



West Monkton Parish Council

ADOPTED

Minutes of the Meeting of West Monkton Parish Council held on Tuesday 12th December 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs Besley, Ellis, Gage, Hall, Haskins, Hope and Munson.

In attendance: Mrs A Shepherd, Clerk, Mrs K Welsh, Assistant Clerk Community, Mr K Perry, Bathpool Flood Warden, Cllr David Fothergill and one members of the public.

195/23 To receive any apologies (with reasons), introductions with responsibilities

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cavill and Tully.

196/23 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.

197/23 To adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 28th November 2023

The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council on 28th November 2023, having been previously circulated, were taken as read. It was resolved to adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 28th November, proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Besley and agreed by show of hands.

198/23 To note Clerk's report and Assistant Clerk (Community) report

Clerk's Report:

Parish Administration:

- General Admin:
 - Website rebuild completed.
 - Venue booking and preparation for Away Day on 11th December.
 - Reviewed letter received from Somerset Council regarding services / devolution of assets. Paper prepared with suggestions of how the PC may respond. Email sent in response requesting further discussion.
 - Allotment renewal letters sent.
 - Reported concerns about play park at Canal View to Management Company.
 - Confirmed the co-option of Cllr Munson with Somerset Council, website updated, training booked, email address created. Time scheduled with Cllr Munson to provide an overview of the PC projects etc.
 - Enquiries regarding ownership of land behind Bridgwater Road. Cllr Cavill to make further enquiries.
 - Consultation response submitted to Somerset Council Biodiversity Net Gain consultation.
- Finance / Payroll:
 - Making payments / placing orders.
 - Managing / inputting Accounts using Scribe.
 - December payroll and finance reports and grant spend records.
 - Thank you card / voucher for Mr and Mrs Derham for the freezer donation
 - 2024/25 budget preparation, notes from Budget / Precept Working Party meeting and amendments to budget.
 - Developed PC Reserves Policy for approval.

Planning:

- Poppy of Honour Memorial planning application, liaised with Planning Officer
- Updating Planning Log with planning decisions / conditions weekly.
- Preparation of PowerPoint presentation in respect of planning applications received for PC meeting and submission of agreed response to planning applications.

Highways:

- Received approval from Somerset Council to place the SID on Monkton Heathfield Road near Richards Crescent junction – liaised with Lengthsman about installing bracket.
- Reported condition of road at Milton Hill – update received confirming work is scheduled.
- Reported potholes on Dosters Lane – update received confirming work is scheduled.
- Reported drainage issues at Dyers Lane.
- Reported blocked gullies on Greenway.

Country Park

- Meeting on 23rd November, prepared agenda and notes.
- Email sent to Somerset Council enquiring about purchasing the CP land. Response received.
- Advice sought from SALC regarding fundraising for the Somerset Wood / Poppy of Honour. Advice relayed to Cheddon Fitzpaine PC.

Sports Pitches

- Preparing paperwork for planning pre-app advice application. Submission imminent.

MH1

- Managing Agents quotations
- Update on timescales etc onto Monkton Matters

MH2:

- PC Statement prepared, submitted for next Village News edition and added to Monkton Matters.
- Legal agreement meeting availability for January 2024.
- Meeting with Cllr Rigby 12th December regarding Highway Proposals.

Hartnells Development

- Submitted further comments in respect of phase 4 application
- Reviewed locations of bins in development, obtained permission from Persimmon to site a dual waste bin, liaised with Somerset Council regarding the best location to enable emptying.

BACH:

- Invoices and accounts.
- Cleaning supplies obtained.
- Additional savings account with Nationwide enquiries / application.
- Next BACH Committee Meeting scheduled to take place on Thursday 8th February 2024 at 7pm.

Meetings last month:

- 1st November – LGR Session
- 1st November – MH1 Managing Agent Meeting
- 7th November – Agenda run through
- 7th November – Meeting with EA re Bathpool
- 7th November – Meeting with Carden Group re Hyde Farm Development and land adjacent to sports pitches.
- 8th November – MH2 Meeting with Planning Officer and Developer
- 9th November – Meeting with Simon Fox re MH Developments
- 10th November – Remembrance Service at Country Park
- 14th November – PC Meeting
- 15th November – LGR Session
- 21st November – Agenda run through
- 21st November – Meeting re Baseball pitches
- 21st November – Budget and Precept Meeting
- 22nd November – NALC Making the Planning System work for Local Councils Training
- 22nd November – Clerks Session re Somerset Council Financial Position and devolution of services / assets
- 23rd November – Joint PC Country Park Meeting
- 24th November – Annual Leave
- 27th November – Event Risk Assessment Training
- 28th November – PC Meeting
- 29th November – LGR Session

Meetings this month:

- 1st December – SLCC Branch Meeting / AGM
- 5th December – Agenda run through meeting
- 7th December – Crowdfunding Webinar
- 8th December – Annual Leave
- 11th December – Strategic Plan Away Day

11th December – Hestercombe LCN Meeting
12th December – Introduction to Local Council Award Scheme – NALC Event
12th December – Meeting with Cllr Mike Rigby re MH2 Highways Proposals
12th December – Parish Council Meeting
13th December – LGR Session
15th December – Carol Singing at BACH / Volunteer Festive Evening
18th – 19th December – Annual Leave
22nd December – PC Xmas Do

