



West Monkton Parish Council

## ADOPTED

Minutes of the Meeting of West Monkton Parish Council held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 at 7.00pm.

**Present:** Cllrs Besley, Cavill, Ellis, Gage, Hall, Haskins, Munson and Tully.

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

### **229/23 To receive any apologies (with reasons), introductions with responsibilities**

Apologies were received from Cllr Hope.

### **230/23 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.

### **231/23 To adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024, having been previously circulated, were taken as read. It was resolved to adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January, proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Munson and agreed by show of hands.

### **232/23 Chairman's Report**

#### **a) Parish Asset Report**

Cllr Haskins reported on the following:

- A number of potholes on the ERR. Clerk confirmed that Persimmon are in the process of carrying out remedial work on the ERR to enable adoption.
- Fly tipping on the ERR – Clerk confirmed that this has been reported to Persimmon who are arranging its clearance.
- Bird mouth fencing in and around MH1. Clerk to request a list from Persimmon of the fencing to be repaired. After adoption review of fencing including material and location to take place.
- Blocked gullies on Greenway
- Blocked gullies and ditches and general drainage problems on Gotton Lane
- Potholes on rural roads

Clerk to request a drive around the parish with a Somerset Council Highways Inspector to discuss the issues. Clerk raised the sandpit in Farriers Green Play Park. Volunteer litter pickers came across a broken bottle on the slide and pieces of glass had fallen into the sandpit. Matter reported to Somerset Council who attended and confirmed that they were satisfied that all pieces of glass had been removed from the sandpit but another member of the public found a piece of glass after Somerset Council had stated they had cleared the glass. Member of the public concerned about whether the sandpit is safe in the park as the park is used for young people to congregate. Cllr Cavill to raise with Somerset Council. It was agreed to keep an eye on the park / equipment over the coming months to see if there are similar incidences.

Cllr Tully raised the footpath on Milton Hill which has debris and water flowing across it from the steps at the rear entrance to Farriers Green Park. Clerk to chase Somerset Council for a quotation for the works required.

Cllr Tully raised the potholes at the junction of Milton Hill with School Road. Clerk to report again with Somerset Council.

Cllr Tully reported that despite the movement of the dog waste bin at Farriers Green, the neighbouring property owner is still experiencing problems with dog waste being thrown into her garden. Clerk to order signage warning that it is an offence to discard waste other than in the bins provided.

Cllr Haskins requested clarity on whether the play park in the Hartnells Farm Development is open – Clerk to request an update from Persimmon.

Cllr Gage reported that there was flytipping at Yalway – Clerk to report.

#### **b) Feedback from SALC meeting**

Cllr Haskins reported that the SALC meeting was postponed for two weeks. SALC are committed to continuing to deliver the training courses that they currently do. The Assistant CEO role is going to be retitled Training Officer. A SALC representative will be in attendance at all LCN meetings going forward.

#### **Public Question Time**

Cllr Gage asked when a price list will be available from the new Somerset Council Highways Contractor.

Cllr Cavill to follow up.

Cllr Besley requested an update on the proposal for Somerset Council to issue the Parish Council with a licence / permit to dispose of fly tipping at the recycling centre.

Clerk to follow up.

Cllr Cavill provided an update on the Somerset Council financial position. Requests to government for the capitalisation order and for the additional 5% on Council Tax is required. The additional 5% of council tax may not be possible unless a S114 notice is issued.

Cllr Haskins raised the upcoming NALC training events. Clerk confirmed that bookings have been made for the upcoming relevant training events for the Clerk or Assistant Clerk Community. Events to be reviewed and bookings to be made if necessary / relevant.

#### **233/23 Planning**

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

14/23/0043: Variation of Condition No. 01 (approved plans) of application 14/23/0017 for alterations to Plots 19 and 20 only on land west of Derham Close, Creech St Michael

It was agreed to make no comments in respect of the application.

14/23/0044: Variation of Condition No's 2, 4, 8, 12 and 15 and removal of Condition No's 5, 6, 10, 11, 13 and 14 of application 14/21/0024 on land west of Derham Close, Creech St Michael.

It was agreed to make no comments in respect of the application.

48/24/0003/T: Notification to carry out management works (lateral reduction west side) to 4 lime trees within West Monkton Conservation Area at Marlows Cottage, Blundells Lane, West Monkton (trees growing from Marlows)

It was agreed to make no comments in respect of the application.

