



West Monkton Parish Council

ADOPTED

Minutes of the Meeting of West Monkton Parish Council held on Tuesday 25th February 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs Besley, Cavill, Chapman, Cronshaw, Ellis, Gage, Munson and Tully.

In attendance: Amy Shepherd, Clerk, Kate Welsh, Assistant Clerk (Community) Candy Sully, CP Volunteer Coordinator, and 4 members of the public.

241/24 To receive any apologies (with reasons), introductions with responsibilities.

Apologies were received from Cllr Haskins.

242/24 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.

243/24 To adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 11th February 2025.

The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council on 11th February 2025, having been previously circulated, were taken as read. It was resolved to adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 11th February, proposed by Cllr Gage, seconded by Cllr Chapman, and agreed by show of hands.

Public Question Time

Members of the public who are residents at Acacia Gardens attended the meeting to make representations about planning application number 48/25/0004 relating to Swingbridge House relating to car parking, increased traffic movements, road safety for young people travelling to and from Monkton Wood Academy and emergency vehicle access. The extension of the double yellow lines on Acacia Gardens was also raised and the Clerk provided an update. Cllr Munson also provided information about the proposed Bridgwater Road pavement improvements as part of the MH2 application and the proposed SID location in Bathpool.

Clerk raised the area of overgrown hedge at Milton Hill between the traffic lights and Dyers Brook.

Clerk raised the overgrown brambles on the verge of Monkton Heathfield Road from the pedestrian crossing to Fouracres.

Clerk provided an update on the works to clear weeds etc on Bridgwater Road. The contractor is arranging a tractor to return to remove the weeds from the road edge.

Clerk provided an update on the lengthsman's schedule. The Lengthsman is hoping to install the litter bins later this week.

Clerk to put forward additional comments on behalf of the Parish Council in respect of the planning application raising the resident's concerns.

Clerk to contact Traffic Management to make them aware of the proposal and ask them to reconsider the double yellow line extension proposal.

Clerk to ask Lengthsman to cut the hedge.

Clerk to ask Lengthsman to cut back the brambles.

Cllr Gage raised the potholes on Redhill and Dosters Lane.

Cllr Chapman raised the area to the front the Roys Place properties that front Bridgwater Road. On one side of Roys Place the hedge has been removed, but on the other the hedge remains. Clerk confirmed that the phase plans from Roys Place do not indicate that the removal of the hedge was part of planned works.

Cllr Cavill raised the block drainage from the pond at Pigeon Cottage which is causing the road to flood.

Clerk to write to Pigeon Cottage and ask that work is undertaken to unblock the drainage from the pond.

Cllr Cavill provided an update on Somerset Council's budget / finance. The Secretary of State has awarded a capitalisation directive of £63m on top of the capitalisation last year. This has enabled a balanced budget for 2025/26. However, the S151 Officer has advised that £101m of savings are needed for 2026/27 and a further £136m for 2027/28.

Cllr Chapman raised the Brittons Ash Hedge Cutting and the debris that has been left on the road following the cut.

Cllr Chapman raised the area of land owned by Redrow behind the primary school. Brambles are overgrowing the fence into the path.

Clerk to ask Persimmon / Redrow to cut back the brambles / tidy the area.

244/24 Planning

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

48/25/0013: Replacement hip to gable roof, with formation of first floor ancillary accommodation, and erection of a single storey extension to the rear of Glendower, Cheddon Fitzpaine Road, Goosenford, West Monkton.

The Parish Council supports the granting of permission.

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

Noted.

245/24 Assets

a) Country Park and Somerset Wood;

(i) General update

A general progress report on the Country Park was circulated in advance of the meeting and shared on screen. It was noted that work to install the Bruford Memorial would take place on 26th February.

It was noted that work was progressing on the Falklands Memorial Boards and the WW2 memorial. Candy Sully, Volunteer Coordinator is editing the wording for the boards. Cllr Cavill suggested also asking Bethan Turner to take a look at the board wording.

