



West Monkton Parish Council

ADOPTED

Minutes of the Meeting of West Monkton Parish Council held on Tuesday 28th January 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs Besley (from 8.05pm), Cavill, Chapman, Cronshaw, Ellis, Gage, Munson, Haskins and Tully.

In attendance: Amy Shepherd, Clerk, Candy Sully, CP Volunteer Coordinator, Alan Hall, and 3 members of the public.

217/24 To receive any apologies (with reasons), introductions with responsibilities.

Apologies were received from Kate Welsh, Assistant Clerk (Community) and Cllr Besley who would be late.

218/24 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.

219/24 To adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 14th January 2025.

The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council on 14th January 2025, having been previously circulated, were taken as read. It was resolved to adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 14th January, proposed by Cllr Cronshaw, seconded by Cllr Munson, and agreed by show of hands.

Public Question Time

Cllr Munson asked, in light of the recent heavy rainfall and the impact on other parts of Somerset, how many properties in the parish would be impacted if stream levels increased by another metre that that experienced before. Cllr Munson also suggested that the PC should review its emergency plan.

Cllr Tully expressed his concern that that sandbags are no longer available to properties from Somerset Council or the Environment Agency and expressed concerns about the lack of gully sucking, road sweeping and ditch clearance.

Clerk outlined some questions received from a member of the public about the Bridgwater Road Pitch:

What is the timeframe for the work? Clerk confirmed that the PC has been told that the work will be completed by September.

Will fencing and gates be installed to stop balls going astray and to stop dogs entering? Yes, the PC has been supplied with a specification of the fencing and gates.

Will the adjacent brambles be managed? Persimmon are responsible for the bramble clearance and work is planned for February.

Working Group to be created incorporating Cllrs Munson, Cavill, Gage and the volunteer Bathpool Flood Warden to review Emergency Plan.

Information about the equipment available to be added to the next edition of the village news that is going to every property.

Is it the longer-term aspiration to clear the brambles back to the stream edge along Dyers Brook? The Management Company will determine the work the residents would like upon the POS handover.

220/24 Planning

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

No notifications of planning applications were received.

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

Noted.

221/24 Assets

a) Country Park and Somerset Wood

(i) General update; Memorial Walk; Falklands Memorial

A general progress report on the Country Park was circulated in advance of the meeting and shared on screen. It was noted that the Wrens Memorial dedication is planned to take place on Thursday 30th January at 2pm.

The Falklands Memorial Boards were discussed. The plan is to install the boards for unveiling at the Falklands Event on 24th May. It was resolved that the Parish Council were fully supportive of the boards and that an order is placed, proposed by Cllr Munson, seconded by Cllr Chapman and agreed with all in favour. Fundraising to take place at the Falklands Event on 24th May.

The proposed WW2 memorial was discussed and plans and designs shared on screen. Clerk advised that the total estimated cost is £6500.00 plus VAT plus the cost of the gravel pathways. Clerk also advised that there are not sufficient funds in the Country Park budget line to cover the cost of the memorial, but the aspiration is that the memorial would be installed prior to the VE Day event on 8th May.

It was agreed that the Clerk would review the PC finances in advance of the next meeting and make suggestions on available funds that can be used to cover the cost of the memorial.

Finally, the Bruford Display Board was discussed. Clerk advised that the board has been ordered to be installed soon, the funds raised by Cheddon Fitzpaine PC will be used to cover the cost of the board.

Cllr Cronshaw raised correspondence received from Terry Williams asking if a Service Headstone could be installed at the Country Park. The headstone includes the wording 'For those who leave never to return. For those who return but are never the same'. After a discussion it was agreed that a site for the headstone at the beginning of the Memorial Walk would be identified.

(ii) Lottery Project Progress Report

A Lottery Progress Report was circulated in advance of the meeting and Clerk and Candy Sully, Volunteer Coordinator provided a summary of the report.

Clerk reported that an application for CIL funding has been submitted to the Town Council and a meeting has been scheduled to discuss the application.

A wildlife trail proposal was discussed and the possibility of applying to SALC for Health and Wellbeing Grant funding for the project. It was agreed that an application for a small grant of £2500 would be developed and submitted to SALC.

b) BACH update.