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

Noted

#### **234/23 Finance**

##### **a) Somerset Council Financial Position update**

Cllr Cavill had nothing further to add to the update provided in public question time.

Clerk confirmed that no response had been received from Somerset Council about asset / service devolution.

### **b) 2024/25 Budget and Precept Demand approval**

The draft 2024/25 budget and proposed precept demand were discussed.

It was agreed to set the 2024/25 budget at £195,725.00 and submit a precept request of £172995.00. The precept demand represents a 40.7% increase equivalent to £78.48 per annum for a Band D property. An increase of £22.73 per annum on the 2023/24 precept.

Proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Cavill and agreed with all in favour.

### **235/23 Sports Pitches update**

Cllr Hall reported that a programme of works for the groundworks will be issued shortly. Enquiries are being made with Coker about storage of one machine during the works. Costs will be provided for approval.

Jack Downs will install the remaining gate shortly.

Cllr Besley to plough the field when the ground conditions are right.

Pre-planning advice application was submitted prior to Christmas but no communication received since. Clerk to follow up.

The padlock issue on the front gate has now been resolved meaning the land can be accessed at any time by the Parish Council and Persimmon.

### **236/23 MH Developments**

#### **a) MH2 Update**

Cllr Haskins and Cavill provided feedback on the joint meeting about the S106 agreement for the MH2 development with CSM Parish Council representatives, the Planning Officer and Developers. The delivery of community infrastructure and public open space were discussed during the meeting and a table of information is being developed for further discussion by WMPC and CSMPC. Clerk reported that the information is expected to be available in the next couple of weeks and a joint meeting with all members of CSMPC and WMPC will be scheduled to take place on either 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> February. Councillors confirmed their preference for the meeting to take place on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February. Clerk to confirm with CSMPC.

Cllr Besley requested that mechanisms to ensure the delivery of the retail / district centre are discussed at the joint meeting.

Clerk confirmed that new plans in respect of the planning application are expected to be submitted at the end of this week. Once they are public meetings will be arranged in CSM and WM. The suggestion is that the PCs meet jointly after the public meetings to ensure that PC comments reflect feedback received from the public meetings.

#### **b) MH1 Update**

Clerk reported that an update had been requested from Persimmon on progress. Persimmon are checking progress with the S106 deed of variation with Somerset Council. Clerk to follow up with the Somerset Council Planning Officer.

#### **c) Hartnells Farm Development Update**

Clerk reported an update provided by the Planning Officer which confirmed that the current application is still subject to discussions and that Persimmon are working on a new scheme which when finalised will be subject to further consultation. The Planning Officer confirmed that the Parish Councils concerns have been noted and that Jon Fellingham, Somerset Council Highways is aware of the Parish Councils proposals in relation to the crossing point. Clerk to follow up the crossing point with Jon Fellingham.

### **237/23 Highways Update**

#### **a) Monkton Heathfield Road SID results**

Clerk summarised the results of the SID, which were circulated in advance of the meeting, when it was placed on Monkton Heathfield Road from 15<sup>th</sup> December to 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

The results demonstrate the following:

- There are on average 4500 vehicle movements a day.

- There were significantly more incoming vehicles (from A38 / Bridgwater) 109,497, compared to outgoing (from WRR / Taunton) 66066. This would suggest that traffic lights at the Monkton Elm junction with the A38 could have a good impact the number of vehicles turning from A38 onto Monkton Heathfield Road.
- The highest speed recorded was 48mph (incoming) and 55mph (outgoing).
- 97% of vehicles were travelling less than 25mph.

It was agreed that the SID would be placed on the lighting column near the Merry Monk next.

### **238/23 Permanent pump at Bathpool; update**

Clerk reported that following contact being made with the agent acting for landowner in early January and a plan of the proposed land to be acquired by the PC being sent to the land agent, there has been no further communication. Clerk to follow up with the Agent.

### **239/23 Primary School Solar Panels Update**

Cllr Gage reported that he had met with West Monkton Primary School and put forward a proposal to put solar panels (approximately 60) on the sports hall roof, that once installed the school would own the panels and become responsible for maintaining and insuring them, that the School would use the power generated but that the Parish Council would receive the income from any power that is exported and that the school would no longer charge the BACH utility charges (approximately £1200 per annum).

West Monkton Primary School are keen to proceed with the proposal but the Diocese and Academy need to provide approval first. The cost to the Parish Council for the installation will be approximately £25000.00.

