



West Monkton Parish Council

ADOPTED

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 28th November 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs Besley, Cavill (until 9.40pm), Gage, Hope, Hall, Haskins and Munson.

In attendance: Mrs A Shepherd, Clerk and Mrs K Welsh, Assistant Clerk Community.

181/23 To receive any apologies (with reasons), introductions with responsibilities

Apologies were received from Cllrs Ellis and Tully.

182/23 To note

a) Declarations of Interest: No change.

b) Dispensation Requests: None

c) Amendments to the Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest: None had been notified to the Clerk.

183/23 To adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 24th October 2023

The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council on 24th October, having been previously circulated, were taken as read. It was resolved to adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 24th October, proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Hope and agreed by show of hands.

184/23 Chairman's Parish Asset Report

Cllr Haskins reported on the following:

- There are drainage issues in a number of locations- these have been reported on the Somerset Council website.
- Had a discussion with the Lengthsman regarding grass cutting for next year.
- Road Incident on Greenway. The police investigation is ongoing. Cllr Cavill reported that he had offered condolences to the family and offered the support of the Parish Council if needed. Clerk to contact Traffic Management at Somerset Council in view of the latest incident to see if any improvements to Greenway to reduce vehicle speed.

Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

Clerk reported that Creech St Michael Parish Council had received concerns from a resident in Coombe relating to large vehicles using Coombe Lane for access. The lane is signed as being unsuitable for long vehicles, but the resident reported that this is ineffective and often ignored. Creech St Michael Parish Council have committed to working with West Monkton Parish Council to address the matter and improve signage or request that a ban is imposed on HGV vehicles using the lane.

Assistant Clerk Community reported that the volunteer litter pickers had been in contact suggesting that some of the existing litter bins are in the wrong place.

Parish Councils to take a joint approach and Clerk to liaise with CSM PC.

The volunteer litter pickers to be requested to put together a plan of the location of the bins and suggested alternative locations.

185/23 Planning

a) To consider any planning applications (listed on Somerset Council website)

48/23/0045/CQ Application for Prior Approval for proposed change of use from agricultural building to 1 No. dwelling house (Class C3) and associated building operations at Quantock Farm, Quantock Lane, West Monkton

The Parish Council supports the granting of permission and made the following comments in respect of the proposal:

- Construction traffic and deliveries to the site should not go through Coombe but instead through West Monkton / Church Hill.
- To comply with the WM & CF Neighbourhood Plan policies, measures for rainwater capture should be included and any lighting should be downlit and LED.
- The proposal should incorporate bird boxes and bee bricks.

b) To note that Planning decisions made are available on Somerset Council website filed under the application number
Noted

186/23 Somerset Council Financial Position Implications

Cllr Cavill provided an update on SC financial position. Big action is now needed by Somerset Council. Somerset Council Executive Papers have been published today providing an update on in year savings and the achievability of those savings and also options for the 2024/25 budget.

Between now and 6th February Somerset Council need to put forward a comprehensive budget plan for next year that is achievable, if that isn't possible a S114 notice will be issued.

A discussion took place about the services that Somerset Council delivers that are statutory and discretionary.

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Somerset Council expressing the Parish Councils interest in the delivering some of the services identified in the letter from the Leader of Somerset Council requesting further discussion.

It was also agreed to delay approval of the PC 2024/25 budget and precept demand until January.

187/23 Sports Pitches update

Cllr Hall reported that the fencing around the dog walking area is complete. Whips will be planted alongside the fence.

The sports pitch field will be ploughed once the land has dried out sufficiently.

The pre-planning advice application is being finalised for submission as soon as possible. It was agreed to make reference to longer terms aspirations for the provision of Baseball if land can be acquired.

Cllr Haskins reported that a new padlock for the gate has been purchased and that he will install it.

188/23 MH Developments

a) MH2 Update;

Clerk reported that a hard copy of the masterplan that had been previously shared with the Parish Council by the Developers had been received in the post.

Cllr Cavill reported that he had requested a meeting with Somerset Council Executive Members about the MH2 proposals but no response had been received. Cllr Cavill confirmed that Cllr Rigby had left his position as Executive Member for highways and confirmation of his replacement is awaited.

