

Mere Parish Council

*Parish Clerk - Mrs. L. C. Wood*

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 1st October 2007 at 7.30 p.m. in the Andy Young Pavilion, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors R. Coward (Chairman), Mrs. M. White (Vice-Chairman), C. Hazzard, R. Hill, R. Hughes, G. Jeans, E. Mitchell, M. Peirce, Mrs. R. Porter, D. Sealy, R. Sims, S. Squires & Mrs. L. Traves. Also County Cllr. Mrs. Bridget Wayman & PCSO Kim Thick (Tisbury).

Public Present: Mr. T. Stedman, R. Potter, M. Whatley, S. Ford, B. Wagg & L. Stanton.

Public Session

Mr. Simon Ford (parent governor of Mere School) spoke about the Travelplan for the school which was designed to increase the number of children walking and cycling to school. The school is concerned because there has been a reduction in the number of children walking to school in the last 3 years and there are 3 particular sites that they have safety issues with – Edgebridge, The Lynch/Pettridge Lane and Hazzards Hill. A walking bus scheme has been implemented to bring children from Bramley Hill and they would like to set up other walking bus schemes from the north and south of the village. Mr. Ford asked the Parish Council for support with these issues and it was agreed that a meeting should be set up to discuss this matter further.

Mr. Tony Stedman spoke about the Xmas Tree in The Square and said that last year it was a Health & Safety hazard for bus passengers as the tree obstructed their egress to and from the bus at the bus stop. Mr. Stedman said that he felt the first 3m of the trunk should be cleared of branches to prevent this obstruction.

G. Jeans spoke as a member of the public stating that there was a planning application on the agenda for a building which he owned. However, he wanted to make it clear that the planning application had been submitted by Leaping Frogs Kindergarten and not by himself.

Lesley Traves wanted to draw attention to the fact that there was a street light at the top of Steep Street and the light was being obscured by a large fir tree.

Mary White stated that the Highways Authority had filled in two of the worse pot-holes in Mill Lane but that there was a whole series of pot-holes along the lane now.

Mary White also stated that she had received concerns about the fact that the Old Drove at Old Hollow appeared to have been blocked off recently. She also stated that residents of Old Hollow still remained concerned regarding safety issues around the Peasehill development. Cllr. Jeans explained that this was a matter for the Health & Safety Executive.

Richard Hughes said that delivery drivers are threatening not to deliver in Limpers Hill/Southbrook vicinity because of the state of the road.

Clive Hazzard wanted to thank the police for their help with the carnival & the Chairman congratulated Mr. Hazzard and the Carnival Committee on the success of the carnival.

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs. P. Coward & Michael Hall.

62. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Derek Sealy declared a personal & prejudicial interest in Planning Application S/2007/1855

Cllr. George Jeans declared a personal & prejudicial interest in Planning Application S/2007/1942

Cllr. Eric Mitchell declared a personal & prejudicial interest in Planning Application S/2007/1784

Cllr. Clive Hazzard declared a personal interest in Planning Application S/2007/1784

Cllr. Rodney Coward declared a personal interest in Planning Application S/2007/1784

63. Minutes – Cllr. Mrs. Traves proposed that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday, 3rd September 2007 be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hazzard and carried with a majority vote of those present.

64. Planning

a) Applications: (All applications can be viewed on SDC's website [www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning](http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning) – application search – and type in the relevant number)

Cllr. Mrs. Mary White in The Chair

S/2007/1784 – FULL APPLICATION – CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL LAND TO A GOLF DRIVING RANGE INCLUDING THE ERECTION OF A SHED (RETROSPECTIVE)  
TWO COUNTIES FARM, SHAFTESBURY ROAD, MERE.

Cllr. Mitchell, having declared a personal & prejudicial interest in the above application, left the room whilst it was under discussion. Cllrs. R. Coward and C. Hazzard, declared a personal interest in the above application.

Cllr. Hazzard informed members that he had already been quoted in the press as saying that he felt that this would be a good facility for Mere as it was one sporting facility that the Parish Council could not provide for the community on its own land. Cllr. Peirce asked if on-site parking facilities were adequate and was informed that they were. The Parish Council had not received any letters of objection and Cllr. Sims proposed that the application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Squires and carried with a vote of 7 for and 4 abstentions.

