**Mere Town Council**

**Chair & Clerks Report for Town Council meeting 6.10.2025**

**Agenda Items**

**5a) Salisbury Street Parking Restrictions**

**Clerk:** As you know, I was on holiday during the September Town Council meeting but I have listened to the recording of the meeting and I am aware of the situation regarding double yellow lines outside the Lecture Hall.  Since I have returned from holiday, Sandra has emailed the Senior Traffic Engineer that looks after the LHFIG meetings and he has provided us with some information relating to enforcement but he also seemed to think that double-yellow lines have been in place outside the Lecture Hall since 2011 – his google map captures for 2011, 2022 and 2023 would certainly seem to show that this is the case but I would like to make sure that the double-yellow lines are actually in accordance with the Traffic Regulation Orders that were made in 2017 – this would obviously be necessary to be certain of legal enforcement.   Anyhow, I am in possession of the actual Traffic Regulation Orders and Sandra and I have been out on the road trying to ascertain whether or not the double-yellow lines accord with the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO’s).

The two relevant orders for the south side of Salisbury Street are:

“From its junction with the access road to the car park to a point 48 metres west of that junction”

“From a point 5 metres west of the western boundary of property No. 45 Salisbury Street for a distance of 7 metres in a westerly and southerly direction”

As to the first point – we have paced this out and it seems to be correct.  The double-yellow lines would appear to end about 48 metres west of the car park junction.

However, we are unable to find the property “No. 45 Salisbury Street” and so cannot ascertain exactly where the double-yellow lines should be in the second TRO.  I have therefore written back to the Highways Department and asked them if they can either provide me with a map showing the extent of the TRO’s or can provide me with a location point for No. 45 Salisbury Street so that we can measure out the 7 metre distance.

**5c) Minute No. 71b) i) Highway Improvement Request Forms for B3092 – dated 29.7.25 (see Chair & Clerks Report)**

Clerk: I note that one of the decisions from the last meeting was:

* Delegate Chair & Vice-Chair to purchase suitable SID device (budget pre-approved & funds allocated)

Unfortunately, having checked the budget spreadsheet and Minutes, this is not the case. Here is an extract from the Budget Meeting Minutes: ***Automated Speed Watch /ANPR Camera*** *– the chairman has suggested that a speed indicator device that collects data would be helpful in demonstrating average speeds on certain roads and may help to prioritise requests for speed limit assessments. Therefore, I have included £1000 in the budget allocation towards this. There was a long discussion about the requirement for this to help with speed assessments but Cllr. Jeans put forward the case to get a device for Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). It was agreed that this should be a discussion for a future council meeting.*

So….. we have £1000 allocated towards a Speed Indicator Device. I have received quotations from one company for several different types of SID – the cheapest being £3447 + VAT and the most expensive being £5608 + VAT. None of those models have ANPR. I am currently making enquiries about ANPR cameras and whether it is possible to purchase a SID with ANPR and/or the cost of separate ANPR cameras.

**d) Report on SWW Area Board meeting held on Wednesday, 17th September and Mere Town Council application for funding for solar panels on public toilets (see Chair & Clerks Report)**

* South West Wiltshire Area Board Meeting

Wiltshire Councillors and community representatives met on 17th September to discuss issues which affect our local area.

* Local Policing and Crime Prevention

Inspector Lou Oakley of Warminster Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) provided an update.

Dedicated Officers: Mere and Tisbury now have a dedicated police officer, Thomas Newman, working alongside PCSO Stewart Hunt.

Retail Crime Focus: Inspector Oakley highlighted retail crime as a national and local priority. A recent survey was conducted with local stores in Mere and Tisbury to understand the issues.

Tackling Rural Burglaries: Police are running targeted overnight operations using specialised units, unmarked cars, and drones. Residents were urged to improve their security.

ANPR Cameras: The Inspector agreed that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras are beneficial for tracking criminals in rural locations, but police lack the funds to install them. Town councils were encouraged to consider funding ANPR cameras themselves.

You can sign up for the Wiltshire Police messaging service, which also enables you to reply directly to messages with information which may help the police. https://wiltsmessaging.co.uk/

* New Public Transport Service for Mere

The Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service, Wiltshire Connect, launched on 1st September, designed to replace traditional fixed-route bus services. It covers the rural areas around Mere.

The service also links users to Mere, Gillingham, Warminster or Tisbury Stations, making it an excellent rail link service. Bookings can be made via an app, website, or by phone. https://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/getting-around/bus/wiltshire-connect/

The service currently lacks evening hours, but officials are hoping to use new grant funding to invest in more vehicles to enable later services.