A discussion followed on what further steps the Parish Council could now take. It was agreed that the Parish Council would make a statement, to be included in the next edition of the Village News and on the Monkton Matters website, providing an update on the application and the likely re-submission of the planning application in December and confirming the Parish Councils position in relation to the new proposals.

Clerk to request confirmation from the Developers Consultant of timescales for re-submission.

b) MH1 Update; POS transfer update. To review Managing Agent quotations.

Clerk reported that quotes for the management and maintenance of the MH1 public open space had been requested from a total of four managing agents that operate in the local area. One quotation had been received and two of the agents had declined the opportunity to quote.

The quote, provided by First Port (formerly known as Blenheims), was discussed. It was proposed by Cllr Hope, seconded by Cllr Hall and agreed with all in favour to accept the quote with a commitment of engaging First Port for one year initially.

Clerk to provide an update on Monkton Matters to provide residents with an indication of the annual sum based on the quote received and updating them on timescales.

c) Hartnells Farm Development Update; Phase 4 reserved matters planning application update. Approval of purchase of a dog bin.

Clerk reported that following discussion at the last Parish Council meeting, additional comments have been submitted to the Planning Officer at Somerset Council in relation to the Hartnells Phase 4 Planning Application. The comments also included a suggestion that the crossing point obligation near Greenway / Milton Hill be moved to Yallands Hill and Andy Coupe and Jon Fellingham were copied in to the email. Clerk confirmed that no response had been received to the email.

Cllr Hope reported his concern that the children's play area equipment that has been installed at Hartnells is the same equipment as supplied in Hob Close and expressed concern about how long the equipment will last and possible repairs that will be required. Clerk reported that Persimmon are agreeable to a dual waste bin being placed in Hartnells, an email has been sent to Somerset Council to ask the best location for them to empty the bin – confirmation awaited. Subject to agreement regarding its location, it was agreed to purchase a dual use bin at the cost of £439.99 +VAT.

d) Hyde Farm Development update;

No update.

189/23 Highways Update

a) Red Hill Culvert and brook between Red Hill and the pub; discuss required works, schedule works to coincide with Airband road closure.

Work needed to clear the culvert and brook between Red Hill and the pub was discussed. Cllr Haskins and Gage to meet at the location to look at what might be required before contractor quotations are obtained.

b) Monkton Heathfield Road Bus Gate discussion

Cllr Hope summarised a series of pictures of the bus gate at Bridgwater Road and Ilminster Road and the area requirements for an installation of a bus gate. Cllr Hope also shared pictures of locations on Monkton Heathfield Road where a bus gate could be installed and outlined the potential issues with the locations.

A discussion took place and it was generally accepted that there was not an ideal position for a bus gate on Monkton Heathfield Road.

It was noted that the MH2 proposals included amendments to the Monkton Elm junction with the A38 and the traffic assessment for the development may require additional measures.

Clerk to chase agreement from Somerset Council to install the SID on Monkton Heathfield Road near the Richards Crescent junction.

190/23 Community

a) Update;

Assistant Clerk Community provided the following update:

Café – Continuing to be busy with school children, parents, knit and crocheters and community garden volunteers. The Knit and Crochet group completed and put up the poppies around the parish which was well received. We are entering the Tree Festival at West Monkton Church on the 9th December making and decorating a Christmas Tree with woollen decorations.

Loss and Bereavement Group – Vicar Jim Cox was unable to make the November session, however 3 ladies came to the session and I ran the group in his absence. It went well and they are keen to come next month.

Stay and Play Group – Attendance still good on both days. Baby Bluebirds Theatre Company who has been given funding to run workshops and 5-week courses to help parents to up skill and to support their children with maths through music and fun activities have been meeting and working with families who attend the group on a Wednesday. Alan Chapman has planned to arrive as Santa on the week commencing 13/12 at the group and we will be using toys from the Swap Day on the 25/11 to give to children at the group.

Litter Pickers – Our group of litter pickers continue to keep our parish tidy and have used the stickers across the parish to tackle dog mess and littering. I have also purchased black bin bags for them to use. They have asked if we order some more stickers for the litter pickers? It was agreed to purchase one more batch of stickers.