Assistant Clerk (Community) Report:

Community - General

- Monkton Matters – keeping MM up to date with new news and events as and when required. Sharing articles on Facebook pages – increase in articles created by us the Parish Council in recent months.
- Updated Community Matters article and shared on Monkton Matters, Facebook and noticeboards
- Responded to enquiries/requests via Facebook and by email to those in the community.
- Regular trips to Bookers to restock for the community café/stay and play and for events
- Liaised with litter picking volunteers about issues around the parish and passed onto appropriate service or reported to council as needed
- Managing Allotment List
- Responding to messages on social media and raise in PC Meeting as necessary
- Developed Village News Article for Jan/Feb
- Shared letter from young person responsible for graffiti on Monkton Matters
- Research for Memorial Fund for Poppy of Honour
- Completing DBS Check forms for working in Heathfield School in new year

Community Fridge

- Coordinating and managing volunteers, cleaning rotas and pick-ups.
- Keeping in touch with volunteers to keep them updated and involved.
- Responding to complaints and concerns about community fridge.
- Meeting with Fareshare to enable collection of frozen food items

Community Cafe

- Running a weekly Community Café at the BACH. Opportunity to meeting with the public to share concerns and to socialise.
- Started a Knit/Crochet Group which meet weekly at the BACH to make poppies – organised decorating the parish with these with the help of volunteers.
- Meeting place for potential and existing volunteers to support, recruit and get feedback about the volunteering.
- Promote community events
- Village Agent visit to the Stay and Play and Community Café on 1/11/23
- Run 'Repair Café' on third Wednesday of each month
- Ran first Loss and Bereavement Group as Rev Jim Cox unable to attend 1/11/23

Community Garden

- Community Garden group meet regularly at the BACH
- Sourcing sheds for Councillors to discuss and decide upon.
- Update A boards with wellbeing message and jobs need doing at the garden
- Organised visit from the Community Service Team on the 17th December.
- Promoting weekly meet at the Community Garden through Bethan, listing basic jobs that need doing regularly.

Community Events

- Liaising with Bethan Turner for promotion of Events
- D-day Event – Meeting 27/11/23
- Obtained quotes for D-day event planned for 6/6/23
- Planning and organising catering for Christmas Events on 15th December at the BACH – Carol Singing from 3.30pm and Volunteer Buffet Evening Event.
- Created invite and invited all volunteers, to the Volunteer Event on the 15/12/23 – keeping log of dietary requirements
- Prepare and organise quiz night 11/10/23
- Downloaded 'The Purple Guide' to help prepared, plan for events with health and safety in mind
- Meeting with Tug of War working group to discuss event, 29/6/24 to replace party in the park on 8/6/23.

- Meeting with Tug of War group at country park to discuss the venue, keen to use the space and have discussed with Alan Hall.
- Organised hymn sheet collection for Carol Event
- Liaising with Jim Cox for Carol Singing Event and Loss and Bereavement Group

Other Volunteering

- Touching base with Companion Volunteer, who is now meeting regularly with a number of clients via the village agent in the community.
- Ordered new Hi-Viz and gloves and distributed to volunteers
- Organised building of the new picnic benches at BACH garden with repair café volunteers
- Organised volunteers to clean up sports pitches on 7/11/23

Meetings, Events and Groups

- 14/11/23 and 28/11/23 - Attended PC meetings
- 7/11/23 - Attended agenda run through meetings
- Attended Stay and Play Groups every Wednesday and Thursday
- Attended Community Café every Wednesday
- 10/11/23 – Remembrance Service
- 8/11/23 – Meeting with West Monkton Primary School to discuss School Council and attending assemblies
- 7/11/23 – Tug of War Meeting at CSMVH
- 7/11/23 – Volunteer Litter Picking at Sports Pitches
- 16/11/23 – 1year Stay and Play event
- 17/11/23 – Meeting with Tug of War Group at Country Park
- 17/11/23 – Cheddon Coop Event – for Community Fridge
- 21/11/23 – Meeting with Will Lowndes and Stuart Haskins at Heathfield School to discuss future plans to work together
- 21/11/23 – Budget and Precept Meeting
- 22/11/23 – Crisis Media Course Online via Breakthrough Communications
- 23/11/23 – Online Country Park Meeting
- 25/11/23 – Share Event at BACH 12-5pm
- 27/11/23 – Meeting with Jo Comer re D-day Event at County Hall
- 27/11/23 – Fareshare Freezer Check meeting 3.30pm
- 30/11/23 – Meeting with Alan re D-day Event

199/23 Somerset Council Report

Cllr Fothergill reported on the following:

Council's Financial Position: Latest budget papers, published ahead of the Council's Executive on 6 December, show the in-year overspend for 2023/24 has reduced from £27m to £19m, while the budget gap for 2024/25 has reduced from £100m to £87m. However, in order to close the gap and balance the budget next year a series of service reductions, efficiency savings, and increases to fees and charges, including Council Tax are being considered. Proposals include:

- Increases to parking, planning fees, harbour fees, registrations ceremonies and green waste collections
- Reduction in library services, leisure provision, theatres, visitor centres and heritage services
- Reduction or cessation of CCTV provision
- Reduction in maintenance of ditches, grips, drains, gullies, grass and hedge cutting, weed treatment, road markings, signs and paths.
- Reduction in funding for active travel, bus services and highways safety schemes including school crossing patrols
- Reduction in the number of Household Waste Recycling centres

There is also a warning that even that may not be enough to fully close the gap, and a planned transformation programme will need to be accelerated and broadened to reduce the size of the council in future.

