



West Monkton Parish Council

ADOPTED

Minutes of the Meeting of West Monkton Parish Council held on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 7.00pm.

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

In attendance: Mrs A Shepherd, Clerk, Mrs K. Welsh, Assistant Clerk Community, Candy Sully, Country Park Volunteer Coordinator, Mr K Perry, Bathpool Flood Warden, Cllr David Fothergill, Somerset Councillor and 3 members of the public.

252/24 To receive any apologies (with reasons), introductions with responsibilities.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Besley and Tully.

253/24 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.

254/24 To adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 25th February 2025

The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council on 25th February, having been previously circulated, were taken as read. It was resolved to adopt the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 25th February, proposed by Cllr Cronshaw, seconded by Cllr Chapman and agreed by show of hands.

255/24 To note Clerk's report and Assistant Clerk (Community) report.

Clerk's Report:

General Admin:

- Catch ups with Jess, Administrative and Events Assistant, Kate, Assistant Clerk Community and Candy, Volunteer Coordinator and weekly team meetings.
- Review of Strategic Plan – for approval at this meeting and Annual Report development for approval at April meeting.
- Website updates.
- SRA grant funding application completed and submitted.
- Followed up the Environment Agency about the pumps in Bathpool.
- Developed APM agenda and slide structure.
- Met with Somerset Council officer about Devolution of Assets.

Highways

- Submitted grant application to Avon and Somerset Police to cover cost of two news SIDs. Acknowledgement received confirming there has been a delay in considering the application and it will be considered in the next round.
- Liaised with Somerset Council regarding the feasibility study for the Yallands Hill Crossing Point proposal.
- Chased chapter 8 certificate for Cllr Gage from training last year chased.
- Horse Warning Signs – liaised with Traffic Management about locations.
- Amended SID location application.
- Letter to Pigeon Cottage regarding blocked pond drainage.

Community Review Project

- Feedback from CCS awaited on Action Plan, then there will be a final training session for the Steering Group about fundraising and grant applications.

Finance / Payroll:

- Making payments / placing orders.
- Managing / inputting Accounts using Scribe.
- March payroll and finance reports.
- Obtaining quotes for inclusion in March finance report and alternative options for Greenway noticeboard.

- Various orders placed and deliveries accepted including community event leaflets. Obtained addresses for delivery of village news.

Planning:

- Jess supporting with the updating of the 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.
- Hartnells street name suggestions submitted.
- Contacted Traffic Management about the double yellow lines extension proposal on Acacia Gardens following the Swingbridge House proposal.

Country Park and Somerset Wood

- Working with Somerset Web Services and Volunteer Coordinator on the development of the Country Park website. Now Live.
- Lottery project evaluation report updates.
- 6-month progress report completed and submitted to the National Lottery.
- Advertising consent application for entrance signage completed and submitted to the LPA following consultation with and permission being obtained from Somerset Council.
- Grant application for CIL funding amended and resubmitted to Taunton Town Council – going through Governance process – Finance and Governance Meeting on 4th March first step.
- Lottery Project progress report covering progress up to February prepared, circulated and discussed at the PC meeting on 25th February.
- Logged purchase of Poppy of Honour plaques and issued invoices where required.

Sports Pitches

- Awaiting determination of the planning application. Followed up with Planning Officer.
- Followed up highways proposals / access with Highways Officer who commented on planning application.
- Road access works expected to commence in March.
- Signage for gates / access points order. Signage for dog walking area designed and ordered.

MH1

- Catch up meeting with Persimmon, liaised with Persimmon and Solicitor regarding Transfer Document and play park remedials and other outstanding actions.
- Contacted alternative Managing Agents and scheduled meetings with them to discuss development.
- Letters sent to homeowners who have hedges adjacent to footpath on Furs Close sent letters requesting that they cut the hedge to maintain the path width.

MH2

- Gathering availability for further catch-up meeting with CSM / Planning Officer / Developer.

BACH:

- Jess supporting with invoices.
- Accounts / scribe updates.
- Orders / cleaning supplies.
- Audio equipment improvement works scheduled for 11th March.
- Made suggested changes to the MOU and letter from School regarding solar panels as discussed at the PC meeting on 25th February.
- Welcome screen kept up to date and monthly condition checks completed.
- Next BACH Committee meeting scheduled to take place on 17th June 2025 at 7.30pm.

Meetings last month:

- 4th February – Agenda run through meeting.
- 4th February – TTC meeting re CIL funding application.
- 6th February – Safeguarding training
- 6th February – MH1 Catch Up Meeting
- 10th February – Annual Leave
- 11th February – PC meeting
- 12th February – Local Plan Workshop for Hestercombe LCN
- 13th February – Meeting with SWS re CP website
- 13th February – Sonic Fireworks Meeting
- 14th February – catch up with CFPC.
- 17th February – Annual Leave
- 18th February – Agenda run through meeting.

18th February – BACH Committee Meeting
19th February – LGR Session
20th February- Events Working Group Meeting
20th February – MH1 catch up meeting.
21st February – Annual Leave
24th February – Local Plan Workshop
25th February – PC meeting
26th February – Risk Management Training
28th February – Annual Leave

Meetings this month:

3rd March – Annual Leave
4th March – Agenda run through meeting.
5th March – Meeting with Managing Agent re MH1
6th March – MH1 catch up meeting.
7th March – Solar Panel meeting
11th March – Audio equipment installation at the BACH
11th March – Meeting with Managing Agent re MH1
11th March – PC meeting
13th March – Traffic Modelling presentation
13th March – Events Working Group Meeting
13th March – Hestercombe LCN Meeting
14th March – SLCC Branch meeting
14th March – Taunton Garden Town Advisory Board meeting
17th March – Annual Leave
19th March – HMRC Webinar
19th March – Meeting with Sonic Fireworks
20th March – MH1 catch up meeting.
22nd March – Cycling Event at BACH
25th March – Annual Parish Meeting
27th – 31st March – Annual Leave

Assistant Clerk's Report:

Community - General

- Responded to enquiries/requests via Facebook and email to those in the community.
- Responding to messages on social media
- Safeguarding Training – prepared and delivered.
- Certificates created and sent to those who attended Safeguarding Training.
- Organised adding Event Calendar to Village News magazines and arranged collection by volunteers to deliver.
- Responding to emails/messages around areas in the parish that need clearing up.