Cllr Gage also reported that during the meeting with the school concerns were raised about the handover of the school and BACH from the contractor to SCC and then to the school and PC. Maintenance of items like the fire alarm and sprinkler system have not taken place. The school are putting together a potential total charge per annum for maintenance that the BACH is required to make a 5% contribution towards. The suggestion is that the maintenance costs are discussed at an annual meeting at the end of each year.

### **240/23 Community**

#### **a) Update**

Assistant Clerk Community reported on the following:

Café – Continuing to be busy with school children, parents, knit and crocheters and community garden volunteers. The Knit and Natter Group entered the Tree Festival at West Monkton Church on the 9th December making and decorated a Christmas Tree with woollen decorations and proudly won first prize. The repair café is quiet but continues to run once a month and the volunteers enjoy meeting and there are usually one or two parishioners who turn up with a task or two for them.

Loss and Bereavement Group – Vicar Jim Cox attended the December and January groups and we had 3 attendees at the December group and one at the January group.

Stay and Play Group – Attendance still good on both days. Our Volunteer, Alan Chapman arrived as Santa to both groups on the week commencing 13/12 and gifts were given to all the children who attended. Feedback from the families was that it was beneficial to have 'Santa' at the sessions as this helped the little ones become more brave and chat with him whereas at first many of them were frightened.

Parents of Children with Additional Needs – Over the past few months/years it appears that there are many children and families in the parish who are struggling with their additional needs children and the systems in place for this children. Many parents find solace in sharing their stories with other families of children with additional needs. Would the Parish Council consider having a group on one of the free Wednesday afternoons each month at the BACH during the café time for families to meet to share experience and to support each other?

Community Fridge – Thanks to the volunteers for keeping the Community Fridge open all through the Christmas period including Christmas day. There was large amounts of donated food available for the community to use and very little was thrown away. It was noted that frozen food was not donated from shops during this period.

Litter Pickers – Despite the colder weather our litter picking volunteers continue to keep the parish tidy and keep us up to date with any issues around the parish that need intervention. Volunteer litter pickers is being advertised

as the volunteer opportunity of the month in February. It was agreed to purchase more litter picking equipment at a cost of approximately £85.00. Clerk to place an order.

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. The December assembly was cancelled by the school and has been rearranged for the 30th January 2024. The assistant clerk for community is awaiting her DBS before working at Monkton Wood on Thursday afternoons as planned. This has been chased up and is now underway.

#### **b) Festive volunteer evening feedback / review / debrief**

A discussion about the festive volunteer evening took place and what went well and what could be improved were highlighted including:

What went well:

- The timing was good, the evening was scheduled at about the right time before Christmas and the start time was good.
- The right amount of refreshments were available.
- The display boards worked well and provided a good talking point and helped to raise awareness of what the PC is doing.
- The food was good and a good amount was available, although there was some left over it didn't go to waste as it went into the Community Fridge.

What could be improved:

- The food was good but the potatoes need to be warm – suggestion that they are either part baked by the caterer or hot plates are used.
- Suggestion of adding magnetic panels to the walls in the Activity Hall to enable better displays – BACH Committee to discuss at its next meeting.
- Music could be improved.
- Tables and chairs need to be provided for people to sit when eating although it was noted that not having tables / chairs at the beginning worked well to enable people to talk to each other more.
- Assistant Clerk Community to look into mobile carol singing next year, perhaps a tractor and trailer rather than having carol singing at the BACH after school because the numbers in attendance weren't that high.

#### **c) Community Events**

Assistant Clerk Community provided an update on scheduled community events including:

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 – Approximately 50 people attended the carol singing event and although was a great little gathering it was a shame that it was not dark and we may like to consider running the café until about 5pm at the BACH followed by singing by the Christmas Tree for this coming year?  
15/12/23 – Festive Volunteer Event – This was very well attended and we had a number of emails and messages commended the Parish Council for this event. A debrief will take place at the meeting on the 23rd January to plan for next year.

30/3/24 – Easter Egg Hunt – Unfortunately this year we don't have our 'Easter Bunny' as she is away on holiday. We can either purchase our own costume and find a volunteer to dress up or we can continue with the Easter Egg hunt without an Easter Bunny. It was agreed to continue without an Easter Bunny this year.

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
- Junior competitions
- Up to 2 teams for each category

#### **d) D-Day Event; approval of costs and placement of orders**

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Assistant Clerk Community provided a breakdown of the anticipated costs for the D-Day event. A discussion followed and some updates were suggested.