Work to stake out the position of the WW2 memorial and service headstone is also taking place on 26th February.

(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.

The Country Park website is now live, picture of the volunteers in their new jackets was also shared.

Clerk reported that the six month review report has been completed and submitted to the National Lottery. The second year one revenue payment will be received at the beginning of March.

Clerk also reported that the advertising consent application has been drafted. Permission from Somerset Council to install the signs and to apply for permission, to comply with the terms of the lease, will be obtained prior to submission. Clerk advised that the cost of the application is £152.50 and is part of the lottery funding. Councillors approved the submission of the application.

b) BACH update; Feedback from Committee Meeting on 18th February. Solar panels – consider / approve quote and amended agreement with school (R)

Cllr Gage provided feedback from the BACH Committee Meeting on 18th February. The Committee was supportive of the solar panel proposal and the online meeting audio improvement works.

Cllr Gage reported that four contractors had been approached to quote for the solar panel works, three quotes been received.

A document summarising and comparing the quotes was shared on the screen.

The lowest of the quotes was provided by Commercial Solar both for the cost per panel and cost per kw produced. Cllr Gage recommended that the Parish Council resolve to approve the quote provided by Commercial Solar.

Cllr Gage also advised that additional costs for bird netting (£480.00) and possible export meter install costs (to be confirmed).

It was resolved to accept the quote provided by Commercial Solar. Proposed by Cllr Cavill, seconded by Cllr Chapman and agreed with all in favour.

The Contractor to be commissioned to carry out the work upon receipt of agreeable permission from the school being received and the amended Memorandum of Understanding with the school being agreed.

The draft letter of permission from the school was shared and discussed. It was agreed to request amendments to the letter including expressed permission from the school to install the solar panels.

The Memorandum of Understanding with the school was discussed.

Amendments were identified including the removal of paragraph 11.7, amendment to 17.1 to confirm that the solar panels will remain the property of the Parish Council after installation, 17.2 to confirm that the Parish Council will not install batteries as part of the system and 17.4 to reflect ownership of the panels by the Parish Council and the ongoing responsibility for their upkeep.

The information after the signatures on the agreement about meter readings should also be removed.

Clerk to make suggested changes to the letter and memorandum of understanding and send back to the school.

Cllr Gage to check with the contractors if they can provide a structural assessment of the roof as required by the school.

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. An application has been made to CAG for a grant to install lighting in the second shed following a number of issues raised.

d) Community Garden update;

The team continues to meet and manage the community garden. On 13th February, the Community Garden Team met to make plans for the Spring. 3 new volunteers attended the meeting and have been assigned some seed planting and other tasks. They have asked if Maidenbrook Park would still like the chippings that are at the garden. They have asked if the dumpy bags at the garden can be removed. They are using compost from the compost heaps this year but we have ordered vermiculite and seed compost for the seedlings. We have also ordered some canes for them. The team are very organised with their growing and planting and are looking forward to the spring/summer. UPDATE - Stuart Haskins to arrange removal of the dumpy through Mark Besley as well as the unwanted chippings.

e) Noticeboards; Greenway and Village Hall replacements (R)

Clerk confirmed that a quote has been requested from Benjamin Henry to replace the Greenway Noticeboard but is awaited.

Cllr Tully advised that the information about the village hall noticeboards needs to be considered by the Village Hall Management Committee prior to the Parish Council.

Item to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

246/24 Projects

a) Poppy of Honour fundraising update; trailer update, approval of costs to display Poppy of Honour at upcoming shows and discussion around associated transport / storage / insurance arrangements (R)

Cllr Cronshaw provided an update on the Poppy of Honour fundraising. Plaque purchasing is slow. Lots of leaflets have been given out and more may need to be ordered. Clerk to check quantities.

Payment for the trailer to be made. Cllr Haskins will advise of cost of any works required to the trailer at the next meeting.