Changes to waste collection days: Recycling and rubbish collection days will be changing for more than 120,000 homes in Somerset in February next year. The new routes will make rounds more efficient, more manageable for crews whilst reducing mileage and carbon emissions. The changes come at no cost to the council. In February 2024, recycling and rubbish collection day schedules will change for around 85% of homes in the west of the county. Changes to routes and collection days for the rest of the county are expected to be introduced in June 2024. It is important that residents know their new collection days as crews will not be able to come back for either recycling or refuse for missed collections. Garden Waste collection dates are unaffected.

The M5 Willow Man: A plan to revive the once-iconic Willow Man sculpture has received a funding boost from National Highways, the company responsible for England's motorways and major A roads. The Willow Man, close to Bridgwater, Junction 23 M5 has deteriorated in recent years and is now barely recognisable. Created by artist Serena De la Hay and unveiled in 2000, the

sculpture was commissioned by South West Arts to mark the millennium. Somerset Council has been granted £35,000 of funding from National Highways' Designated Funding programme for an initial feasibility looking at the possibility of repairing/enhancing and relocating the Willow Man. A future scheme could see the sculpture rebuilt using more robust materials. Have your say at: <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/communities/willow-man-feasibility-study/>

National Landscapes: on November all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales became National Landscapes, including Somerset's Mendip Hills, Quantock Hills, and Blackdown Hills National Landscapes. The new name looks to reflect their national importance whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness for the work that they do. Tone Works and Tone Dale Project: The Government has awarded nearly £20 million for Tone Works and Tone Dale project. The award will provide an opportunity to transform and regenerate the nationally significant heritage site at Tone Works and enhance associated land for community use.

Fight against Domestic Abuse: A new campaign aims to raise the profile of lesser-known types of domestic abuse and encourage those who may not realise they are being abused to come forward for support and advice. Somerset Council has commissioned 12 short films to shine the spotlight on non-physical types of domestic abuse. The films direct anyone who is experiencing these forms of abuse to www.somersetdomesticabuse.org.uk, where they can get more information, support and advice or by contacting the service on 0800 69 49 999.

The following questions were asked:

Cllr Ellis asked whether there is free parking over Christmas in Taunton. Cllr Fothergill wasn't sure but highlighted the New Parking Strategy which was approved by Somerset Council Executive last week which will bring in further resident only parking.

Cllr Ellis asked about the Park and Ride. Cllr Fothergill confirmed that First Bus had given notice and the park and ride is currently out for tender.

Cllr Hope asked if Taunton Bus Station was going to return. Cllr Fothergill confirmed that may well at some point, it is currently rented to the NHS but is owned by Somerset Council.

Cllr Besley asked about the Council's Commercial Investments and how they had borrowed the money and questioned the Council's financial management in this matter. Cllr Fothergill confirmed that all commercial investments will need to be sold off.

200/23 Feedback from Hestercombe Local Community Network Meeting on 11th December 2023

Cllr Haskins provided feedback on the Hestercombe LCN Meeting on 11th December. A lengthy presentation was received about the SC Financial Position and information about the Highway Steward was shared. Concerns were expressed at the meeting about whether one Highway Steward would be enough to do the work that is needed across a wider area. Cllr Hall gave a presentation on the multi-agency flood prevention approach which generated some lengthy discussion. An action to write to MPs for the LCN areas where flooding has been identified as a priority was agreed. Somerset Rivers Authority are looking into mapping of the area.

Cllr Gage raised the Bridgwater Barrier and asked if it would solve the issue. Cllr Fothergill confirmed that it won't solve the problem completely but it will stop silt from coming into the River Parrett at Bridgwater Bay. Reservoirs are also being altered to hold more water to aid flooding issues.

Cllr Haskins also reported that Youth Provision was discussed. Tash Scully from Somerset Youth Alliance gave a presentation. An action from the LCN meeting was to establish the youth provision available in the LCN area.

The next LCN meeting will take place in February.

201/23 Somerset Council Financial Position and asset / service devolution update including feedback from SALC and SLCC AGMs

Clerk reported that she had responded to Somerset Council requesting further discussion about asset / service devolution. Feedback was provided on the SLCC and SALC AGM meetings and the presentations provided on the SC Financial Position. Cllr Haskins reported that he is now a member of the SALC Board for a period of one year.

Clerk reported that Bridgwater Town Council are organising some Chapter 8 Training in February (cost £157.00). It was agreed that Cllr Gage would attend the training and consideration would be given to Cllr Haskins attending a future training session.

Clerk reported that Somerset Council have published a consultation on the 2024/25 budget which has been shared on Monkton Matters. It was agreed that Cllrs would respond to the consultation individually and consideration would be given to submitting a PC response at the next meeting.

Public Question Time

A member of the public raised concerns about flooding in Gotton Lane and Goosenford. It was agreed to discuss the issue further under the Highways Item.

Cllr Gage raised the broken road surface at Cherry Hill Cross Roads.

Cllr Gage raised potholes between Cherry Hill Cross Roads and Sidbrook.

Clerk to report to Somerset Highways.

