerry ( our Chief Executive) on the 18<sup>th</sup> August. We feel localities with below 50,000 population can tend to be marginalised almost totally by Government of all political persuasions and we want to bring together a group that can form a body for their Hub Town , Hub Parish view - establishing points that can be taken forward with the powers that be. We currently have c200 localities in membership but the larger we can grow the more notice will be taken... We also feel there is much merit in being able to create a forum that spreads and exchanges 'smaller' town best practice and parish discussion specifically around rural issues..

We are offering c six months completely free membership and then you can freely decide whether we are doing enough to persuade you that you should stay.

Please can Mere T.C. a community at the centre of rural matters due to its local facilities, and character, take us up on this completely free, no commitments offer.

We look forward to hearing from you after your councillor meeting.

Email 27.9.23 - Dear Lindsey,

**We recently sent out to you an invitation to have a free period of membership of the Rural/Market Towns Group. ( details set out below). We very much hope that you can take up this one up and we can work with you for a while.. It is important that, at this difficult time, rurally and semi rurally based local councils do come together to their mutual benefit. Rural in definition encompasses a range of localities and we need the widest possible group. The comprehensive rural case struggles to be heard if places don't' come together. Please do send me an e mail taking up this offer.**

**We do very much hope to hear from you.**

Kindest regards,

David

**David Inman**

**Consultant to the Rural Services Network**

The Rural Services Network seeks to provide a voice for rural communities by representing rural services, networking between rural service organisations and establishing and broadcasting best practice in rural service provision. It comprises SPARSE Rural, the Rural Assembly, the wider Rural Services Partnership and through local council groups, the Rural /Market Town Group and the Rural Village Services Group. The organisation works with Rural England, a stand-alone CIC research group.

The Rural Services Partnership Limited is a registered company (0696 0646) in England & Wales.

18<sup>th</sup> August

**Subject:** Rural Market Town Group

We are the Rural Services Network, a membership organisation that provides a national campaigning voice for rural communities. We have over 500 organisations in membership, and support both rural local authorities, and rural Town and Parish Councils.

We would like to invite you to join our Rural Market Town Group, a grouping of the larger Parishes and Market Towns in England where we aim to share best practice and enable the group to contribute to our national

campaigning work. Rural Local Authorities have been underfunded by successive Governments, **leaving rural residents living in your town and in rural areas generally , receiving significantly less in Government funding**, paying higher council tax and receiving less services which cost more to provide.

Our primary aim is to campaign for fairer funding for rural areas, however we also work on other key issues such as affordable housing, the rural economy, access to health and care services and public transport.

[This link provides more information about the group and the services that we provide.](#)

These services include:

1. Weekly Rural Bulletin delivered to your inbox setting out key rural news stories and monthly Funding Digest highlighting potential funding opportunities for you and your local organisations.
2. Free attendance at RSN seminar programme – 8 events held online annually.
3. Opportunity to share your news and good practice with the group and the wider RSN.
4. Dedicated RMTG newsletter six times a year.
5. Two bespoke meetings a year for Councillors and Clerks.
6. Discounted access to tickets for online RSN National Rural Conference

We are currently offering free membership for six months to those joining the group, (from September 2023 to end of February 2024) and after that date, IF you chose to stay with us, the subscription varies between £97 and £133 depending on your population size. There is no requirement to join us after the free six -month period. Your town council will decide then.

If you'd like to take us up on this free offer for towns to join for the six months, please let us know and we will put you on service straight away.

Alternatively, if you'd welcome a chat to find out more, let us know and we can arrange a time that suits.

Best wishes

Kerry

**Kerry Booth**

Chief Executive

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

Please note, I work 4 days a week – my days vary but I will get back to you as soon as possible.

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