Pupil Participation – I have organised dates to run assemblies at West Monkton Primary School to tie in with their themes and values throughout the year. Stuart and I met with Wil Lowndes, Assistant Head at Heathfield Community School and we are planning to start a 'Community Lunchtime Club' with 2 to 3 pupils from each year group to start having conversations around community. I plan to add this into my diary on a Thursday after Stay and Play Group.

Ideas for the future:

- School quiz team- take on the adults!

- Farm visit
- WWI memorial
- Charity stalls at parish events
- D-day commemorations

Youth Club – items currently stored in the BACH storage cupboard to be removed as the youth club is no longer operating.

b) Community Events update

Assistant Clerk Community provided the following update:

Community Quiz continues to be popular, the December quizzes now fully booked and we have new dates for next year for the community quizzes on Wed 24 January, Wed 21 February, Wed 20 March and Wed 24 April.

15/12/23 - Christmas Carol Singing Event at the BACH – I have emailed both Rev Jim Cox and Helen Newstead at West Monkton Primary School and Rev Jim has the 15th Dec in his diary at 3.30pm. The Primary School have asked if a group of their children can sing some of the songs they have been practicing for their concerts and I have suggested they do this at 3.30pm to start off the singing.

15/12/23 – Festive Volunteer Event – List of invitees was circulated and I have now a full list of those to be invited to this event. I will look to send the invite out before the end of the month, I have asked for replies by 30th November at the latest. Quote from Newports Catering.

It was agreed to proceed with Plan A from Newports Catering and to purchase some cheese and biscuits.

The refreshments for the event were discussed, Cllr Gage to source the refreshments.

29/6/24 – New Event – Tug of War with the local parishes – this replaces 8/6/24 Party in the Park. A visit was organised to the Country Park and they are keen to use the site for the event – we need to organise teams from the community to be entered into the competition, teams as follows, Over 40s, Under 40s and junior competitions – 2 teams for each category.

The Parish Council has been offered a fridge from South Quantocks Benefice, small under counter fridge – perhaps we could use this for events? It was agreed to decline the offer.

c) Community Fridge update

Assistant Clerk Community reported that the Community Fridge is continuing to pick up from Coops, Aldi, Tesco, Lidl and M&S regularly with some intermittent picks ups from Sainsbury and Asda. Upright freezer is now in situ at the BACH and we were also donated a freezer for the shed. We have a system to prioritize those in need using the BACH freezer and the freezer in the shed is used for surplus foods. Following an online meeting with Fareshare we should be able to collect more frozen food going forward.

d) Community Garden update; To consider quotations for a shed for the garden

Assistant Clerk Community reported that the picnic benches have been built by a volunteer and are now in place in the garden. A boards have arrived and have started to be used – they share what needs doing in the garden and also share a well-being quote. Awaiting contact from SALC to meet up to look at how project is developing. Community Service Team due to work at the garden on 17th December.

Quotations for metal sheds for the community garden were discussed. It was agreed to gather quotes for a timber shed instead.

191/23 Country Park Update feedback from Joint Meeting with CFPC on 23rd November. To consider quotations received for wildflower meadow

Cllr Hall reported that a meeting had taken place with Cllr Mike Best, Somerset Council and Jo Comer regarding the D-Day arrangements. During the meeting it was confirmed that Somerset Council had no money available to contribute towards the cost of the event. Cllr Hall and Assistant Clerk Community are putting costings together for consideration and to enable grant funding to be applied for.

The Poppy of Honour planning application has been submitted today. Clerk reported that payment of the application fee of £181.00 had been made and Simon Fox, Somerset Council Planning Officer has been alerted that the application has been submitted.

Cllr Hall reported that a further meeting is scheduled to take place with the Architect tomorrow to discuss final details.

Specifications of materials is awaited.

A further quote has come in for the construction which is being considered with architect tomorrow.

Feedback from the Joint Meeting with CFPC on 23rd November was provided. Clerk confirmed that three key actions were agreed:

1. To enquire with Somerset Council about the possible purchase of the land. An email has been drafted and circulated for comments. Cllrs confirmed they were happy with the content of the email.