Cllr Munson raised concern about the parked cars at the bottom of Greenway near the junction with Monkton Heathfield Road. Cllr Haskins and Clerk confirmed that the issue had been raised with Traffic Management who advised against double yellow lines at the location.

Cllr Haskins reported that the request to move the Hartnells Farm crossing point obligation from near Milton Hill to Yallands Hill had been raised with Cllr Rigby.

Clerk reported that a member of the public had reported the broken panels on the Bus Shelter opposite the Merry Monk.

Clerk reported that a member of the public had reported that vegetation needs cutting back around the litter bin at the bus shelter near the Merry Monk.

Clerk reported that a member of the public had reported the redundant 'End of Cycle Route' sign on Milton Hill.

Clerk reported that a member of the public had reported the silt from the rear of Farriers Green being washed onto the pavement at Milton Hill. Cllr Haskins also raised the silt at Greenway.

Clerk reported that the Lengthsman has removed the Heathfield School sign from the junction on Monkton Heathfield Road with Milton Hill on the request of the school and Somerset Council.

Cllr Haskins reported that the ERR roundabout sign near the Sports Pitches indicates the Hardys Road is a no through road.

Cllr Fothergill confirmed that he would give his support to the proposal.

Clerk to obtain quotations to replace the panels at the Bus Shelter and at the bus shelter outside the primary school.

Clerk to ask the Lengthsman to clear the vegetation.
Clerk to ask the Lengthsman to remove the sign.

Clerk to ask the Lengthsman to clear the silt.

Clerk to raise with Persimmon.

202/23 Planning

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

No notifications received.

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

Noted

203/23 Sports Pitches update

Cllr Hall reported that the flood lighting company had provided plans of where gullies for the lighting need to be provided. These will be incorporated into the drainage works set to commence in May.

Fencing for the dog walking area is complete and one more pedestrian gate is to be installed. Cllr Haskins reported that people are accessing the land through the side of the Hyde Lane gate.

Clerk reported that the dual waste bin is being delivered tomorrow for installation by the Lengthsman.

Cllr Besley to plough the site when the ground conditions are dry enough.

Deep water signs have been installed around the trench.

Trees for the site are being provided by the Woodland Trust. Clerk to liaise with the Woodland Trust about earlier delivery and delivery by a local company; possibly Wee Trees.

204/23 MH Developments

a) MH2 Update

Clerk reported that two online meetings scheduled with Simon Fox, Somerset Council and the Developer have been cancelled and instead a meeting is being scheduled to take place in January to discuss the legal agreement for the development. Two councillors from each PC and the Clerks will attend the meeting which is scheduled to take place on 15th January at 6.30pm at Creech St Michael Village Hall. An invitation to the meeting was extended to Cllr Fothergill. Clerk to confirm details.

Clerk reported that the planning application for MH2 are expected to be submitted next week although the formal consultation period won't commence until January. Clerk to liaise with CSM PC about scheduling public meetings, one in CSM and one in WM. Clerk confirmed that CSMPC will develop an online form to enable feedback from the community to be captured and inform the Joint PC response to the planning application.

Feedback from the meeting with Cllr Rigby was provided. Cllr Rigby confirmed that he would speak with Jon Fellingham, Somerset Highways tomorrow to discuss the proposals and will then reply to the PC. Clerk to keep Cllr Fothergill updated with any response received from Cllr Rigby.

b) MH1 Update

Clerk reported that an update on progress had been published on Monkton Matters and no comments or queries have been received.

c) Hartnells Farm Development Update

Clerk reported that she had followed up the additional PC comments on the phase 4 planning application regarding drainage concerns and shared a video of the issues being experienced by Greenway homeowners. The planning inbox was copied into the email. No response has been received yet but comments on the planning application have been received from the LLFA about the flood / drainage assessment submitted with the application.

Cllr Haskins and Hall reported that they had attended an Environment Agency event at Burrowbridge Village Hall and raised concerns about Hartnells drainage and flooding on Hyde Lane and raised awareness of the MH2 planning application and the need for the development to require work to the culvert under Monkton Heathfield road at the Blundells Lane junction.

Cllr Hall reported that FWAG progress with the multi-agency flood prevention has stalled due to the need to recruit a replacement for Ada Myers. The project spreadsheet has been updated.

Kevin Perry, Bathpool Flood Warden, reported that he had a walk around with the Environment Agency reviewing the MH1 attenuation ponds.

d) Hyde Farm Development Update

No update.

205/23 Highways Update

Cllr Haskins reported that Somerset Highways had committed to do a drive around with Cllr Haskins to identify and discuss the issues with flooding being experienced at Red Hill, Monkton Heathfield Road (impacting on Pavilion Gardens).

A member of the public raised the flooding at Gotton Lane and Goosenford. Member of the public to share videos and images of the problem with the Clerk to share with Somerset Council.

Cllr Hall reported that Quantock Hills AONB has funding available and suggested that it could be used to install an attenuation pond in one of the fields to take water that is coming down the road from Hill Farm to Sidbrook, helping to slow the flow and reduce flooding.

206/23 Country Park Update

Cllr Hall reported that the Stone Gabions have been delivered. They have been stored by the container and will be installed and filled with stone in the spring when the ground is dryer.

Cllr Hall reported that he is awaiting a response from Somerset Wildlife about the wildflower meadow.