Grant Funding

- Applied for funding from Hinkley Point for the Nature Trail at Maidenbrook Country Park.
- SALC Wellbeing Large Grant for Hestercombe LCN – Youth – have been working with Cllr David Stripp, KSM PC to submit this application. Grant has been awarded which incorporates £5k for WMPC capacity. Jess Cox able to work an additional 5 hours a week from home.
- Successful application to the Food Resilience Project for £1,000 towards our Summer Food Project this year.
- Applied to CAG for funding for lighting in the Community Fridge second shed.

Community Fridge

- Coordinating and managing volunteers, cleaning rotas and pickups.
- Keeping in touch with volunteers to keep them updated and involved.

Community Cafe

- Running a weekly Community Café at the BACH
- Run 'Repair Café' on third Wednesday of each month – contacting members of the public about various repairs and liaising with the team.
- Rev Jim Cox runs the Bereavement group on the first Wednesday of each month.
- Researched courses for Rev Jim and Kate and unfortunately, they were not deemed appropriate for their needs.

Youth Work

- Meetings with LCN CYP working groups.
- Youth Café continues to be busy on a Wednesday after school and is open until 5.30pm. We have an influx of young people straight from school and all those waiting for the school bus (Approximately 30-40 young people). We then have a regular group of young people who stay for activities (Approximately 20 young people)
- Planned and ordered resources for planned sessions at Youth Café
- Developed risk assessment for Youth Café
- Developed Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers and Code of Conduct agreement for young people.
- Supporting Mandy Cooper (Youth Café Volunteer) to complete her Level 2 in Youth Work.

Stay and Play Group

- Increasing numbers attending Stay and Play on Thursdays following Bethan's comms work to advertise the group.

Community Garden

- Community Garden group meet regularly at the BACH.
- Respond to queries and request for support from Community Gardeners.
- Meet with volunteers and took notes about what they needed for the garden this year by way of seeds and compost/feed as well as co-ordinating removal of woodchip and dumpy bags.

Other Volunteering

- Touching base with Companion Volunteer, who is now meeting regularly with a number of clients via the village agent in the community.
- In the process of reviewing DBS for our Companion Volunteer as she has now been volunteering with us for nearly 3 years.
- Clean Up Parish Poster shared across social media and Village News and WhatsApp group created with any volunteers interested. No new volunteers have come forward.
- Liaising with Crocheters/Knitters about creating poppies for Poppy of Honour trailer.
- Dealing with queries and concerns from volunteers as they arise.
- Organised for Community Services to clear the path on Bridgewater Road.

Community Events

Maidenbrook Event Plans for 2025

- Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday 19th April 2025 – 11am to 1pm – 150 Eventbrite Tickets will be available.
- Big Tommy Sleepover – 22nd March 2025 from 6pm – agreed and Candy and volunteers organising.
- VE Day 80 - Thursday 8th May 2025 – Beacon Lighting in Evening – 5pm to 10pm – TENS Submitted
- Somerset Day Picnic – 10th May 2025 – 12 to 4pm – TENS submitted.
- Falklands Commemorative Get Together – 9am open (11am start) – TENS submitted.
- FunFest @ Maidenbrook with joint parishes – Saturday 12th July 2025 – 12noon to 10.30pm
- St Giles Animal Rescue Dog Show and Fete – Sunday 10th August 2025 10am to 4pm – Facebook Event created, and flyer received from St Giles.
- VJ Day Friday 15th August 2025 – Gordon Pursley to draw up a plan/programme for this for the next Event Working Group meeting.
- Open Day/Black Tie Event – 6th September 2025 – Awaiting reply from Sonic Fireworks before organising a meeting with Cllr Carol Cronshaw to discuss and plan.
- Bonfire Night - 5th November 2025 - Awaiting more information from Sonic Fireworks

Actions from Meetings

- Organised agendas and recorded and typed notes/minutes of the FunFest Meeting and the Events Working Group and shared with attendees.
- Contacted Patch and Ashley Keele regarding Tone FM supporting our events – unfortunately Tone FM are currently having some issues and Tone FM is no longer in service. Ashley as offered to help with audio at our events at a charge of £300 per event.
- Flag ordered for VE Day
- Ordered toilets from Travis Perkins from 7th May to 27th May for the events with a view to retaining some throughout the summer months – to review at end of May.
- In process of putting together Event Management Plan for VE Day and FunFest to include Martins Law and co-ordinate risks at the park during events.
- Designed banners for Maidenbrook Country Park Events
- List of actions still to complete from events meetings

Meetings, Events and Groups

5/2/25 Community Café/Bereavement Café and Youth Café
6/2/25 Delivery of Safeguarding Training
11/2/25 WMPC Meeting
12/2/25 Hestercombe LCN CYP Steering Group Meeting
12/2/25 Community Café/Youth Café
13/2/25 Team Meeting
13/2/25 Meeting with Sonic Fireworks
13/2/25 Community Garden Meeting @ Bathpool Inn
17/2/25 Delivery of Safeguarding Training
17/2/25 FunFest Meeting @ BACH
18/2/25 Agenda Run Through Meeting
19/2/25 Community Café/Repair Café
20/2/25 Stay and Play Session
20/2/25 Hestercombe LCN CYP Steering Group Meeting
20/2/25 Event Working Group Meeting
25/2/25 WMPC Meeting
26/2/25 Community Café/Youth Café
26/2/25 Community Quiz Night
27/2/25 Stay and Play Session
27/2/25 Team Meeting

256/24 Somerset Council Report from Cllr Cavill and Cllr Fothergill

Cllr Fothergill reported on the following:

Update on the Boundary Commission Review for Somerset.