It was agreed that orders would be placed and deposits paid to secure things like entertainment and toilets using available funds in this financial year. Proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Gage and agreed with all in favour. An item regarding the D-Day Event to be added to the agenda for all meetings until the event.

#### **e) Community Garden; tool / equipment purchase**

Assistant Clerk Community reported that the Community Service Team worked on the garden on 17th December and cleared most of the brambles now. There is now more space for growing in the spring. The volunteers have continued to meet and keep up with the garden over the winter period and are now beginning to look at plans for the spring. We have had a few new volunteers joined the group. We are also now awaiting the shed in readiness to order tools and equipment needed for the spring/summer season.

Clerk reported that a shed has been ordered, delivery was expected last week. Clerk has escalated the delivery with the company.

Clerk outlined the proposed purchase of tools, trays / pots and seeds for the Community Garden. It was agreed to not purchase any further items until the shed is delivered and installed. Clerk to add to the agenda for the next meeting for consideration.

#### **241/23 Country Park and Somerset Wood**

##### **a) Somerset Wood; fundraising update, Joint Committee update**

Cllr Hall reported that planning approval has been obtained for the Poppy of Honour Pavilion. A meeting has taken place with a security camera company about what cameras can be installed using the proposed pavilion solar panels.

Cllr Hall has been meeting with Reed and Holland and potential contractors to inform tenders for building the pavilion.

Clerk reported that a QR code is being established to aid fundraising. Once in place the QR code can be shared on website / social media / posters etc.

Clerk reported that the first meeting of the Somerset Wood Joint Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm at the BACH and that three councillors needed to be put forward by the PC to be voting members of the committee at the meeting. It was agreed that Cllrs Besley, Hall and Cavill would be members of the committee for the meeting.

##### **b) Country Park update**

Cllr Hall reported that security cameras for rest of park have also been discussed with a contractor. Cameras are available that operate using solar cells and 4G.

More tyre tracks have been found at the Park. Signage is in the process of being developed.

Young people have reportedly been on the ice on the pond during the recent cold weather. Permanent signage for around the pond is also being developed.

Costs for the disabled parking area, fencing and a height restriction barrier are being obtained. These costs will form part of the poppy of honour costings.

Cllr Gage reported that he had been making enquiries about how to create wildflower meadows. Cllr Gage to oversee the required ploughing / spraying / seeding and the delivery of the meadow.

Assistant Clerk Community provided an update on the Lottery funding grant application for the Country Park.

The application has gone through to the next stage and a meeting is scheduled to take place on 5<sup>th</sup> February to discuss the application further.

#### **242/23 Strategic Plan update; plan on a page delivery**

Clerk provided a brief summary of the draft Strategic Plan that was circulated in advance of the meeting and requested feedback on it so far from Councillors.

Clerk outlined an idea that a plan on a page, summarising the Strategic Plan and what the Parish Council is doing is also developed for delivery, either in the Village News, or by volunteers to every household in the Parish

to raise awareness of the work of the Parish Council. It was agreed to move forward with the delivery of a plan on a page.

Clerk suggested that the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting could be based around the contents of the Strategic Plan and incorporate recognition of the help of volunteers.

Councillors to review the Strategic Plan and provide feedback to the Clerk.

Clerk also requested contributions from Councillors for the 2023/24 Annual Report. The Annual Report will be in the same format as previous years this year and will move to a format more in keeping with the Strategic Plan from 2024/25 onwards.

**243/25 Other matters for report only – items for discussion – no decision**

Cllr Hall reported that a meeting is scheduled to take place with the newly appointed FWAG officer about the wider catchment flooding projects on 30<sup>th</sup> January.

Clerk reported that the new .gov.uk email address for the Parish Council will go live on 1<sup>st</sup> February. Clerk to circulate instructions to Councillors.

Cllr Besley requested an update regarding the MH2 planning application. This was provided by the Clerk.

**a) Items for next meeting agenda - by Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 or Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Noted

**b) Dates to note over the next 14 days**

Audit Working Party – 26th January at 9.30am

Garden Town Advisory Board meeting – 26th January at 11am

FWAG meeting – 30th January at 1.30pm

Agenda Run Through meeting - 6th February at 9am

BACH Committee meeting – 8th February at 7pm

PC Meeting – 13th February at 7pm

**244/23 Dates of forthcoming meetings:**

Parish Council:

Second Tuesday in the month (Business focused meeting)

2024: 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: 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 9.53pm



Signed Chairman:

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024