Cllr. Rodney Coward, Chairman of the Parish Council resumed The Chair

S/2007/1818 – TREES WITH TPO – CUT BACK AND THIN WALNUT TREE  
14 CLEMENTS LANE, MERE

Councillors generally agreed that this was an important tree and felt that they were unable to comment on the application unless they were aware of how much cutting back and thinning was proposed. The Clerk was asked to write back to SDC to ask for more information.

S/2007/1855 – FULL APPLICATION – ERECT CONSERVATORY  
LINDEN HOUSE, SHAFTESBURY ROAD, MERE.

Cllr. Sealy, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room whilst this item was discussed.

Cllr. Hughes proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of those present.

S/2007/1864 – LISTED BLDG (WKS) – ALTERATIONS TO FACILITATE CONVERSION TO DWELLING  
APPROVED UNDER PERMISSION S/2007/0732  
CHURCH OF ST MATTHEWS, SHAFTESBURY ROAD, MERE.

Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the above application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. S. Squires and carried with a unanimous vote.

S/2007/1894 – FULL APPLICATION – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING GARAGE, ERECTION OF NEW BUILDING TO BE USED AS OFFICE  
8 DENES AVENUE, MERE.

Cllr. Hill expressed his concern that this application would result in the permanent removal of a vehicular access. Cllr. Hughes proposed that the application is recommended with condition that the new building to be used as an office is to be used in association with the owner/occupiers of 8 Denes Avenue and not occupied separately, sold as a separate unit or given separate curtilage. *(To ensure that there is no adverse effect upon neighbouring residents in respect of vehicle movements and parking arrangements)*. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a vote of 11 for and 1 abstention.

S/2007/1942 – CHANGE OF USE – CHANGE OF USE FROM FURNITURE DEPOSITORY TO PRE-SCHOOL USE (RETROSPECTIVE)  
THE CHAPEL, BOAR STREET, MERE.

Cllr. Jeans, having declared a personal & prejudicial interest, left the room whilst this item was discussed.

Cllr. Hazzard felt that the Parish Council should support this application as the Leaping Frogs pre-school provided a well-used community facility & service and he therefore proposed that the application be recommended for approval. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Sims and carried with a unanimous vote of those present.

S/2007/1944 – FULL APPLICATION – ERECT 2 DETACHED DWELLINGS  
BROCKHURST, WHITE ROAD, MERE.

Cllr. Mrs. White felt that the proposed application would result in overcrowded development. It was also pointed out that some members could recall a dispute arising over the right of way being a right of access and not owned by Brockhurst. Cllr. Hazzard proposed that the application be recommended for approval subject to an informative being added regarding history of disputes over ownership & access rights. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hughes and carried with a vote of 5 for, 3 against and 3 abstentions. In view of the close proximity to the Recreation Ground, the Clerk asked Cllr. Jeans if he would take photographs of boundaries and existing physical features on and around the boundary.

S/2007/1954 – CHANGE OF USE – CHANGE OF USE OF RETAIL PREMISES TO RESIDENTIAL  
10 CHURCH STREET, MERE.

Cllr. Hazzard reminded members that the Parish Council had fought hard to keep shops open in the past and said that the Parish Council's policy, in accordance with the Parish Plan, was to oppose change of use applications. Cllr. Hazzard said it would be criminal to lose another commercial retail premises. Cllr. Mrs. White agreed that this was an important commercial retail premises. Cllr. Mrs. Traves said that she was not aware that the shop had been advertised for sale separately from the residential premises. Cllr. Sealy said that he hated to see any butchers shop close but he was aware that Mr. Nurden had tried extremely hard to sell his shop. Cllr. Peirce said that the Council needed to face reality, that Mere was no longer a shopping town and Church Street was a residential street.