The deadline for stage 1 of phase 2 of the consultation was extended by the Boundary Commission (at the request of Somerset Council) to 4 March 2025. This followed a rejection of the recommendations of the cross-party Electoral Review Working Group at the Constitution and Governance Committee Meeting in January. In the absence of a submission from Somerset Council by the original deadline of 20th January the Conservative Group at Somerset Council submitted the report prepared on behalf of the working group before the deadline on 20th January. The submission included details of some areas that we felt needed further consideration. There is another paper going to a Special Meeting of the Constitution and Governance Committee on 3rd March To consider and finalise the Somerset Council submission as Somerset Council's Stage 1 of the Phase 2 response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). This is the link to the papers: -

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/imgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=7579>

Appendix A has the details of the proposed structure of electoral divisions. The overall electorate of Somerset, based on the projected 2030 figures is 467,274; the target figure for 96 divisions per member was 4,867, and the Council has endeavoured largely to stay within 10% of that figure.

More information about the review can be found here: - <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset>

Timeline Moving Forward

3 June 2025 - 11 August 2025 Public consultation on the proposals

2 December 2025 Publication of the recommendations

TBC Ask Parliament to approve our recommendations.

2027 New arrangements apply to local elections.

SC Finances

Somerset Council Faces a £52.2m budget Gap for 25/26 and plans to increase Council Tax by 7.5% - In addition it has needed to seek government support to close this year's remaining gap of £43m.

The £43m gap will be bridged using a Capitalisation Direction which is a form of one-off assistance (that was also requested last year) offered by Government which allows the Council to sell assets or borrow money and use the proceeds to fund the budget gap and the day-to-day running costs.

The Council applied to the Government for financial support and has been allowed to increase Council Tax by 7.5%, more than the usual cap of 5%. If approved at Full Council on 5 March, this would mean a band D property paying an additional £129 a year. For many homes in Somerset this will be in addition to very large increases in some Town and Parish elements of the Council Tax including an annual increase of £111.73 (Band D) in Bridgwater making it one of the most expensive in the country.

Audit

Somerset Councils Auditor's Raise a Red Flag as they Give 2 Statutory Recommendations in relation to serious concerns over the Council's financial sustainability. 2 Statutory recommendations have been issued to the Council, by its External Auditors Grant Thornton, exercising their powers under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Statutory Recommendations are taken where significant weaknesses are identified with arrangements. In addition to the 2 Statutory Recommendations relating

to 2023/24. the Auditors also raised 9 Key Recommendations and 8 Improvement Recommendations addressing perceived weaknesses in the Council's arrangements for financial sustainability, governance and securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. In accordance with the Act, a meeting of the Full Council is required within one month to consider the 2 statutory recommendations. The recommendations were discussed at Somerset Council Full Council on 12th February.

Statutory Recommendation 1 (SR1) The Council should develop detailed savings plans at pace to deliver the savings targets set out in the MTFS in order to reduce reliance on one-off resources and rebase the Council's budgets to a financially sustainable level. To support the development of a sustainable budget the Council should also: • identify additional savings to minimise the use of reserves, ensuring that sufficient levels of reserves are maintained to mitigate the significant levels of financial risk the Council is facing. • ensure all planned savings are delivered, and where they are not that mitigating savings plans put in place. • establish an appropriate culture of financial accountability and ensure managers have sufficient skills to manage the financial resources for which they are responsible.

Statutory Recommendation 2 (SR2) The Council should develop the overarching transformation business case and detailed business cases for individual workstreams that will deliver service transformation and contribute to delivering the Council's ambitious savings targets. The funding required to deliver transformation, and the new target operating model, should be identified and a funding plan developed. This should be undertaken at pace in order to deliver the savings required to balance the 2025/26 budget.

Parking Charges

Somerset Council's new and increased car parking charges spark outrage and despair.

The Liberal Democrat run Somerset Council have announced their intention to introduce a new parking policy that will see residents across the county pay more for parking. The move has been met with widespread criticism from residents and local businesses, who are concerned that it will put even more financial pressure on them and the local economy.

Opposition Spokesperson for Transport, Andy Dingwall, said "This is a really short-sighted proposal. It's going to push people away from our town centres, putting even more pressure on local businesses, many of whom are already struggling – we're being asked to pay more and more for a council that is delivering less and less."

Talking about these changes, a Somerset resident and business owner said: "It's just one thing after another! They want to put council tax up, national insurance, wages and our costs are all going up, and now they're stopping people from wanting to come into town – it feels like they don't want us to continue to run a business in Somerset!"

Mandy Chilcott, leader of the Conservative opposition at the council said: "Somerset Council has failed to get a grip of its finances since its inception, declaring a financial emergency at the end of 2023. It has been slow to deliver any of the benefits that a unitary structure should have yielded and now seeks to make Somerset residents pay. The introduction of this parking policy is one in a number of plans it has to increase its income, including the continued fire sale of millions of pounds of commercial properties without repaying related borrowing, cost shunts moving some service delivery to town and parish councils seeing many increase their taxes by up to 39%, and an unprecedented 7.5% council tax rise – requested and granted by special permission from the Labour Government (Somerset being the only top level authority allowed this inflation busting tax increase)."