Cllr Gage reported that a replacement battery has been ordered for the automatic door button in the lobby. Cllr Gage also reported that a ring doorbell has been ordered for outside the BACH for people to use should they need assistance entering.

Cllr Gage provided an update on the School Solar Panels proposal following his meeting with the Primary School. The school are happy to proceed with obtaining quotes. The agreement includes that any income received from the Panels will be the Parish Councils and the monthly utility charge to the BACH will cease. Clerk confirmed that Audio Visual Direct are visiting the BACH tomorrow to prepare a quote for improved audio equipment for online meetings.

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c) Community Fridge update.

Steady flow of donations throughout the week from around 12 locations in and around Taunton, some daily and others a few times a week. The volunteers worked through Christmas to ensure that the Community Fridge stayed open. The old freezer from the shed has been removed and replaced with the large freezer from the BACH. A small upright freezer has been purchased for the BACH for use by the Youth Café.

Cllr Haskins reported that gravel has been put down around the clothes bank, the intention is to add a spray that binds the gravel together when the weather improves.

d) Community Garden update.

The team continues to meet and manage the community garden. Tony Brown attended an online short course on community composting and will do some further research into whether the school and parish council could set something up using combined waste.

Cllr Besley joined the meeting at 8.05pm

222/24 Projects

a) Poppy of Honour fundraising update; Black tie event.

Cllr Cronshaw provided an update on fundraising efforts and outlined a proposal to hold a black-tie event at Taunton School on 29th August. The cost per person, minimum numbers and likely ticket costs were outlined. Likely ticket purchases were also discussed and auction / raffle prizes.

It was agreed to discuss the proposal again at the next meeting. Cllr Cronshaw to enquire with Taunton School to see if the event could take place in the October half term.

The trailer for the Poppy of Honour was discussed. Cllr Haskins had approached a local business about supplying a trailer, but they have unfortunately declined. After discussion, Cllr Haskins to contact business again about them possibly lending a trailer for when the Poppy of Honour needs to be moved.

b) Sports Pitches update.

Clerk reported that there was little progress to report on the planning application and it doesn't appear that the planning officer has actioned the additional information submitted in November. Cllr Cavill to chase Planning Officer.

Alan Hall confirmed that he is arranging a site meeting with the contractor to agree a timeline for the remaining works.

Drainage for the trenches was discussed and whether it needs to be connected to an existing ditch or whether they could be filled in once the fencing is in place. Further discussions to take place.

c) MH1 POS; transfer document update / approval

Clerk reported that a catch-up meeting took place on 23rd January. Prior to the meeting there was an indication that the transfer document had been sent to solicitors. Upon checking the transfer document that was received it was an earlier version without any of the agreed amendments. Other matters were raised during the meeting including the grass cutting on Pippin Road, Persimmon confirmed that they are responsible for cutting it and it is included on the map, a date for the tree works is awaited. Hedge cutting expected to take place in the second week of February – exact date to be confirmed. A commencement date for the play park remedials should be confirmed by the end of the week.

d) MH2 Update.

Clerk confirmed that there was little to report. A presentation about the likely impacts of the MH2 proposal on traffic flows and congestion was provided at the Hestercombe LCN meeting and it was agreed to discuss the impacts further at the Highways Working Group meeting on 30th January.

e) Multi-agency approach to flood prevention update

Clerk provided an update on the multi-agency flood prevention activity. FWAG would like to arrange a further multi-agency meeting. Arrangements are being made.

223/24 Environment

a) Weeds on kerb edges and road sweeping

Cllr Chapman confirmed that he had cleared the weeds from the kerb edges in front of the Primary School. Cllr Haskins confirmed that the matter was on the agenda for the Highways LCN Working Meeting on 30th January.

