

# West Monkton Parish Council

Annual Report 2024-2025



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## Chairmans Report 2024/25

As another year draws to a close for the Parish Council (PC) it's time once again to take stock of our achievements and progress on the many projects and initiatives we are running. You may recall that last year the PC drew up a Strategic Plan which sets out our vision and objectives and an action plan for each year up to 2027. It is against the Strategic Plan that this Annual Report provides an update on progress and celebrates what your PC has achieved during 2024/25. Unlike in previous years you, will not see a report from each individual Councillor.

### Your Parish Council Team

The PC team has seen some changes over the past year. In August I was pleased to welcome Carol Cronshaw as one of your Parish Councillors. Carol stepped into the vacancy created when Alan Hall resigned and moved out of the parish. Although Alan is no longer in the PC team he continues to play a very active role in some of our projects like the Play Pitch development and the Country Park. The second new Councillor I welcomed to the team last year was Alan Chapman. Since moving into the community some years ago Alan has been one of the 140 volunteers who turn out each week to support the PC and improve our community. Alan filled the vacancy created when Geoff Hope resigned to take on new challenges. Both new Councillors have taken on significant roles in the day to day running of your Parish and I once again I welcome them to the team.

This year has also seen us increase the size of the PC support team to enable us to cater for the ever increasing workload brought about by the expansion of the parish, devolution of services from Somerset Council and of course the many projects and initiatives we are running. We have therefore taken on 2 new members of staff which have been funded in part by the fantastic National Lottery Grant that was awarded to us for the Maidenbrook Country Park (MCP) development. Candy Sully joined us in September as the Volunteer Co-ordinator at the MCP and is funded entirely by the Lottery grant for the next 3 years. She has enthusiastically taken on the many challenges presented to her at the park with plenty of new ideas. The second appointment is Jess Cox who also joined in September. Jess provides administrative support to Clerks Amy Shepherd and Kate Walsh as well and Candy. This has enabled Amy to spend time managing the Lottery Grant process as well on the many issues and projects being run by the PC. Jess is a part time employee and funded in part by the lottery grant.

### What have we been doing for you.

The PC continues to meet twice a month except in August and December. The business of council at these meetings takes on average between 5 and 6 hours each month and last year the PC reviewed over 60 planning applications one of which is of course the Langaller Park development known to most as MH2. Working with our neighbouring PC, Creech St Michael we have held a number of meetings with the developers and planning officers raising our concerns about the highway plans and overall development being proposed. Unfortunately, not all of our concerns have been taken on board and addressed at this point in time so there is still work to be done.

Having declared a climate emergency in 2018, everything the PC does in the community is undertaken with the climate in consideration. This includes our comments on planning applications and of course the many projects we are undertaking so it was extremely pleasing to be recognised nationally in the recent National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Star Council Awards as a Finalist in the "Climate response of the year" category. It was my pleasure to attend the award ceremony at the House of Lords on February 25th but unfortunately, we didn't win. It was however rewarding to have our work well received and recognised by the peers and MP's attending the function.

Our ambition to take over the Public Open Space (POS) of MH1 has been continually frustrated by slow rate of progress on the developer's side. It was the genuine ambition of the PC to have takeover ownership of the MH1 POS in early 2024, but it is the failure of the developer to include clauses in the transfer documents and provide documents to protect the PC interests that has caused delay. Progress has now been made, and I can say with some confidence that are now very close to finalising the transfer. So, it is my sincere hope that by the time you read this report we should have completed the transfer process. Looking to the future, the PC is already in conversation with a number of management companies to take on the POS maintenance.

## Chairmans Report 2024/25 continued..

Our social media sites, Monkton Matters plus our Facebook page and website have been very successful this year in getting the word out to the community about what we are doing and of course getting feedback. The Facebook page now has 1414 followers, some posts reach in excess of 24000 people and on average around 14000 people see our new post of “meet the team” on Mondays. The Village News magazine also continues to play an important part in our parish communications, with the PC funding additional copies to every household in March of this year together along with a parish / community events “pullout” leaflet. This is worth putting in a safe place, so you don’t miss the exciting things being planned for this year!

Work on the new cricket and rugby pitches adjacent to the Eastern Relief Road , progressed well last year despite the poor weather we had. The main pitch areas are now seeded, and the cricket square will be installed this year together with landscape trees and hedging. A planning application has been submitted by the PC architects for the changes to the layout that are required, and approval is expected very soon. Contractors working for the developers will be installing the new access road this spring together with the services ready for the next phase of our plan which will be to install changing rooms and a pump track.