There was a paper at Corporate and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 17th February where the committee were asked to support the proposals. All those present and all those that spoke online from across political parties spoke unanimously against the proposals.

The paper on 3rd March asks the Executive to support the changes. This can be found below. If approved in principle the proposals will then go out to public consultation.

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/g7385/Public%20reports%20pack%2003rd-Mar-2025%2010.00%20Executive.pdf?T=10>

This is the link to the Somerset County Conservatives Petition Against Somerset Council Parking Hikes

<https://www.somersetcountyconservatives.org.uk/news/petition-against-somerset-council-parking-hikes>

Work is progressing on the Agratas facility which will bring massive investment to the area and up to 4,000 jobs at the Gravity site. To make the project a reality, significant work on local roads is required. In recent months, this has been to allow initial work to connect the facility to the National Grid.

From 4 March to 18 March, further power connectivity work will be undertaken at Crandon Bridge on the A39 under temporary traffic lights. We appreciate this is likely to cause disruption at peak times, so drivers are being urged to plan ahead.

The next major set of works will connect the Gravity site to various utilities. This requires the phased closure of sections of Woolavington Road between the Enterprise Way roundabout and Woolavington Village.

These closures will start from 14 April last for up to five months. Details of which sections will be closed when will be shared locally when they have been finalised.

Please note, all residents and businesses on Woolavington Road will be catered for and will be able to access their properties throughout these closures.

There will need to be some evening closures of the A39 link road between J23 and Dunball. The motorway junction will remain open, and a diversion will be in place. The closures are from 7.30pm to 5am from:

- Monday 3 March

- Thursday 3 April to Monday 7 April (inclusive)
- Monday 12 May to Wednesday 21 May

Full press release can be found here:- <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/roadworks-for-new-phase-of-agratas-site-preparation-start-next-week/>

Illegal Tobacco and Vapes Seized in Shops Across Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay

As authorities crack down on illegal tobacco and vape sales in multiple regions, more than £37,000 of illegal tobacco, vapes and cash was seized by Trading Standards officers during a recent operation. The five-week operation during January and February saw officers from the Heart of the Southwest Trading Standards Service, supported by Devon and Cornwall Police and Avon and Somerset Police, look for illegal tobacco.

During the operation officers visited 14 shops across the region including in Brixham, Crediton, Kingsbridge, Newton Abbot, Paignton, Plymouth, Taunton, Teignmouth and Wellington.

They used detection dogs to look for hidden stashes. Only one shop was found to not be selling illegal products. All but one of the 14 shops were found to be selling illegal products.

To report concerns of counterfeit or other illegal products, contact Trading Standards, email tradingstandards@devon.gov.uk or phone 01392 383000.

Cllr Cavill reported on the following:

Boundary Review – error in plan relating to West Monkton boundary submitted by Somerset Council in relation to the Boundary Review. Division boundaries are not supposed to break parish boundaries. Clerk to write to the Boundary Commission to advise of the Parish boundary.

The Boundary Commission will develop proposals and then consult so there will be another opportunity to comment later in the year.

SC Finances. General update provided. £40m interest is being paid a year on borrowings at the moment, this figure will rise.

A discussion took place about why Somerset Council is in the financial position that it is.

Cllr Gage asked what punishment was in place for shops selling illegal tobacco and vape products. Cllr Fothergill confirmed that the shops were fined but that new legislation is being developed that will require licences for selling tobacco / vaping products.

When this is in place there will be more sanctions.

Public Question Time

Cllr Gage reported that Somerset Council is starting to fill the potholes on the lanes.

Cllr Chapman raised issues being experienced in the Community Fridge. Including an incident on Monday and another on Tuesday.

Cllr Ellis asked if anyone had a spare copy of West Monkton Then and Now.

A member of the public asked if, following work to clear the area on Monkton Heathfield Road opposite Thornash Close, if the Parish Council could remove the old trees, plant a screening hedge along the full length of the grassed area and the planting of a number of ornamental trees away from the hedge.

A member of the public raised the bollards at the bottom of Greenway – 5 of the 7 bollards have white rings around them suggesting their removal / replacement.

Clerk to review CCTV footage.
Assistant Clerk Community to ask volunteers not to place small sauce sachets or flour in the fridge.

Assistant Clerk Community to add a post to Facebook.

Clerk to gather options / costs for hedging including privet, laurel or beech for consideration at the next meeting.

Clerk to make enquiries.

257/24 Planning

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

Cllr Cavill, as a member of the Somerset West Planning Committee did not take part in discussions of the planning applications to avoid fettering his discretion.

08/25/0002/A: Display of 5 No. non illuminated hoarding entrance signs at Maidenbrook Country Park, Maidenbrook Lane, Cheddon Fitzpaine.

The Parish Council supports the granting of permission.

Cllr Cavill and Clerk provided an update on the Country Park planning condition discharge application. Two conditions have been discharged relating to highways connections / paths and landscaping. One remaining condition needs to be discharged that relates to the proposed fencing / volunteer hub structures.

Cllr Cavill confirmed that he is continuing to chase the determination of the Sports Pitch planning application. Cllr Cavill to escalate.

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

258/24 Strategic Plan / Annual Report update

a) Strategic Plan 2024-2027 – Approval of reviewed Strategic Plan

The reviewed version of the Strategic Plan 2024-2027 was circulated in advance of the meeting and shared on screen. Clerk provided a summary of the Plan.

It was resolved to approve the Strategic Plan subject to the addition of the income information at year end. Proposed by Cllr Gage, seconded by Cllr Chapman and agreed with all in favour.

b) Annual Report update

Clerk provided an update regarding the 2024/25 Annual Report. The Report is being finalised and will report on the Parish Councils achievements during the year against the Strategic Plan. The final version will be shared in advance of the next meeting for approval.