Cllr Hall reported that Somerset Council have no funding for the D Day Event. Cllr Hall and Assistant Clerk Community have been looking at the costs for a smaller local event instead and possible grant funding opportunities. Discussion about whether to include an allocation in the 2024/25 budget deferred to item 15 Finance.

Cllr Hall reported that the Poppy of Honour Memorial Planning Application has been submitted.

Clerk reported that following the discussion at the last PC meeting and the advice received from SALC, Cheddon Fitzpaine are agreeable to WMPC holding a Somerset Wood bank account for fundraising as long as a Joint Committee is established with clear Terms of Reference. Clerk confirmed that she is meeting with the Clerk of Cheddon Fitzpaine PC in January to develop the Terms of Reference for them to be agreed by both Parish Councils at our January meetings.

Cllr Fothergill reported that Somerset Council hold £2.5k of donations for the Somerset Wood and that an officer has indicated their preference for this money to be passed to the Parish Council. Cllr Fothergill to put the Clerk in touch with the SC Officer to enable this.

Clerk reported that money needs to be raised for the build of the Poppy of Honour Memorial and that she had attended a webinar about Crowd Funder. Clerk reported that she had compared the fees with those charged by Go Fund Me and Crowd Funder are more competitive. It was proposed by Cllr Besley, seconded by Cllr Hall and agreed with all in favour that a Crowd Funder campaign be developed.

Clerk reported that the recommendation is that a crowd funding project should be open for eight weeks and suggested that a Somerset Wood Facebook Page is created which could share the crowd funding information. Clerk and Assistant Clerk Community to develop.

The possible purchase of the Country Park Land from Somerset Council was discussed. Clerk reported that Cllr Cavill is making further enquiries to inform a possible offer. Further discussion to take place at the January meeting.

207/23 Community

Assistant Clerk Community provided an update on the following:

Christmas Events – Carol singing and a volunteer evening scheduled to take place on Friday 15th December. Father Christmas will also be at both stay and play groups this week.

Monkton Wood Academy – completing DBS check forms so enable working with the School.

Community Fridge – met with Fair Share about the collection of frozen food items.

Community Garden – quite quiet at the moment. Cllr Haskins reported that Paul Elliston had delivered a quantity of cardboard for the paths and that wood chip is needed. Assistant Clerk Community reported that a response is awaited from Monkton Elm Garden Centre about a shed for the Garden.

Food boxes – donations of items for food boxes for families in need have been delivered to the BACH for delivery to identified families.

208/23 Reports, including recent developments, matters to consider and decisions to be made:

a) Bathpool Flood Warden: Mr Kevin Perry

Mr Perry reported on the following:

Following a very wet November and then a period of dryer weather, the Environment Agency removed the relief pump at the end of November. Heavy rain fell on 3rd and 4th December on saturated ground and levels in the Old River Tone rose very quickly. Sewer discharge was experienced in Acacia Gardens and Swingbridge. Mr Perry made a request for the return of the pump on 4th December, it took 3.5 hours to come and be switched on – in that time the Old River Tone rose by 0.6m. When the pump was switched on levels were 0.8m higher than they would normally be when the pump is switched on. The level of the Old River Tone reached a new highest level. Properties were flooded on 4th December in the evening. The pump has been pumping for 50 hours so far in December.

Drainage problems and sewer discharge in Acacia Gardens and Swingbridge was the worst it has been, residents have received an indication from Wessex Water that improvements are planned. Clerk to liaise with Wessex Water and request detail.

The Environment Agency Team visited on 4th December and did a walk around and took pictures of the river levels. The Team appeared surprised at how high the water had risen. The report from the visit identified the wall which has been built to the rear of a Yew Tree Lane property without a permit – it is likely to be the subject of enforcement action.

The Project Manager appointed in respect of the permanent temporary pump at Bathpool is likely to be in a position to meet with PC and provide an update soon, there is a question over whether planning permission for the pumps is required.

Clerk provided an update on the acquisition of the land for the pumps, enquiry has been sent to the land agent – a response is awaited – Clerk to chase.

The Taunton Flood Alleviation Scheme has been delayed again and won't commence until late 2024.

Clerk reported that Cllr Cavill is investigating the land ownership behind Bridgwater Road.

A submersible pump to be purchased by the PC for flood resilience to be considered at a future meeting.

b) Councillors with roles of responsibility (not all Councillors will have a report to make)

Footpaths

Cllr Gage had nothing to report.

BACH

Cllr Gage reported that he had spoken to the Primary School and that they had confirmed that the heating will be kept on over Christmas. Cllr Gage also raised the idea of solar panels. It was noted that this could be a CIL project. Item to be added to the agenda for the next meeting for discussion / resolution.

Cllr Gage raised the storage cupboard and asked when the Youth Club items would be removed. Assistant Clerk Community to chase.

Safe Routes to School;

In Cllr Tully's absence there was nothing to report.

Public Open Spaces/ Children's Play Areas and Recreation;

Cllr Hope raised the Canal View Play Park and shared pictures. An inspection report from the Management Company for Canal View has been received identifying all the issues but not providing a timeframe of when the issues will be fixed. Clerk to follow up.

Cllr Hope raised the Attenuation Pond near Canal View. The pond holds water and Cllr Hope reported that he had enquired with Persimmon about the mechanics. It was noted works were required to enlarge the pond by Persimmon prior to adoption by Wessex Water.