As in previous years our support to community groups within the Parish has continued and seen grants awarded to the Scout Group, Escape Support Group and WM Church Community Hub. In particular, the grant to WM Church enabled a new boiler to be installed just before Christmas which I know was very much appreciated by the congregations and all those who regularly frequent the building for all gatherings.

Since Somerset became a unitary authority, we have been in discussion with the Council over which activities we feel we can deliver to better serve our community. In the main these will be bin emptying grass cutting and the maintenance of play areas. The Hestercombe Local Community Network (LCN) continues to develop its role in the function of Local Government. A working party of the LCN i.e. (CYP Working Group) has been working hard to develop plans for our young people’s health and wellbeing. A seed grant was applied for and granted by the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) to undertake a survey of the LCN parishes and develop a detailed submission for a larger grant to fund resources and facilities. West Monkton PC will be the lead council for this project as we are the only PC in the LCN with the General Power of Competence. Having been the Chairman of the LCN for the first year I chose to stand down at the start of year 2. The Chair of the LCN is now held by Cllr Philip Spencer who is a member North Petherton Town Council. Alongside the LCN the PC was invited to take part in the Somerset Community Review survey. The information gathered from this survey will help to shape plans for the future providing what you want in the Parish. I would like to say thankyou for spending time completing the questionnaire if you participated.

### Activities Events and all things happening at the BACH.

Kate Welsh, your Community Clerk has had another extremely busy year. Supported by some of our volunteer army, Kate has continued to run the many weekly events at the BACH including the monthly Repair Café, Stay and Play Groups, Weekly Community Café and the monthly Bereavement Café to name just few. The Community Fridge has also grown this year with the arrival and installation of a second shed which was grant funded thanks to Kate again. The new shed now houses books uniforms and toys amongst other things. The original shed has now has a new freezer and enclosed shelving also grant funded which continues to save excess of 10 tonnes of food going to tip each year.



## **Chairmans Report 2024/25 continued...**

The BACH and its up to date facilities is now one of the best of its kind in the Taunton area, making it a very well used community hub. At the outset the PC decided that surplus funds generated by the hiring out of the BACH would be used to support community projects and initiatives such as grant funding for young people activities. This coming year will see the installation of solar panels on the primary school and BACH buildings ticking both the community and environmental boxes. The community garden continues to provide a place for people to communicate and relax with others whilst using their green fingers. Again, grant funding has seen the project expand its facilities with benches tools and facilities further enhancing the facility. Other projects run at the BACH include sharing events (sharing of clothes / toys etc). and the very successful Summer Food Project for young people run during the school summer holidays last year. The arrival of a Salvation Army clothes bank located outside the Community Fridge sheds has proved very popular so much so that it is now being unloaded at least once a week. Other activities have been the first Father Christmas community tour dispensing Mulled wine, mince pies, hot chocolate and of course plenty of Christmas cheer. The tour started at the primary school where it was a fun thing for the children to have a selfie taken with Father Christmas before getting a present.

### **Community Events**

As in other years the PC has continued to expand its activities to create and promote the Community spirit. The monthly quiz nights at the Tacchi Morris are always very well supported, likewise the farm tours are a firm favourite. 2024 saw us run 4 major events in the Maidenbrook Country Park supported by our neighbouring Parish Councils. Building on that success and with this year being the 80th anniversary day of VE and VJ day, we are planning more celebrations for you to come and enjoy. Adding to these national celebrations we will once again have a major dog show with St Giles animal centre, the easter egg hunt and of course another Funfest Day incorporating tug of war and games for all, rounded off in the evening with 2 live bands and a bar.

### **Maidenbrook Country Park, Somerset Wood and Poppy of Honour.**

As I have already mentioned, the award of a significant Lottery Grant to the Country Park has made a complete change to activities and plans at the Country Park. The additional funds have enabled us to engage Candy as the volunteer coordinator, obtain PPE and uniforms for the volunteers, apply for planning permission for the volunteer hub, plus set up a website to promote the park and the brand. Along side all of this the PC has to raise match funding of course and we have already received support from Persimmon Homes.

The Somerset Wood continues to develop with 3 new memorials being added this year. Planning permission for the building to house the Poppy of Honour was obtained this year and detailed plans for the fund-raising activities are coming together. One of these activities will be taking place on September 6th at the Country Park so that's another date for your diary.