Cllr Cronshaw advised of shows that the Poppy of Honour can be taken to including the Dunster Show, Somerset Armed Forces Day (£100 charge), Flower Show, Mid Devon Show (£120 charge), Fleet Air Arm Museum, Plymouth Armed Forces Day and more.

The cost of transporting the trailer, who will man it and insurance was discussed.

Cllr Cronshaw is liaising with the Poppy of Honour Committee about insurance.

It was agreed to add an item to the next agenda to discuss the shows further and the transport / cost of taking the Poppy of Honour to each.

Cllr Cronshaw to develop a schedule.

Cllr Chapman to discuss the fees payable with the organisers of the Somerset Armed Forces Day and Flower Show.

Cllr Cronshaw confirmed that a meeting of the Working Group is planned for next Wednesday.

b) Sports Pitches update;

Clerk reported that the Sports Pitch access works are due to commence on 3rd March.

Enquiries have been made as to whether Highways have been re-consulted on the amended proposals in respect of the planning application that were submitted in November. The Highways Officer has confirmed that he hasn't been reconsulted but that they will now consider the additional information.

This means that although the additional information submitted in respect of the planning application has been added to the application on the website, the Planning Officer has not reconsulted with consultees. Cllr Cavill is chasing the Planning Officer / escalating.

Clerk reported that signs for the sports pitch gates have been obtained for install and a sign for the dog walking area has been designed and is with Signs Express for creation.

Clerk shared an update from the ground works contractor:

Visited the site, Monday 3rd February.

My thoughts are -

In general the ground appears to be draining quite well, (one or two wet spots on the edges of the field, the worst area being at the top end of field where I think the car park may be)

Grass looks a bit stressed but I think that this is mainly due to the high volume of rain water, that has passed through & over the field. I suspect most, if not all of the fertiliser applied last autumn has washed out. Ground temperatures at the moment are not allowing for any further growth.

The plan for moving forward does depend upon the weather conditions, as soon as we experience a warming up of the ground & air temperatures, we will undertake the following operations:

Roll pitches

Apply a controlled release fertiliser

Verti-drain field

The above operations are designed to encourage increased grass growth, Rolling will encourage the grass plant to tiller & help the surface to settle after the winter, Controlled release fertiliser will provide nutrients to the grass plant for about 120 days. Verti-draining will encourage deeper rooting of the grass plant.

The Cricket Square

As soon as conditions permit, we will complete the Cricket Square. At present I cannot give a time line as this is very much at the mercy of the weather.

Cllr Gage reported that the Rugby Club have confirmed that they will do the first cut when required.

c) MH1 POS; transfer document update / approval (R)

Clerk reported that the transfer document has been amended, originally it didn't include requirement to complete tree works / play park remedials within 6 months of transfer. Amendment agreed between solicitors. Expecting to receive amended transfer and map (with Ts) for consideration / approval by PC. A Working Group was agreed to review these documents when they are received including Cllrs Chapman, Gage and Cavill.

Clerk also reported that she has made contact with some alternative Managing Agents and meetings with them are being arranged.

d) MH2 Update;

Clerk reported that a meeting with the Planning Officer / Developers Consultant has been requested and their availability is awaited.

e) Multi-agency approach to flood prevention update

No progress to report.

f) Bridgwater Road Football Pitch Update.

Pictures of progress with the pitch were shared on the screen. The position of the gates was discussed. Cllr Chapman reported that the gate and fencing is to be completed by the end of the week and the contractors will then come back when drier to work on the pitch surface including to rotavate, add drainage and seed. Expected that the works will be completed by September and for the pitch to be available from summer next year.

247/24 Consultations

a) Divisional boundaries consultation:

Division Boundaries for Somerset Council: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset> Closing date extended by six weeks until 3rd March 2025

It was agreed not to submit further / additional comments in respect of the consultation.