Cllr Hope raised the knee-high fencing along the ERR and asked whether it would form part of the highway adoption of POS. Clerk to make enquiries.

c) Communications Report

Parish Council Website

- Regular updates to Highways (including road closures), Planning, Finance and Parish Council carried out.
- New website being set up

Parish Council Facebook Page:

- Page likes / followers now at 1109
- 10.3 post reach
- Posts added sharing news items that are added to the website.

Monkton Matters

- Page likes / followers now at 385
- 37 new articles added in November
- Articles on Monkton Matters being shared on Monkton Matters Facebook page to pull users to the website.
- 3.4k post reach
- Business directory has details of 22 businesses so far.

Community Fridge Facebook Page:

- Page likes /followers 1100
- 1.4k post reach

Community Garden Facebook Page:

- Page likes/followers 139
- 1.3K post reach

Village News Contribution

- Developed by the Clerk's

Noticeboard Updates

- Updated noticeboards

d) GDPR

Nothing to report.

Representatives on outside bodies/Response to Consultations:

e) West Monkton Village Hall Management Committee

In Cllr Tully's absence there was nothing to report.

f) The Spital Trust

Cllr Ellis reported that the Spital Trust are having problems with getting the wall that was taken down to build the new bungalows rebuilt. The Spital Trust have instructed someone to do the work.

g) Any events at which WMPC was represented

It was noted that other than the Environment Agency meeting and the SALC and SLCC AGMs which had already been reported upon, WMPC have not been represented at any other meetings.

h) Consultations:

Kingston St Mary Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-production/kingston-st-mary-neighbourhood-plan/> (Deadline 11th January 2024) -It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate details of the consultation with Cllrs and add it to the agenda for the next meeting to agree a PC response.

209/23 Finance

a) Quotations and Updates:

Monthly inspection of play park equipment at Farriers Green

Somerset Council - Inspect play area equipment on a monthly basis £22.44+VAT per inspection.

Response awaited from Somerset Council.

- Refurb of St Quintins play area agreed and scheduled to be done by DLO this financial year. Progress update requested.
- Insulate roof at Village Hall, under discussion, waiting for further info and description of grant chasing efforts from Village Hall Management committee. Info sent , with link to site, to VH committee from Rural Grants Directory section on Village Halls..
- Environmental

Quote for Farriers Green ramp by DLO accepted in April 2022, but M Davies no longer in role at SWT. Replacement for M Davies confirmed – Andrew Sollis. In contact with him, Andrew has stated that the quote previously approved is out of date. Andrew is going to meet with contractors to get a revised quote. Quote chased.

b) Receipts and Payments

Information relating to named, or otherwise identifiable, individuals is confidential and has been redacted in documents placed in the public domain.

Receipts		
Interest	Lloyds	£27.55
	Nationwide	£139.22
	PSDF	£1964.88

Adopted - Redacted

Payments

Payee	Net	Vat	Total	How paid	Cost Centre	Cost Code
To authorise payment of:						
A Pritchard litter picking	xx.xx	No vat	xx.xx	d-d	Salaries and expenses	Pension (employee contribution)
Employee pension contributions	172.66	No vat	172.66	d-d	Salaries and expenses	Pension
Employer contributions	129.50	No vat	129.50	d-d	Salaries and expenses	Pension
A Shepherd Clerks salary SCP33	xx.xx	No vat	xx.xx	bacs	Salaries and expenses	Salaries
K Welsh assistant clerk-community salary SCP 28	xx.xx	No vat	xx.xx	Bacs	Salaries and expenses	Salaries
HMRC Tax and NI Contributions	1562.05	No vat	1562.05	bacs	Salaries and expenses	Salaries
A Shepherd homeworkers allowance	27.00	No vat	27.00	bacs	Salaries and expenses	Expenses
K Welsh homeworkers allowance	27.00	No vat	27.00	bacs	Salaries and expenses	Expenses
S Rolls Lengthsman services	75.00	No vat	75.00	bacs	Environmental and Open Spaces	Lengthsman
Business all about you Climate Initiative PR WMPC 35	175.00	No vat	175.00	bacs	Environmental and Open Spaces	Environment / Community
QSSIT regular maintenance / monthly sub	25.40	5.08	30.48	bacs	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Expenses claim A Shepherd – Travel	27.00	No vat	27.00	Bacs	Salary and expenses	Expenses
- Postage / Stationery	17.64	No vat	17.64	Bacs	General Administration	Sundry Admin
- Sports pitch warning signs	16.16	No vat	16.16	Bacs	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
- BACH cleaning supplies	8.04	No vat	8.04	Bacs	BACH	Cleaning supplies
- Thank you card / gift	22.29	No vat	22.29	Bacs	Youth and Community	Youth and Community
Expenses claim K Welsh (Travel)	189.00	No vat	189.00	Bacs	Salary and expenses	Expenses
Travis Perkins (Toilet Hire Remembrance Service)	146.92	29.38	176.30	Bacs	Country Park	Country Park
Heathfield Window Cleaning Services (Clean bus shelters and signs)	185.00	No vat	185.00	Bacs	Environmental and Open Spaces	Environment / Community
South Somerset Astronomical Society (Haley Comet Project contribution)	600.00	No vat	600.00	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
Parish Online (Annual subscription)	150.00	30.00	180.00	BACS	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Expenses Claim K Welsh (Community café sundries and volunteer festive evening sundries)	129.62	No vat	129.62	BACS	BACH	Community Events / Initiatives
Expenses Claim A Hall (Print cartridges)	26.44	5.29	31.73	BACS	General Admin	Sundry Admin
Travis Perkins (Gabions Country Park)	1193.58	238.72	1432.30	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
Expenses Claim S Haskins (Padlock Sports Pitch gate)	86.31	17.26	103.57	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure

Payee	Net	Vat	Total	How paid	Cost Centre	Cost Code
(Bridge Club Trolley materials BACH)	29.59	No vat	29.59	BACS	BACH	Hall Maintenance
(Travel)	22.50	No vat	22.50	BACS	Salaries and Expenses	Expenses
Expenses Claim B Gage (Cistern Lever BACH)	15.99	No vat	15.99	BACS	BACH	Hall Maintenance
(Gate – Sports Pitches)	198.00	39.60	237.60	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
(Refreshments – Volunteer Evening)	179.34	No vat	179.34	BACS	Youth and Community	Youth and Community
(Wildflower Seeds – Country Park)	295.00	59.00	354.00	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
J Down Contracting Limited (Country Park Fencing)	550.00	110.00	660.00	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
J Down Contracting Limited (Sports Pitch dog walking area fencing)	3025.60	605.12	3630.72	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
Futurform Limited (Community Garden Benches)	460.00	92.00	552.00	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
Newports Catering (Volunteer Festive Evening Catering)	400.00	No vat	400.00	BACS	BACH	Community Events / Initiatives
Reed and Holland (Poppy of Honour Planning Application)	1870.00	270.00	2190.00	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
SALC (Training)	70.00	No vat	70.00	BACS	General Administration	Training
SALC (Training)	25.00	No vat	25.00	BACS	General Administration	Training
Wybone Limited (Two dual waste bins)	924.98	185.00	1109.98	BACS	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
Expenses Claim B Gage (Christmas Trees)	187.65	No vat	187.65	BACS	Youth and Community	Youth and Community
To note payment of:						
Direct Debit						
Invoice Tailored Auto Enrolment 10996 29/11/2023 (Pension administration)	12.00	2.40	14.40	DD PAID	Salary and Expenses	Pension
Invoice SWS 113626 2/12/2023 maintain gsuite	84.00	16.80	100.80	DD PAID	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Invoice SWS 113574 web-lite hosting (MM) and standard mailbox 20/11/2023	30.00	6.00	36.00	DD PAID	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Invoice SWS 113490 new website 17/11/2023	125.00	25.00	150.00	DD PAID	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
BACS						
Planning Portal (Poppy of Honour Planning Application)	170.33	10.67	181.00	BACS PAID	Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL Expenditure
Bridgwater Mowers (Lawnmower repair)	31.76	6.35	38.11	BACS PAID	Country Park	Country Park

Payee	Net	Vat	Total	How paid	Cost Centre	Cost Code
Bridgwater Mowers (Ride on Lawnmower Service)	310.52	62.10	372.62	BACS PAID		

Any other invoices received before the next meeting will be added. Payments by bacs wherever possible.

Resolution: to authorise payments and note payments made during the month described above:

Proposed by Cllr Besley, seconded by Cllr Hall and all agreed by show of hands.

It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate acquiring a credit card for the PC, to be discussed by the Audit Working Party at its meeting in January.

Transfer between accounts

None.

b) 2024/25 Budget / Precept Demand Update

The notes from the Budget / Precept Working Party on 21st November were circulated in advance of the meeting were circulated in advance of the meeting:

Budget and Precept Working Party Meeting

Tuesday 21st November at 7pm

at the BACH

Notes

In attendance: Cllrs Haskins, Hall, Gage, Ellis, Cavill, A Shepherd (Clerk) and K Welsh (Assistant Clerk Community)

1	Apologies; Cllrs Tully, Munson and Hope
2	<p>Background / considerations influencing the draft 2024/25 budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somerset Council Financial Situation <p>A discussion about the Somerset Council financial situation took place. Somerset Council letter about asset / service devolution The contents of the recent letter from the Leader of Somerset Council were noted. Clerk summarised a document prepared in response to the letter which identified assets / responsibilities that the Parish Council may wish to have devolved to it and how this has been reflected in the draft budget prepared for 2024/25.</p>
3	Draft budget for 2024 /25 and draft precept calculations (2024/25 council tax base TBC)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk provided a summary of the proposed 2024/25 budget. • The following amendments and actions were identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clerk to confirm if chapter 8 training expires and the cost of chapter 8 training to be included in the training budget. ○ Cllr Cavill and Clerk to establish the commitment in relation to the PC making a contribution towards Priorswood Library. The commitment started in 2019/20, Cllr Cavill believes that the commitment was made for 6 years. ○ The dog bin emptying / grass cutting and public open spaces budget lines to be merged into one. ○ Clerk to establish the likely cost of the PC providing mobile phones for the Clerks (included in the IT and Communications budget line). ○ General Reserves to be raised from £10000 to £20000. ○ Clerk to develop a Reserves Policy for approval by the PC.
4	<p>CIL Expenditure and Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of forecasted expenditure to year end, possible projects for expenditure and forecasted receipts from future development was provided. • Possible purchase of the Country Park land was discussed. It was agreed that an application for PWLB funding would be made if the purchase of the land was agreed by Somerset Council.
5	<p>Next Steps / Timescales for approval</p> <p>The following next steps were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk to make the identified amendments to the budget and make the enquiries outlined. • A summary of this Working Party discussions to be included in the December Finance Report. • It was noted that the Council Tax Base figure would not be confirmed by Somerset Council until December, the precept calculations cannot be done until this is received. • Final approval of the budget and precept demand to be delayed until January to ensure that the budget reflects any devolution of assets / responsibilities from Somerset Council.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting ended at 8.30pm.