259/24 Assets

a) Devolution of assets and services from Somerset Council; feedback from meeting with Somerset Council

Cllr Haskins and Clerk provided feedback on a meeting with Ian Munday at SC regarding devolution of assets and services. CFPC were also in attendance as the Country Park was discussed. The position of SC is that if a long-term lease is in place for an asset a transfer of the asset is not a priority at the moment. Ian Munday advised that if the PC would like to negotiate the terms of the lease, an email advising which terms should be sent. If changes to the lease, make it easier to transfer the asset instead this may take place.

The play parks and open spaces in the Parish and Heathfield Hall were also discussed. SC would like to know if the PC would like to progress with these.

A discussion took place, and it was agreed to identify the terms of the Country Park lease that the PCs would like amended and only proceed with the transfer of the parks and open spaces if the Country Park is transferred.

Cllr Cavill to follow up the Bridgwater Road pitch land and the land between School Road and Farriers Green separately with Charlie Field at SC.

Clerk to email Ian Munday regarding the Waterleaze play area / pitch and the land between the tip / Bathpool.

b) Country Park and Somerset Wood update; barriers update.

Cllr Cavill provided feedback from the Forestry Commission enquiries regarding tree trunks that could be used as barriers at the Country Park. It was also noted that there may be tree trunks available in MH1 following the recent tree works.

Cllr Gage confirmed that he had enquired with National Grid and Open Reach who have confirmed that they do not repurpose telegraph poles. It was noted that a meeting of the Funfest Working Group is scheduled to take place on 22nd March at the Country Park to review the number of barriers needed. Cllr Cavill to attend.

Cllr Chapman to also enquire with the trainer that provided the strimmer training to see if any tree trunks are available.

Alan Hall provided an update on progress with the Country Park WW2 memorial. The boards are being finalised, trees arriving on Thursday, the Wells Cathedral masons have indicated that if all the carvings are added to the stone, then the cost of the stone could rise to £10000. A solution is to carve the front face of the stone and add acrylic sheeting to the other tree sides. This would keep the cost of the stone within budget. Samples of the acrylic sheeting are being collected on Friday.

The layout of the memorial has also been set out on site. Delivery of the memorial for VE Day is on track.

The Service Headstone unveiling was discussed. It was noted that the unveiling of the Service Headstone just after the WW2 memorial unveiling may detract from it. It was also noted that the Service Headstone honours those who have lost their lives in all conflicts, not just WW2. It was agreed to schedule the unveiling of the headstone either at 2pm on VE Day or reschedule the unveiling for another day – perhaps at the Remembrance Service in November.

Cllr Cronshaw and Cllr Cavill to liaise with Terry Williams.

Clerk summarised arrangements for the National Lottery Open Week at the Park and the need to purchase some wildflower seeds to give out. It was agreed to purchase some wildflower seeds.

Candy Sully, Volunteer Coordinator provided an update on activity at the Country Park including some dead hedging training that has taken place, the Bruford Sign installation, a visit from the High Sheriff and volunteers from Natwest and the Keely Group. The Forest School area has been tidied up and the benches and signs have been sanded and revarnished ready for Open Week.

The volunteers are having problems with the ride on lawn mower, Clerk to gather quotes for a service. The Great Tommy Sleepout is taking place on Saturday 22nd March. Fundraising link to be added onto the Facebook page.

c) BACH; Solar panels update

Cllr Gage provided an update on the solar panels. The MOU and letter were amended following the discussion at the last PC meeting and sent back to the school. A meeting took place on 7th March with the school. They are happy with the amendments but requested a further amendment to the MOU to include reference to scheduling maintenance / repairs of the panels with the school. This amendment has been added to the MOU. The school are now taking the letter and MOU through the Diocese and to a director meeting this week. It is hoped that these will be signed / agreed at a meeting with the school scheduled to take place this Friday 14th March at 10am.

A structural report is required. The contractor provided an initial assessment, but the school is requesting a more substantial assessment. The contractor initially quoted £1500 + VAT to do this but has since provided a revised quote of £400.00.

It was agreed to proceed on the basis that the costs of the structural assessment are shared with the contractor.

Cllr Gage reported that an export meter is not required so there is no additional cost.

It was agreed to commit to the structural report when National Grid has responded to confirm that the solar panel work can take place.

Cllr Gage advised that the installation is likely not to take place during the Easter School Holidays. The work takes approximately one week.

d) Noticeboards; Greenway and Village Hall Replacements

Clerk advised that information has not been received from Cllr Tully regarding the Village Hall noticeboard.

Clerk made reference to comments received from a member of the public about the Greenway noticeboard and whether the PC should replace or remove the noticeboard.

Clerk also outlined a quote received from Benjamin Henry. It was agreed that the noticeboard should be replaced but that some alternative, cheaper quotes / options should be considered. Clerk to include alternatives in the next finance report.

260/24 Projects

a) Poppy of Honour fundraising update; trailer update including costs to fix / prepare, insurance (as an asset and whilst towing), approval of costs to display Poppy of Honour at upcoming shows and discussion around associated transport / storage / insurance arrangements (R)

Cllr Cronshaw reported that fundraising for the Poppy of Honour continues. The trailer to transport the Poppy of Honour has been purchased following agreement at the last meeting.

A program of shows and events that the Poppy of Honour can be taken to was shared and discussed.

It was agreed to proceed with the events apart from the Devon Show on 15th to 17th May as the plot available would not enable the Poppy of Honour to be on display. The costs for the Somerset Armed Forces Day and Mid Devon Show were approved. Proposed by Cllr Chapman, seconded by Cllr Cavill and agreed with all in favour.