Cllr Hazzard proposed that the application should be recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

*Reasons:*

- § It is against Policy PS3 of the Salisbury District Local Plan. Whilst we realise that the premises as a whole (shop and accommodation + separate cottage) has been marketed for sale, the Parish Council does not feel that this is adequate demonstration that the premises is no longer viable for commercial retail use. Firstly, the property has only been marketed as a whole '*A handsome & well presented period house with retail shop, separate letting cottage & delightful southerly garden - £650,000.*' Whilst, we are not suggesting that the valuation is inaccurate, we do feel that the price for the whole site will limit the number of potential purchasers. Secondly, the agents marketing the property have recently been advertising '*with potential for residential use subject to planning permission*' and we feel that this is misleading. As far as the Parish Council is aware, the retail shop has never been marketed for sale as a separate entity which may increase the potential for purchase. Furthermore, the Parish Council feels that it would be feasible to physically separate the retail part of the premises from the residential part.
- § This retail premises is an important public service that should be retained in order to ensure a sustainable future for the community of Mere.
- § This retail premises is in a convenient 'high street' location in the centre of Mere with on-street parking nearby and is considered a vital asset in helping to sustain the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- § Policies in the Mere Parish Plan (adopted by the Parish Council) are set to resist change of use of retail & commercial premises to residential for the above reasons.
- § We are aware that it is often easier to sell residential premises and residential premises can often reach higher market values than they would when being sold as commercial/retail premises. We are also aware that Mere needs to provide easily accessible shops and services to meet people's day-to-day needs in order to provide some level of self-sufficiency and sustainability. For this reason we cannot allow a precedent to be set that would encourage owners of retail premises to apply for change of use.

Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. White and carried with a vote of 6 for, 3 against and 3 abstentions.

b) Notice of withdrawn planning applications:

S/2007/1550 – FULL APPLICATION – ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION  
WALNUT TREE INN, SHAFTESBURY ROAD, MERE.

S/2007/1452 – O/L APPLICATION – NEW DWELLINGS  
LAND ADJACENT TO MILLBROOK, MILL LANE, MERE.

*\*c) To consider draft consultation response on Local Development Framework, Core Strategy Issues & Options Paper* – with reference to the draft consultation response, as issued to members, the Clerk was thanked for putting together the consultation response which was endorsed with a unanimous vote.

65. Matters Arising

a) *Report from County Councillor* – County Cllr. Bridget Wayman reported on the temporary closure of the library to allow for maintenance. She also reported that the timetable for elections for the new unitary authority would be held in May 2009 and not 2008 and the new authority would be called Wiltshire Council.

b) *Report from District Councillor to include report on Western Area Committee Meetings* – District Cllr. Jeans urged the Parish Council to attend WCC's Meet & Greet meetings to discuss proposed arrangements for the new unitary authority.

c) *Report from Transport Representative* – Cllr. Sims reported on the latest meeting of the Shaftesbury & Gillingham Transport Forum. He also reported that the Connect 2 bus became operational today – the new vehicle which is an 8-seater people carrier with wheelchair access is planned to operate in the same way as the old 'Wigglybus' but, no doubt, there will be some teething problems. The operators, from Warminster, have secured a 5-year contract and the bus must be booked in advance, but can be block-booked by regulars. The call centre will be moving to Warminster next month. Cllr. Sims wanted to publicly thank the two ex-Wigglybus drivers, Ron & Pete, who did their best to make the Wigglybus venture a success.

d) *Report from Community Safety Representative* – Cllr. Sims points out that PCSO Kim Thick from Tisbury was present at the meeting. He said that the police post box in the Post Office was proving to be successful and was being used by the community. The Chairman expressed his concern regarding the safety camera vehicle that parked on the brow of the hill on the by-pass bridge in Manor Road to check the speed of vehicles using the A303. The Chairman felt that this was an unsafe place for the vehicle to park and it was agreed that he should talk to the safety camera unit about this.

e) *Fencing around Sheepwash at Burton* – The Clerk read out the response from the Enforcement Officer which stated 'From memory the area around which the fence has been constructed is not within the red line area on the planning consent for the development, therefore the condition is not applicable.' Members felt that the Clerk should write back to the Enforcement Officer asking him if we could have a definitive answer rather than one relying on memory.

f) *Boundary issues adjacent to Jubilee Gardens* – The Clerk informed members that the Title Registers had been received from the Land Registry for the two properties known as Hillside and The Dilly House and the Clerk was happy, from examination of the plans, that there was no encroachment upon Castle Hill Approach (Jubilee Gardens). However, the Clerk said that she would appreciate it if one or two councillors could view the plans as well, to confirm the findings. Cllrs. Jeans and Mrs. White agreed to assess the plans and report their findings.