Cost Centre	Cost Code	Spend 2022/23	Budget 2023/24	Expected spend 2023/24	Budget 2024/25	Budget 2025/26
Salaries and Expenses	Wages	47472.37	61000	63000	73000	80300
	Clerks Salary					
	Assistant Clerk Com Salary					
	Tax / NI Contributions	2646.89	3000	4000	5000	5500
	Pension Contributions					
	Pension Administration	3356.46	2000	3000	3500	3850
	Clerks Expenses					
	Assistant Clerks Expenses					
	Assistant Clerk Com Expenses					
	Councillor Travel expenses					
Homeworkers Allowance						
General Administration	Audit Fees	750	900	900	1100	1210
	Sundry admin / equipment	673.79	1100	1150	1250	1375
	Training	4103	2000	500	1500	1500
	Subscriptions / affiliations	1313.31	1650	1712	1800	1980
	Insurance	1561.63	1750	1652	2000	2200
	Election	0	4000	0	4000	4000
Burial Ground	Burial Ground Maintenance	1840	1840	1840	1840	1840
Country Park	Country Park	1777.13	4000	1000	3000	1000
Environmental and Open Spaces	Public open space maintenance	8550.06	12100	8000	22100	23310
	Environment / Community	9214.66	7500	7000	7500	8000
	Lengthsman	1997.24	3300	3000	5000	5500
	Sports Pitches Delivery /Maintenance	0	10000	5000	10000	10000
Allotments	Allotments	123.87	120	120	135	150
	IT	5957.94	5000	5500	6000	6000

IT and Communications	Publicity					
	Communications					
	Website					
Youth / Community	Youth / Community General	1761.19	2000	2000	1000	1000
	Community Events	0	0	0	1000	1000
	Community Fridge	0	0	0	500	500
	Community Garden	0	0	0	500	500
Grants	Social and Wellbeing Grants	2000	2000	500	2000	2000
	Climate Domestic Grants	350	2000	1000	2000	2000
	General Reserves	0	10000	0	20000	20000
	Total Budget	95449.54	137260	110874	175725	184715

Expected Receipts	
Interest	12000
Allotments	330
Grants (Burial Ground)	400
VAT	10000
Total	22730

(At risk S114 notice)

Total Budget	175725
Minus expected receipts	22730
Total Precept Required	152995

Council Tax Bases 2024/25 (TBC)	2,183.16 (2023/24 figure)	70.08	per band D equivalent			25.7% increase
	(2023/24 - 2183.16)	2023/24 - 55.75)			12710	(83.75% increase)

Clerk provided a summary on progress since the last meeting. Clerk reported that the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 has been confirmed and has increased slightly from the 2023/24 figure. This would mean if the draft budget were approved it would represent approximately a 24.48% rise in precept (equating to less than £15.00 per year per Band D property). The PC Priorswood Library contribution and the D-Day event costs were discussed. The following actions were agreed:

- Clerk to contact Somerset Council to understand the impact of reducing or stopping the library contribution.
- Cllr Hall and Assistant Clerk Community to develop cost options for the D-Day event for consideration alongside the budget and precept demand at the next meeting.
- Deadline for the precept demand is 2nd February. Approval of the PC Budget and Precept Demand to be delayed until the January meeting.

c) Approval of Parish Council Reserves Policy

Clerk provided a summary of the proposed PC Reserves Policy. It was resolved to adopt the Policy. Proposed by Cllr Besley, seconded by Cllr Munson and agreed with all in favour.

d) Budgeting report

The budgeting reports to 30th November were shared in advance of the meeting and the contents of the reports was noted.

210/23 Other matters for report only – items for discussion – no decision

Cllr Haskins reported that the litter bins at Sidbrook Crossroads are full.

Cllr Hope gave his apologies for the January and February Parish Council meetings.

Cllr Haskins thank all members of the Parish Council for their support during 2023 and wished everyone a Happy Christmas and New Year.

a) Items for next meeting agenda - by Monday 1st January 2024 or Monday 15th January 2024

Noted

b) Dates to note over the next 14 days

Clerk confirmed that the following meetings are taking place in December/ January:

15th December – Carol singing / volunteer evening

22nd December – Christmas Do

2nd January – Agenda run through

9th January – Parish Council Meeting

211/23 Dates of forthcoming meetings:

Parish Council:

Second Tuesday in the month (Business focused meeting)

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 (Virtual)

Annual Parish Meeting: 26th March 2024 at 7pm

BACH committee 8th February 2024 at 7pm

Budget and Precept TBC November 2024 at 7pm

Sports Pitch Committee TBC at 7pm

There being no further business to discussed, the meeting ended at 9.15pm

Signed Chairman:



Date: 9th January 2024