224/24 Community:

a) Update

- The café has been busy this month, and we have started to receive donations via the QR code. Families continue to come after school for hot chocolate and biscuits. Sadly, our café volunteer lost his mother recently and will not be able to attend for a few weeks. Amy has agreed to help in the interim.
- The repair café is getting more popular, and we have a long list of items that have been repaired over the period. The volunteers go above and beyond to try to help parishioners with their items, often taking them home to repair.
- We had a review of the Bereavement Café with Rev Jim and Kate who volunteer to run the group. They are happy to continue even though numbers are quite low, and we agreed that even helping a few people through difficult times is very worthwhile. Rev Jim and Kate have asked if they can have different chairs to use, block chairs and Amy has agreed to see what is available. We discussed changing the name to 'Drop-In Bereavement Café' to encourage more people to attend. We also discussed having another volunteer available to help if one of them is unable to make it and I will look to our volunteers to see if anyone would like to help with this.
- Stay and Play is getting busier on Thursdays, and Jess continues to open and run it alongside our volunteer Sheila. We have had positive feedback on our Santa visit in December and how it has helped some of our little ones feel less scared.
- The Youth Café continues to be popular, and we are getting increasing numbers attending. Unfortunately, one of our volunteers is not able to continue, we have signed up Mary Onkem of D'loummies to join us when she is able.
- Litter-picking volunteers continue to go out and keep our parish tidy. There have been some problems with littering on School Road and Co-op is trying to keep on top of emptying their own bins. Somerset Council seems to be collecting more regularly, however this issue needs addressing with the school and unfortunately contact with them has not been consistent.
- Our Companion Volunteer continues to visit approximately 5 elderly residents regularly, spending time with them and helping them with shopping, and appointments as and when required. We will be undertaking an updated DBS for our Volunteer as it has been 3 years.
- Safeguarding Training for Volunteers whose role involves face to face work with the public has been organised. Kate will run the training on Thursday 6th February and Monday 17th February from 1pm to 4pm. Councillors have been invited to attend should they wish to attend.
- First Aid in the Outdoors has been organised for Monday 28th April from 9am to 5pm with our usual training Robin at Somerset Adventures. This will be a refresher for those who did their training 3 years ago and any new councillors and volunteers that help at our events.

b) Community Events Update; feedback from Working Group Meeting on 23rd January 2025, events calendar update.

- The Christmas Tractor Event was extremely well received, thanks to all those who joined us and the volunteers that helped. We plan to run this next year, possibly to coincide with the Year 5 Carol Concert at the Community Café on Thursday 18th December 2025. The date for the event was confirmed.
- The Festive Volunteer Evening was well attended and a success, again I would hope we can run this again next year on Tuesday 2nd, December 2025. The date for the event was confirmed.

Events Calendar 2025

| Date | Event | Venue | Update |
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| Saturday 22 nd March | Cycle Event | BACH | Bethan Turner organising |
| Saturday 19 th April | Easter Egg Hunt | Maidenbrook | Kate & Volunteers organising |
| Thursday 8 th May | VE Day 80 | Maidenbrook | Fireworks, food vendors and entertainment booked Event Working Group meeting 23/1/25 |
| Saturday 10 th May | Somerset Day Picnic | Maidenbrook | Food vendors booked Event Working Group meeting 23/1/25 |
| Saturday 24 th May | Falklands Commemoration Get Together | Maidenbrook | Awaiting update from Event Working Group 23/1/25 |
| Saturday 28 th June | Share Event | BACH | Bethan Turner Organising |
| Saturday 12 th July | FunFest | Maidenbrook | Meeting 21.1.25 - Making good progress with planning, traders now booking space at event and money coming in. Have a few actions to work through before next meeting. Need to know about Cllrs that can volunteer on the day and for set up. Cllrs to contact Kate directly confirming their availability. |
| Sunday 10 th August | St Giles Dog Show | Maidenbrook | St Giles organising, WMPC to organise parking and bar |
| Friday 15 th August | VJ Day & Official Opening | Maidenbrook | To be discussed at Events Working Group meeting 23/1/25 |
| Wednesday 5 th November | Firework Event | Maidenbrook | CFPC currently considering – awaiting response |