## 66. Highways, Rivers, Footpaths & Transport

a) *Highway improvements/traffic management along Castle Street outside old Castle Hill Garage site and implications on Parish Council's planning consultation decision.* – Cllr. Jeans said that he was aware that the developer was required to make a £6k contribution towards highway/traffic improvements in Castle Street and that the developer had also agreed a 1m encroachment onto his land in order to widen the pavement. However, Cllr. Jeans, in his capacity as District Councillor, had written to WCC with an alternative proposal:

- § Instead of widening the existing footpath/pavement outside the old garage site, the road should be widened by 1m and a new 1m footpath be put in place 1m further back into development site. This should make little difference to the developer as he will not lose any more land than he has already agreed to.

- § Providing a small length (say 5 – 10m) of double-yellow lines on the north side of Castle Hill on the brow of the hill – on-street parking in this particular location causes visibility problems for traffic travelling west and east and ultimately leads to traffic congestion.

Whilst not strictly related to the development, Cllr. Jeans felt that the following issue could be added to the traffic regulation orders for the first two matters as he understood that it was the advertising and legal work that was expensive and it would be economical and cost-effective to 'piggy back' one to the other.

- § Provide a small length (say 5-10m) of double-yellow lines on south side of Salisbury Street outside Lecture Hall – the elimination of parked cars in this vicinity will provide a passing place for oncoming traffic but will allow for unloading and loading to the Lecture Hall.

The Parish Council considered these proposals and felt that they would address the issues in the Parish Plan, be beneficial for traffic management and pedestrian safety. On proposal made by Cllr. Mitchell, seconded by Cllr. Sealy and carried with a vote of 12 for, it was therefore agreed to send a letter to WCC supporting Cllr. Jeans' proposal. It was also agreed that this should be reported in Mere Matters.

*b) Letter from United Reformed Church regarding parking problems in Boar Street* – The Clerk read out the letter which stated that the United Reformed Church was facing increasing difficulties over parking where there is a funeral or wedding at the church and asked about the possibility of installing double-yellow lines near the church. Members were reluctant to consider the idea of installing double-yellow lines in Boar Street because they felt that this area provided valuable on-street parking for shoppers and the shops and facilities. However, it was suggested that limited ½ hour parking might help alleviate the problems and would be helpful to shops/shoppers. The Clerk was asked to write to the Highways Authority to ask for advice on criteria, procedure and actions that need to be met/taken to introduce time limited on-street parking.

*\*c) Parish Steward – jobs completed during last visit (19.9.07), Autumn Programme & jobs for next visit.* – Members noted the information in the Clerks Report. It was also pointed out that the footpath from The Rectory to the Churchyard was in need of trimming. The Clerk was also asked to write to the owner of the hedge on the junction of The Lynch/Pettridge Lane at Clay Knap.

*\*d) Letter from Upper Deverills Parish Council regarding centre white lines on B3095 from Longbridge Deverill to Mere.* – With reference to the information in the Clerks Report, members felt (with a vote of 10 for and 2 abstentions) that they were unable to support the proposals to remove the centre white line from the B3095 as they felt that the central white lines were a critical safety aspect in foggy conditions.

## 67. Open Spaces/ Sports Grounds & facilities

*a) Play Area at Clements Lane* – The Clerk informed members that C. G Fry & Son had agreed to pay the Parish Council's legal costs incurred in the transfer of the play area. Members agreed that the Council should use Farnfield & Nicholls for the legal work and members agreed that quotations should be obtained to safety surface the climbing frame/slide equipment with a view to funding from SWAG Grant .