Cllr Cronshaw advised that the Poppy of Honour Memorial Group have confirmed that they will arrange insurance for the Poppy of Honour prior to it coming out of storage on 1st April and that the insurance will include cover for when the Poppy of Honour is in transit.

Cllr Haskins outlined work that has been undertaken on the trailer including, a hitch lock, lights, a new tyre, and brakes.

Cllr Cronshaw to circulate the story of the Poppy of Honour to Councillors and enquiries to be made about creating a board.

Cllr Cronshaw advised that catering enquiries are being made for the event on 6th September. Pynnes of Somerset have agreed to provide a hog roast for 200 people at no charge. Cllr Cronshaw's husband is preparing some starter options to be sampled on 25th March prior to the APM.

Cllr Cronshaw reported the Somerset County Gazettes piece on the Poppy of Honour that included quotes from Joanna Lumley who is the Patron of the Poppy of Honour.

b) Sports Pitches update; Hyde Lane Access.

Cllr Haskins provided an update on the contractor's work including the use of a heavy roller on the pitch and the application of fertiliser. There are a few places that will need to be levelled and reseeded when the weather improves. A stone puncher / clearance of any other stones to take place. Cricket Square to be done when weather improves.

It was noted that people are still walking dogs on the pitch field. It was agreed to fit a chain and padlock to the gate at the end of the dog walking area and to fill the gap between the gate and the hedge on the Hyde Lane access and repair areas of fencing.

Cllr Haskins to arrange materials.

It was noted that once planning permission is obtained and the access works are complete work to fence and gate the site will take place. Alan Hall also advised that updated quotes for the work required will also need to be obtained.

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

Feedback from the catch-up meetings with Persimmon was provided including the sports pitch access works have been delayed due to a contractor issued, the play park remedials are expected to start this month. 60% of the tree works have been completed. The drains on Roys Place will be replaced / repaired this month.

The final changes to terms in the transfer document have been agreed between the solicitors, the final document and plan is awaited for consideration by the Working Group and then the PC.

Alternative Managing Agents have been contacted, and initial meetings have taken place with two.

It was agreed that the Working Group would meet with the Managing Agents and review the Transfer document with a view to the Working Group making a recommendation to the Parish Council at its next meeting.

d) MH2 Update;

It was noted that CSM PC have requested a meeting with WMPC prior to a MH2 meeting being arranged with the Planning Officer / Developer. The catch-up meeting with CSM PC is scheduled to take place on 24th March at 6.30pm.

e) Bridgwater Road Football Pitch Update.

It was noted that the fencing works have been completed. Clerk advised that Mowgate are unable to cut the hedge as some trees are in the hedge. Clerk to obtain a quote to shear the trees to be considered in the next finance report.

261/24 Highways

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

The amended Developed Design Brief, incorporating one crossing point at Yallands Hill, was circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the reduction to one crossing point has reduced the cost from £7400 to £7108.00.

Clerk reported that Cllr Frascini from Taunton TC has £8500 towards a crossing point at Maidenbrook Lane but this cannot be used for the Feasibility Study only the crossing point installation. Cllr Frascini is asking the PC to include this crossing point in the Feasibility Study rather than just the Yallands Hill crossing point.

It was noted that the amended Design Brief includes two lots of Design Engineer fees. Clerk to query this.

It was resolved to approve the Developed Design Brief for one crossing point if the Design Fees can be reduced. If the design fees aren't reduced, then the previous Developed Design Brief for two crossing points is approved instead. Proposed by Cllr Cavill, seconded by Cllr Munson and agreed with all in favour apart from Cllr Gage.

262/24 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:

February was not too wet – there was 70mm of rain. Between 23rd and 26th February there was quite a lot of rainfall, but the river levels were quite low prior to the rainfall so could cope. The catchment went into flood alert on 23rd and 26th February. The pump was switch on by the EA on 26th Feb and no properties were at risk of flooding.

The EA haven't provided an update on the permanent pump work or the costs of the project. Clerk to request an update.

No rain is forecasted in the next 8-9 days and April is also supposed to be quite settled.

b) Communications Report: Update

Parish Council Website

- Regular updates to Highways (including road closures), Planning, Finance and Parish Council carried out.

Parish Council Facebook Page:

- Page likes / followers now at 1416
- 17.5k post reach
- Posts added sharing news items that are added to the website.

Monkton Matters

- Page likes / followers now at 528
- 11 new articles added in February.
- Articles on Monkton Matters being shared on Monkton Matters Facebook page to pull users to the website.
- 8.1k post reach
- Business directory has details of 28 businesses so far.

Community Fridge/Community Garden Facebook Page:

- Page likes /followers 1228
- 3.8k post reach

Village News Contribution

- Developed by the Clerk's

- The March/April 25 of the Village News and New Event Calendar has been distributed to all houses in West Monkton Parish Council

Noticeboard Updates

- Updated noticeboards.

Kate Welsh, Assistant Clerk for Community is looking to review communications plan and strategy going forward with a view to ensuring maximum reach across all communications channels and all groups within the community.

c) GDPR update: Nothing to report

Representatives on outside bodies

d) West Monkton Village Hall Management Committee; Cllr Tully to report.

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

e) The Spital Trust: Cllr Ellis to report.

Cllr Ellis reported that The Spital Trust has received four applications for the vacancy. The applications are in the process of being considered.

f) Any other events at which WMPC was represented; Local Plan Workshops and NALC Star Council Awards.

Cllr Cavill provided a report from the Somerset Drainage Board. The Environment Agency are looking to deregulate to enable local people to carry out works and work to clear Minks - 3500 have been trapped in last 12 months.