2. Compile a document outlining the required amendments to the lease. This will be developed with CFPC and submitted to Somerset Council after a reply has been received to purchasing email.
3. Open a joint PC bank account for fundraising for Somerset Wood. Clerk reported that since the meeting, she had given further thought to the concept of opening a joint PC bank account and the potential issues with financial records and annual audit. Clerk confirmed that she had sought the advice of Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and the advice provided is not to open a joint PC bank account but instead the bank account should be held by one of the Parish Councils, preferably the larger council and one that holds the General Power of Competence. SALC also advised that a Joint Parish Council Committee should be established with clear terms of reference and delegated powers to oversee expenditure of the Somerset Wood fundraised money. Cllrs agreed to accept the advice of SALC and relay the advice to Cheddon Fitzpaine PC.

Cllr Hall reported that a car park for the Country Park / Somerset Wood was needed and that he had requested a meeting with Somerset Council and their Highways Department. Cllr Mike Best is going to find out who Cllr Rigby's replacement is and then try to arrange a meeting.

The possible locations for a car park were discussed including the land to the south of the WRR – Clerk to liaise with Persimmon to find out who owns the land and the land running parallel with Maidenbrook Lane to the west of the Lane. Cllr Cavill confirmed that the piece of land was purchased by David Wilson Homes with a provision for it to be handed over to the District Council but that he wasn't sure of the current position in relation to the land.

Cllr Gage shared a quotation for wildflower seed for the Country Park. It was proposed by Cllr Gage, seconded by Cllr Hall and agreed with all in favour to proceed with the purchase of the seeds.

192/23 To consider consultation response

a) Somerset Council Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance Note Consultation

<https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/planning/bng-guidance-note/> (Closes 4th December 2023)

The Consultation was discussed by Cllrs and points were made including:

- Ensuring perpetuity in Biodiversity Net Gain requirements in relation to house builders / developments
- It Biodiversity Net Gain requirements are to be delivered within a set number of miles of a development.

It was agreed that Cllrs would send any additional comments to the Clerk to enable a Parish Council response to the consultation to be submitted prior to the 4th December deadline.

193/23 Other matters for report only – items for discussion - no decision

a) Items for next meeting agenda – by Monday 4th December 2023

Noted

Cllr Haskins reported that the SALC AGM is taking place this Saturday, 2nd December from 9.30am until 3pm. Cllr Haskins will attend for the morning.

Cllr Hall noted that the next LCN Meeting on 11th December includes an item relating to catchment flooding. Cllr Hall to develop a presentation.

Cllr Munson asked if there was an update in relation to the land purchase for the Permanent Pump at Bathpool. Clerk to chase.

Cllr Haskins asked Cllr Besley to gather the thoughts of residents in West Monkton Village and COWMS about the condition of old village and if any tidying up work would be agreeable. Cllr Besley to liaise.

Cllr Munson reported that a wall has fallen into the footpath between Church Hill and Red Hill. The wall is in the process of being repaired.

b) Dates to note over the next 14 days

The following meetings are scheduled over the coming weeks:

5th December – Agenda run through meeting

11th December – PC Strategic Planning Away Day

11th December – LCN Meeting

12th December – PC Meeting

15th December – Carol Singing and Festive Evening for Volunteers at the BACH

194/23 Dates of forthcoming meetings:

Parish Council:

Second Tuesday in the month (Business focused meeting)

2023: 12th Dec

2024: 9th Jan, 13th Feb, 12th Mar, 9th Apr, 14th May, 11th Jun, 9th Jul, 13th Aug, 10th Sep, 8th Oct, 12th Nov, 10th Dec.

Fourth Tuesday in the month (Community / project focused meeting)

2024: 23rd Jan, 27th Feb, 23rd Apr, 28th May, 25th Jun, 23rd Jul, 24th Sep, 22nd Oct, 26th Nov.

Audit Working Party: 26th January 2024 at 9.30am

Annual Parish Meeting: 26th March 2024 at 7pm

BACH Committee 8th February 2024 at 7pm

Budget and Precept TBC November 2024

Sports Pitch Committee TBC

Meeting finished at 9.53pm



Signed Chairman:

Date: 12th December 2023