248/24 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.
- 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.
- The Drop in Bereavement Café had a slow start with only one attending this month.
- Stay and Play is getting busier on Thursdays, and Jess continues to open and run it alongside our volunteer Sheila. Jess has sorted and organised the toys in the storage.
- The Youth Café continues to be popular, and we are getting increasing numbers attending. We have run a range of sessions this month including celebrating Chinese new year with food tasting, a movie night and valentines day cards.
- Litter-picking volunteers continue to go out and keep our parish tidy. We have an advert going out on social media and the village news for volunteers to help keep the parish tidy by weeding curbs, trimming and general tidying up. We plan to make a WhatsApp group to coordinate tasks.
- 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.
- The first session of Safeguarding Training for Volunteers whose role involves face to face work with the public took place on 6th February with another session being delivered on the 17th February. Feedback has been positive. Looking to offer safeguarding training each year and to Maidenbrook volunteers.
- First Aid in the Outdoors has been organised for Monday 28th April from 9am to 5pm with our usual trainer 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.

Assistant Clerk Community provided an overview of the SALC Funding Application for the Youth Provision for the Hestercombe LCN area. As the only Parish Council with the general power of competence in the LCN area, WMPC will be the lead council, submit the application and administer the grant when received. It was resolved to submit the application for £35000.00. Proposed by Cllr Gage, seconded by Cllr Cronshaw and agreed with all in favour.

b) Community Events Update; feedback from Working Group Meeting on 20th February 2025. Barriers for the Country Park
Events Calendar 2025

Date	Event	Venue	Update
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
Saturday 10 th May	Somerset Day Picnic	Maidenbrook	Discussions to continue at Events Working Group
Saturday 24 th May	Falklands Commemoration Get Together	Maidenbrook	Discussions at Event Working Group to continue.
Saturday 28 th June	Share Event	BACH	Bethan Turner Organising
Saturday 12 th July	FunFest	Maidenbrook	Next meeting 22/3/25 at Maidenbrook Park to make outline plan.
Sunday 10 th August	St Giles Dog Show	Maidenbrook	St Giles organising, WMPC to organise parking and bar
Friday 15 th August	VJ Day	Maidenbrook	To be discussed at Events Working Group meeting
6 th September	Black Tie Event & Opening	Maidenbrook	To meet with Cllr Carol Cronshaw to discuss in more details
Wednesday 5 th November	Firework Event	Maidenbrook	Meeting took place with Sonic Fireworks – awaiting proposals
Tuesday 2 nd December 7pm	Festive Volunteer Evening	BACH	
Thursday 18 th December -	Santa Tractor/Trailer Event	From BACH at 3pm	

- The Event Calendar for distribution with the Village News in the March/April edition is being printed and we will be adding the event calendar to the village news in the coming week ready for delivery.
- Approximately 120 bales of hay will need to be purchased before May for the events. Assistant Clerk Community to make contact with Flying Start Riding School to see if they have hay bales available.
- Need to make a decision on fencing/barriers for Maidenbrook Park to take into account Martins Law. Telegraph poles laid down suggested as a solution. Cllr Cavill and Cllr Gage to make enquiries. Cllr Besley confirmed that he would be able to transport the poles.
- Can Councillors please respond to event invite in diaries with a response as to whether they are able to help on the day and set up/bring down marquees.
- Developing Event Management Plan for larger events (VE Day and FunFest)
- Looking for some Techy Volunteers who can help with audio at our events.

c) Funfest 2025; feedback from meeting on 17th February 2025. Underwriting expenditure on event (R)

Cllr Munson provided an update on progress with FunFest arrangements. Cllr Munson advised that there will need to be expenditure on the event prior to the event and asked if WMPC can underwrite the expenditure and agree a budget of £3,000 to spend in advance of the event from April 2025. It was noted that funds from stall holders and Parish Councils have already been received and that insurance has been obtained to cover the expenditure should the event be cancelled. It was resolved to underwrite the expenditure on the event and agree a budget of £3000. Proposed by Cllr Chapman, seconded by Cllr Besley and agreed with all in favour.

d) Firework Event; feedback from meeting with Sonic Fireworks.