* Support for Elderly and Vulnerable People

Support for Older Residents: A new Community Support Service, run by Age UK Wiltshire, is launching in South West Wiltshire offering face-to-face support to vulnerable, isolated, or lonely older people. The service helps residents gain confidence, access local groups, and navigate challenges like health changes or giving up driving. It will also help with claiming benefits such as Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit, and provides help with falls prevention. https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/

Shared Lives Scheme: The Shared Lives Service provides family-based living or respite care for vulnerable adults over 16. The scheme is actively recruiting more carers. The paid role is flexible and highly beneficial for isolated people in rural areas. https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/shared-lives

* Solar panels for Mere’s Public Toilets

Among the funding applications reviewed by the Area Board was a request from Mere Chamber of Trade for £2,225 towards installing solar panels for Mere public toilets. We’re delighted that this was granted, which will help reduce future running costs.

* Flood Preparations

The Flood Resilience Officer gave a presentation emphasising the need for community preparedness given the climate change prediction of more intense rainfall. Property owners are responsible for protecting their homes from flooding. Residents are advised to fit protection measures like flood doors, rather than relying solely on sandbags.

Town councils were urged to have up to date flood plans and provide contact details for emergency response. Residents should check the latest floodmap: https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/

* How to report issues

Residents are strongly advised to report blocked gullies or flooding via the MyWilts app (find it in the app store). Budgets and schemes to improve drainage are often based on the number of reports received. Also report any known floods to your town council so they are aware of areas at risk (this includes groundwater flooding).

**6c) Wiltshire Towns Programme Activities update (information in Chair & Clerks Report)**

Chair: We are planning a very exciting Halloween event to be held on the night of Halloween. We are planning a body part hunt where small prizes will be given for completed forms. And we thank Cllr John Jordan for taking the to prepare clues to follow the trail, which he is working on now. We will have story telling in the chapel by the Wookey Hole Witch and fun and games in the town square, spooky walks - all ending with hot chocolate at the Seeds4Success building in the Recreation Ground, Cllr Dean is organising a drop in arts and crafts, again at the Seeds4Success building. Keep your eyes open on social media and around the town for the spooky posters with details of our week of Halloween fun.

**\*d) Assertion 10 of the AGAR for the 2025/26 accounts (information in Chair & Clerks Report)**

Clerk: This note has been received from the External Auditor:

 “We would like to draw your attention to a change within the Practitioners’ Guide 2025 which is mandatory

for the 2025/26 period. Paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 relate to an additional assertion to be included in the 2025-

26 AGAR, Assertion 10, regarding email management, websites, compliance with both the General Data

Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the requirement to have an

IT policy. The requirements in relation to Assertion 10 are listed in Paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 and the local

authority should review these requirements and take appropriate steps to ensure compliance.”

Here is Assertion 10:

*Note: Assertion 10 will not appear on the AGAR until 2025/26:*

**Assertion 10 - Digital and data compliance**

To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the authority needs to have taken the following actions:

1.47 Email management - every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk rather than abcparishclerk@gmail.com or abcparishclerk@outlook.com.

1.48 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must meet legal requirements for all existing websites regardless of what domain is being used.

1.49 All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

1.50 All websites must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities (where applicable).

1.51 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

1.52 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.

1.53 The DPA 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies a parish council as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.

1.54 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.

**Information Items**

Extract from a bulletin received from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) on 28.8.25 – I thought it was very interesting to read that Wiltshire tops the county list with its Parish & Town Councils raising £48 million through their precepts, highlighting the increased reliance on parish & town councils to fund local priorities!

* We have [published our annual analysis of parish and town council tax levels for 2025/26](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/8581320B-552C-413A-9A88C45C1B481135/?link=EA070B41-9E89-4AD2-8AF31247AA84C8F6), showing that precepts continue to grow in scale and importance. The total raised is now £856 million, up £75 million (9.68%) from last year, with the average Band D precept rising 7.4% to £91.22. There are now 150 parish and town councils raising over £1 million, six new councils introducing a precept, and Wiltshire topping the county list with £48 million raised. The figures highlight both the increasing reliance on parish and town councils to fund local priorities and the wide variation in financial capacity across areas, underlining their growing role in local government finance. The [report is available](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/8581320B-552C-413A-9A88C45C1B481135/?link=D19F20F7-8DBC-4BD3-991BD02F30E9326F) on our website.