Cllr Haskins provided feedback on the NALC Star Council Awards. A photo from the event has been shared on social media and a certificate will following in the post.

Cllr Haskins also reported WMPC representation at two Local Plan Workshops.

g) Consultations; None

263/24 Finance

a) Finance Report

i. Quotations and Updates:

Flag poles for Country Park

MJ Print Solutions:

4 x DELUXE Flagpole 6m (2 section) with rotating arm

DELP6-2ROTH

White powder coated aluminium flagpole.

60mm diameter

Overall Height - 6m

Visible Height - 5.3m

Construction - 2 part

Tube size (O/D) - 60mm

Wall Thickness - 3mm

Final - White

Total £819.28 plus vat

Delivery £45.00 plus vat

Flagpole Express

Flagpole 6m (2 part) with rotating arm.

<https://www.flagpoleexpress.co.uk/flagpoles/premier-showhome-flagpoles/premier-showhome-flagpoles>

£105.00 per pole + £40.00 for rotating arm - £145.00 per pole.

Base section 60mm diameter

3mm wall thickness

Top section 50mm diameter with 1.6mm wall thickness

White powder coated extruded aluminium flagpole.

Overall height 6m.

Flags and Flagpoles

<https://www.flagsandflagpoles.co.uk/products/6m-deluxe-flagpole-with-rotating-arm?srsId=AfmBOoru7uPL9T-rPEI35y8WHsj5RnnPqw9dxJhPTyZVVm8hCGj-yy15>

White powder coated aluminium flagpole 60mm diameter. 3mm wall thickness.

6m overall height

5.3m visible height

£207.50 each +VAT

Enquiries are being made to see if second hand flagpoles are available locally. If second hand flagpoles cannot be sourced, it was resolved to proceed with the purchase of 3 flagpoles from Flagpole Express. Proposed by Cllr Munson, seconded by Cllr Gage and agreed with all in favour.

- Farriers Green Rear Entrance - Somerset Council have agreed that the Parish Council can obtain quotes for the work to the Farriers Green rear entrance. In the process of obtaining quotes for consideration at the next meeting.

ii. 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 (Monthly)	£22.20
Nationwide (Monthly)	£118.32
PSDF (Monthly)	£2245.83
Somerset West Lottery (Community Fridge)	£19.50
Allotment Renewals	£30.00
Paydough (Poppy of Honour Plaques)	£125.00
Funfest stallholder fees	£225.00

Payments

Payee	Net	Vat	Total	How paid	Cost Centre	Cost Code
To authorise payment of:						
Employee pension contributions	206.05	No vat	206.05	d-d	Salaries and expenses	Pension
	47.30	No vat	47.30	d-d	MCP Lottery Funded Project	Volunteer Coordinator
Employer pension contributions	154.53	No vat	154.53	d-d	Salaries and expenses	Pension
	35.48	No vat	35.48	d-d	MCP Lottery Funded Project	Volunteer Coordinator
A Shepherd Clerks salary SCP33	xx.xx	No vat	xx.xx	bacs	Salaries and expenses	Salaries
	xx.xx	No vat	xx.xx	Bacs	MCP Lottery Funded Project	Administration
K Welsh assistant clerk-community salary SCP 29	xx.xx	No vat	xx.xx	Bacs	Salaries and expenses	Salaries
J Cox Admin and Events Assistant salary SCP 2	xx.xx	No vat	xx.xx	Bacs	Salaries and expenses	Salaries
C Sully Volunteer Coordinator salary SCP 20	xx.xx	No Vat	xx.xx	Bacs	MCP Lottery Funded Project	Volunteer Coordinator
HMRC Tax and NI Contributions	1818.91	No vat	1818.91	bacs	Salaries and expenses	Salaries
	182.70	No vat	182.70	Bacs	MCP Lottery Funded Project	Volunteer Coordinator
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	148.00	No vat	148.00	Bacs	Environmental / Open Spaces	Lengthsman
Business all about you Climate Initiative PR WMPC 50	250.00	No vat	250.00	Bacs	Environmental / Open Spaces	Environment / Community
QSSIT regular maintenance / monthly sub	42.40	8.48	50.88	bacs	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Expenses claim A Shepherd (Travel)	32.80	No vat	32.80	Bacs	Salary and expenses	Expenses
Expense claim K Welsh (Travel)	129.60	No vat	129.60	Bacs	Salary and expenses	Expenses
Water 2 Business (Allotments water)	49.90	No vat	49.90	Bacs	Allotments	Allotment rent
Expense claim K Welsh (Youth Café expenses)	21.65	No vat	21.65	Bacs	Youth and Community	Youth Cafe
Expense claim I Brimacombe (Country Park Volunteer travel expenses)	18.90	No vat	18.90	Bacs	MCP Lottery Project	Volunteer expenses
SALC (Cllr Code of Conduct Training)	25.00	No vat	25.00	Bacs	General Administration	Training
Village News (100 additional copies x 4)	212.00	No vat	212.00	Bacs	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
March / April edition printing (for every property)	622.00	No vat	622.00	Bacs	Youth and Community	Youth Cafe
Mowgate Limited (Hedge cutting Hyde Lane)	192.50	38.50	231.00	Bacs	Environmental / Open Spaces	Off carriageway highway maintenance