Clerk and Assistant Clerk Community provided an update on the meeting with Sonic Fireworks about the VE Day Event, a Firework Event later in the year and other events being organised.

A proposal / further information is awaited from Sonic Fireworks. Matter to be deferred until the next meeting.

249/24 Highways

a) Horse warning signs; update

An email from Traffic Management about the horse warning signs was circulated in advance of the meeting. The email confirmed that Somerset Council do not have funds to pay for Horse Warning signs as these are not a statutory function but considered discretionary and that the signs can only be placed where the number of horse movements is over 12 per day and also vehicle movements are over 300 per day.

The map and suggested locations of the signs was discussed.

It was agreed that the only locations where horse movement and vehicle movement evidence was available were D and E.

Clerk to request that signs are installed at these locations at a cost of £350.00 per sign.

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

Clerk to liaise with Flying Start to confirm Somerset Council Policy.

Consideration to be given to how evidence can be gathered to support the installation of further signs at the other locations.

b) Monkton Heathfield Road Traffic Calming; update

No progress to report.

c) Yallands Hill Crossing Point – Approval of Developed Design Brief for Feasibility Study (R)

The Developed Design Brief was circulated in advance of the meeting. Clerk advised that the Brief includes two proposed crossing points and the cost of the feasibility study is £7400.00 because of this.

It was agreed to request that the Design Brief is amended to only include the Yallands Hill Crossing Point to reduce the cost.

Clerk to liaise with Somerset Council.

d) SID update

Clerk reported that an application for grant funding for two SIDs has been submitted to Avon and Somerset Police, the outcome of the application is expected in April.

Clerk reported that whilst the application for funding is being determined and application has been made to Somerset Council to agree two new positions for the SIDs, one in Bathpool (at the location recommended by Traffic Management) and one at Yallands Hill using the lighting columns available.

A response to the application has been received confirming that 'unfortunately our highway lighting team have now reviewed their policy and have advised us that no SID's can be attached to their lamp columns. So I am sorry to say that we cannot authorise the use of these two lamp columns. We may also have to review those attached to lamp columns already and install posts but we are still discussing this with them.

We could install two new posts at these locations as I believe they are suitable and do meet our criteria.

We would not be able to submit an order until April and could not guarantee how quickly they could be installed.

The cost would be £350 per post.

Alternatively you could ask a third party to install the posts as long as they held the correct qualifications to work on the highway and applied for a Section 171 licence. This may be a quicker route for you? We are also

updating our policy to reflect this change in practice and give more information about third parties should parish's wish to go down that route.

Apologies for this change in decision which only came to light recently'.

It was agreed to resubmit the application including two new posts at the locations and await the outcome before going ahead with commissioning a third party contractor to install new posts at the location. Cllr Tully stated that the speeding issue in Bathpool is near Aldi. Clerk to look for available posts in Bathpool around Aldi to include in the application prior to resubmitting.

e) Bridgwater Road hedge and pavement (adjacent to Bridgwater Road pitch).

Cllr Chapman reported that the pavement alongside the Bridgwater Road hedge was cleared by the Community Payback team. Mud from the clearance now needs to be moved.

It was agreed to commission Mowgate to cut the hedge on the pavement side and reduce the height of it to 6ft so that it is easier to manage going forward.

250/24 Other matters for report only – items for discussion at next meeting

a) Items for next meeting agenda – by Monday 3rd March.

Noted.

b) Annual Parish Meeting 25th March – Draft Agenda

The proposed agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting was discussed and agreed.

c) Dates to note over the next 14 days

Noted

251/24 Dates of forthcoming meetings:

Parish Council:

Second Tuesday in the month (Business focused meeting)

2025: 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: 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 17th June 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 21.40pm



Signed Chairman:

Date: 11th March 2025