- The notes of the Working Group meeting were discussed and the following actions / points agreed:
 - Assistant Clerk Community to purchase VE day flag.
 - Falklands Event to go ahead as planned on 24th May with a marquee, generators and bar. TEN to be submitted.
 - Flag poles for the Country Park to be included in the signage advertising consent application. Clerk to liaise with Cllr Haskins and Assistant Clerk Community.
 - Prices for concrete troughs to be obtained for the next finance report. If installed, sponsorship for each to be investigated.
 - Cllr Haskins to build stage for use at events. Materials expected to cost approximately £200.
- The Event Calendar for distribution with the Village News in the March/April edition is being proofed and ready for printing. This calendar includes regular activities such as Stay and Play, Youth Café, Repair Café, Drop-In Bereavement Café, Community Quiz Nights, and the Summer Food Project, as well as our events. We have also included a few of the church events going on over the summer. Draft shared with Councillors.

c) Funfest 2025; feedback from meeting on 21st January 2025.

Cllr Haskins provided feedback from the meeting. Plans are progressing well. Jessica Cox, Admin and Events Assistant is doing a good job securing traders for the event.

d) Community Review Update

The Report summarising the survey responses and the draft action plan was circulated in advance of the meeting. Clerk confirmed that the draft action plan is now with CCS for feedback. A further training session on fundraising and grant applications will take place shortly.

e) Feedback from Hestercombe LCN.

Cllr Cavill and Haskins provided feedback from the LCN meeting on 22nd January. An update from the CYP Working Group was received. All Parish Councils in the LCN have agreed to allocate 5% of their precept for 2025/26 to Young People. A presentation was provided on MH2 and the impacts on the LCN area.

Cllr Cavill confirmed that the Somerset Divisional Boundary consultation deadline has been extended by six weeks for Somerset Council to agree a response. Matter to be included on the agenda for the next meeting to consider if the Parish Council wants to submit additional comments.

225/24 Highways

a) Horse Warning Signs; update

No progress to report. Matter to be raised at the LCN Highways Working Group meeting.

b) Monkton Heathfield Road Traffic Calming; update

Clerk and Cllr Cavill confirmed that there was no progress report. Matter to be raised at LCN Highways Working Group meeting.

c) Yallands Hill Crossing Point; update

Clerk reported that following agreement at the last meeting she had confirmed with Somerset Council that the Parish Council would like a basic feasibility study.

Somerset Council have responded confirming that they have instructed their Design Team to create a feasibility cost and delivery programme based on the scheme scope and a basic feasibility option service the Parish Council has chosen. Somerset Council will issue a Developed Brief for approval by the Parish Council (it should take about a couple of weeks or so, depending on the resource availability), and we will be able to start the feasibility study as soon as Developed Brief is signed off by West Monkton Parish Council.

The Developed Brief hasn't been received yet, item to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

226/24 Other matters for report only – items for discussion at next meeting

a) Items for next meeting agenda – by Monday 3rd February or Monday 17th February.

Noted.

Cllr Gage requested an update regarding the two additional SIDs. Clerk confirmed that the application for grant funding has been submitted to Avon and Somerset Police.

Cllr Gage requested an update regarding MH2 and whether a letter has been sent regarding Somerset Council's use of CIL. Clerk to arrange a catch-up meeting with the Planning Officer, CSM PC and the Developers.

Cllr Besley reported that ditch works are needed on Blundells Lane. Matter to be given further consideration at a future meeting.

Cllr Haskins reported that further elm trees are down across the public footpath. Cllr Besley to remove.

227/24 Dates of forthcoming meetings:

Parish Council:

Second Tuesday in the month (Business focused meeting)

2025: 11th Feb 11th Mar, 8th Apr, 13th May, 10th Jun, 8th Jul, 12th Aug, 9th Sept, 14th Oct, 11th Nov, 9th Dec.

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

2025: 25th Feb 22nd Apr, 27th May, 24th Jun, 22nd Jul, 23rd Sept, 28th Oct, 25th Nov.

Audit Working Party: 25th April 2025 at 9.30am.

Annual Parish Meeting: 25th March 2025 at 7pm

BACH Committee 18th February 2025 at 7.30pm

Budget and Precept Working Group: TBC November 2025

Sports Pitch Committee TBC

Somerset Wood Joint Committee TBC

There being no further business to discussed, the meeting ended at 21.35pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. H. R. 2025', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Signed Chairman:

Date: 11th February 2025

Adopted - Redacted