Payee	Net	Vat	Total	How paid	Cost Centre	Cost Code
Somerset Web Services (Country Park new website final invoice)	220.00	44.00	264.00	D-D	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Expenses claim K Welsh (Youth Café expenses)	36.47	No vat	36.47	Bacs	Youth and Community	Youth Café
Expenses claim S Haskins (Travel / parking)	61.08	No vat	61.08	Bacs	Salaries and expenses	Expenses
Expenses claim A Hall (Country Park travel)	80.10	No vat	80.10	Bacs	Salaries and expenses	Expenses
(Timber for Bruford Sign)	13.50	No vat	13.50	Bacs	Country Park	Somerset Wood
Expenses claim S Haskins (Trailer items)	205.50	No vat	205.50	Bacs	Environmental / Open Spaces	Off carriageway highway maintenance
Expenses claim A Hall (Travel expenses)	55.80	No vat	55.80	Bacs	Salaries and expenses	Expenses
To note payment of:						
Direct Debit						
Invoice Tailored Auto Enrolment 13515 28/2/2025 (Pension administration)	12.00	2.40	14.40	DD PAID	Salary and Expenses	Pension
Invoice SWS 116546 2/03/2025 maintain gsuite	108.00	21.60	129.60	DD PAID	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Invoice SWS 116478 20/2/2025 Hosting monthly plan	60.00	12.00	72.00	DD PAID	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Invoice SWS 116455 web-lite hosting (MM) and standard mailbox 20/2/2025	30.00	6.00	36.00	DD PAID	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Three (Business Mobiles)	37.50	7.50	45.00	DD PAID	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
EMS (Card Payment System)	11.54	1.20	12.74	DD PAID	Youth and Community	Community Events
Somerset Web Services (Website security annual)	250.00	50.00	300.00	DD PAID	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Debit Card						
Proper Job (Youth Café storage containers)	53.51	10.71	64.22	Deb Card	Youth and Community	Youth Café
Tradeprint (Community Event leaflet printing)	113.36	2.30	115.66	Deb Card	Youth and Community	Youth Café
Tradeprint (Community Event leaflet printing)	60.55	2.30	62.85	Deb Card	Youth and Community	Youth Café
Planning Portal (Advertising consent Country Park signs)	140.84	11.66	152.50	Deb Card	MCP Lottery Funded Project	Facilities – Planning Fee
Somerset Council (TENS – Falklands Event)	21.00	No vat	21.00	Deb Card	Youth and Community	Community Events
Somerset Council (TENS – Somerset Day)	21.00	No vat	21.00	Deb Card	Youth and Community	Community Events
Somerset Council (TENS – VE Day Event)	21.00	No vat	21.00	Deb Card	Youth and Community	VE Day Event
Amazon (POS Maintenance Items)	44.36	8.87	53.23	Deb Card	Environmental / Open Spaces	POS Maintenance
McAfee (Anti-virus software)	91.66	18.33	109.99	Deb Card	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
JW Plant (VE Day Flag)	64.26	12.85	77.11	Deb Card	Youth and Community	VE Day Event

Payee	Net	Vat	Total	How paid	Cost Centre	Cost Code
Amazon (Youth café items) (POS Maintenance)	35.78 7.37	7.17 1.48	42.95 8.85	Deb Card	Youth and Community Environmental / Open Spaces	Youth Café POS Maintenance
Canva (Subscription)	27.00	No vat	27.00	Deb Card	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
Pixart Printing (CP Banner) (Bank charge)	36.76 1.21	7.35 0.00	44.11 1.21	Deb Card	Country Park	Country Park
Amazon (Youth Café cups) Sports pitch signs)	23.32 38.12	4.67 7.63	27.99 45.75	Deb Card	Youth and Community Environmental / Open Spaces	Youth Café Sport Pitches
Amazon (Community Garden Equipment)	74.09	14.82	88.91	Deb Card	Youth and Community	Community Garden
BACS						
Sonic Fireworks (VE Day Firework Display deposit)	729.17	145.83	875.00	Bacs Pd	Youth and Community	VE Day Event
Audio Visual Direct (Online meeting equipment 50% deposit)	694.00	138.80	832.80	Bacs Pd	IT and Communications	IT and Communications
N Raffill (Poppy of Honour Trailer)	1000.00	No vat	1000.00	Bacs Pd	Environmental /Open Spaces	Off carriageway highway maintenance
Weavo Fencing Products Limited (Falklands Memorial)	207.00	14.40	248.40	Bacs Pd	Environmental / Open Spaces	POS Maintenance

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

Clerk reported that Candy Sully, Volunteer Coordinator has worked overtime since her employment commenced in September and hasn't been able to take all of her annual leave allowance. It was agreed that overtime would be paid to the end of March. Clerk to include in April payment / finance report for approval.

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

Proposed by Cllr Cronshaw, seconded by Cllr Munson and agreed with all in favour.

Transfer between accounts / budget lines

From PC Lloyds Treasurer Account to Poppy of Honour / Somerset Wood Account £125.00 (Plaque purchases).

From BACH Treasurer Account to PC Treasurer Account £694.00 (Online meeting equipment)

iii. Appointment of Internal Auditor

To resolve to appoint Mr Kevin Perry as the Internal Auditor for 2024/25 Accounts.

Proposed by Cllr Ellis, seconded by Cllr Munson and agreed with all in favour.

b) Budgeting Report (incorporating BACH Accounts)

The budgeting reports to 28th February were shared in advance of the meeting and the contents of the reports were noted.

264/24 Other matters for report only – items for discussion – no decision

Cllr Haskins reported that a list of hedgerows that are overgrown and need cutting has been received from a member of the public. The list is being reviewed, and a letter will be sent to properties requesting the cutting of hedges where required.

Cllr Ellis shared information about Yeovil Freeriders who deliver blood to hospital and reported that they are available to do talks.

a) Items for next meeting agenda - by Monday 31st March 2025

Noted

b) Dates to note over the next 14 days

Noted

265/24 Dates of forthcoming meetings:

Parish Council:

Second Tuesday in the month (Business focused meeting)

2025: 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 9.55pm

Signed Chairman:



Date: 8th April 2025