*b) Hiring of Andy Young Pavilion for social functions – response on licensing laws* – The Clerk informed members that she had spoken to a member of the licensing team at SDC who had advised that a temporary event notice or premises license would not be required only where there was a very small party with no music or entertainment and only alcohol provided where no money is

exchanged. It was agreed that hiring policy of the Andy Young Pavilion should be raised on the next agenda.

c) *Proposed lease to bowling & swimming clubs – response from WCC* – The Clerk read out the letter from WCC's Legal Officer which stated that there was a clause in the lease between the County Council and the Parish Council which stopped the Parish Council from sub-letting the whole or any part of the premises. However, WCC's Legal Officer felt that a variation to the terms of the lease could be made to permit the grant of a lease to the Bowling & Swimming Clubs on condition that the Duchy of Cornwall were in agreement and there would be a charge for the legal work involved in varying the terms of the Parish Council's lease. Also the County Council was unable to assist the Parish Council in preparing a lease for the bowling & swimming clubs because they do not undertake external legal work. Cllr. Mrs. Porter proposed that the Parish Council should ask the Duchy for permission to sub-let and that the County Council should be asked for an indication of the legal costs involved in varying the lease.

#### 68. Allotments

a) *Application for a shed on plot 13 at North Road (Wellhead) allotments* – Cllr. Hill proposed that the application be approved. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.

#### 69. Finance

a) *Payments*: Cllr. Hill proposed that the following accounts be approved for payment. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote of approval.

Shaftesbury Garden Machinery	Repairs to Victa Rotary mower	31.73
Mere School	Water & Sewerage for swimming pool 30.6.07 – 3.9.07	40.49
Mere School	Electricity for swimming pool 30.6.07 – 3.9.07	251.41
Mere School	Water & Sewerage for bowling green 30.6.07 – 3.9.07	54.95
Mere School	Electricity used in Changing rooms 30.6.07 – 3.9.07	42.71
Mere School	Water & Sewerage for changing rooms 30.6.07 – 3.9.07	49.63
Mere School	Gas for changing rooms 30.6.07 – 3.9.07	116.81
**Piggotts Co. Ltd	Union flag	175.37
Cash	Reimbursement for mobile phone top-up	10.00
Imprest account cheques 2439 - 2449	Payroll & petty cash	4381.76
Forge Garages	Fuel & Oil	184.99
Tincknell Fuels Ltd	Gas Oil	139.91
Scats	'No Dogs' signs X 4	50.00
Cash	Sydenhams – tarmac for Duchy Manor grounds	13.70
Mere school	6.6% of bill for routine fire alarm service (May '07)	6.60
A. R. Diesels	Repairs to Landrover	424.77
Duchy of Cornwall	Castle Hill – rent in arrears (29.9.06 – 28.9.07)	14.68
Wesex Water	Trough OS 212	275.73
Shaftesbury Garden Machinery	Repairs to gang mowers	166.15
Southern Electric	Supply to clock tower	16.11

\*\* To be reimbursed by public donation

*b) Assessment of Internal Auditor – deferred*

*\*c) Letter from SDC's Acting Chief Executive regarding provision of public toilets - deferred*

70. Health & Safety

*a) Health & Safety & Fire Risk Assessments - deferred*

71. General Items

*a) Wiltshire County Council Budget Consultation meetings – It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would attend this meeting*

*b) Literary Festival – Cllr. Mrs. White asked for volunteers for a Parish Council team to enter the literary quiz. Cllr. Mrs. Traves volunteered and said she would find others to make up a team of four.*

72. Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground

*a) To approve figures and details for Annual Return 2007 - deferred*

*b) Lease/rental for Mere Youth Development Centre – deferred*

*c) Dog/litter bins and signs – The Clerk informed members that a new bin had been ordered for the Recreation Ground and the Council had agreed to re-site one of the bins from the play area to the ground itself. Signs would be erected once the bins were installed.*

73. Clerks Report – Cllr. Mrs. White proposed that the Clerks Report should be confirmed and adopted. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.

Cllr. Mrs. White asked for Film Shows to be put on next agenda.

\* Further information on these items in Clerks Report