West Monkton Parish Council



West Monkton Parish Council

## Our Vision:



Our Vision is for West Monkton Parish Council and the local community to work together to protect and improve the social, recreational and environmental well-being of West Monkton and the lives of all who live, visit or work here.

## Our Priorities:



a. Your Local Environment



b. Your Local Community



c. Your Parish Council



d. Delivering our projects



e. Delivering our Vision for our Assets



f. Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan Vision



## Priority A: Your Local Environment

To support our Local Environment and mitigate against the impact of climate change your Parish Council has:

- Continued to deliver the Hi Vis Initiative encouraging more people to cycle and walk. 275 jackets were given out.
- Held share events, reducing waste and providing the community with an opportunity to share clothes, toys, books, seeds, plants and other items.
- Expanded the Community Fridge to provide more reduce food waste and to share clothes, books and toys amongst our community.
- Added a Salvation Army clothes recycling bank
- Continued to deliver the community fridge saving 5700 kgs of food going to landfill.
- Held a Repair Café once a month, reducing waste and enabling the repair of many household items.
- Planted trees and hedge plants at the Sports Pitches and the Country Park.
- Promoted cycling at Family Festival of Cycling Event; attended by 140 people.
- Delivered educational Farm Walks.
- Worked to acquire the MH1 public open space



**Family Festival of Cycling**  
Saturday 22nd March 12-4pm

Brittons Ash Community Hall, Bridgwater Rd, TA2 8FT

- Get your family's bicycles marked under the National Bike Mark scheme.
- Learn about road safety, safe cycling and about great local places to cycle.
- Find out about the work of On Your Bike Charity & what they offer in workshops, maintenance & low



Supporting your local community



## Priority B: Your Local Community

To support, engage and build our Local Community, your Parish Council:

- Undertook Community Review to better understand the needs and priorities of our community.
- Provided grant funding to West Monkton Scout Group, Escape Support Group and to WM Church to provide a Community Hub.
- Held regular Community Events including a monthly Quiz at Tacchi Morris, weekly Stay and Play Groups, a weekly Community Café.
- Continued to provide a community website - Monkton Matters and used social media to engage our community with 1414 followers and posts reaching in excess of 24000 people.



**Join us for our FREE Stay & Play sessions on Thursdays!**  
 Opportunities for little ones to learn, grow, and make new friends and for their carers to talk, enjoy refreshments and to feel part of a supportive local community.





## Priority B: Your Local Community

To support, engage and build our Local Community, your Parish Council:

- Successfully delivered a commemorative event to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day at Maidenbrook Country Park.
- The event was attended by more than 800 people from across our local community.





## Priority B: Your Local Community

To support, engage and build our Local Community, your Parish Council:

- Jointly with neighbouring Parish Councils delivered a family fun Tug of War Event
- Delivered a Dog Show in partnership with St Giles Kennels.
- Delivered an Easter Egg Hunt
- Provided a monthly Bereavement Support Group
- Provided grant funding for Young People from Brittons Ash Community Hall surplus.
- Delivered a Summer Food Project
- Established a weekly Youth Cafe
- Provided Community Care Boxes to those in need in our Community.
- Continued to be supported by over 140 volunteers from across our community



**Loss & Bereavement Support Group**  
First Wednesday of the month 2-4pm  
Brittons Ash Community Hall, Bridgwater Rd, TA2 8FT

If you would like talk about your feelings and experiences in a safe, non-judgemental space with other people in a similar situation, then we would love you to come along.  
There is no charge for this group, or for refreshments.



**Snack & Chat**  
After School on Wednesdays at the BACH, next to West Monkton Primary School until 5.30pm

Chill with Friends  
OUR Youth Café  
From Y7 to Y11 only  
Music  
Tuck Shop  
Bring £1  
Free Entry  
Safe Space  
Plus free snack and drink  
Contact: Kate Welsh - 07505 984006  
community@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk





## Priority C: Your Parish Council

To ensure that the Parish Council is as effective as possible, it has:

- Been open and transparent, publishing information in an accessible format on website [www.westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk)
- Developed and published a Strategic Plan to help the community understand the work of the Parish Council.
- Been an active member of the Hestercombe LCN
- Used Community Infrastructure Levy receipts to deliver the parish priorities.
- Used a variety of communication methods including the village news, noticeboards, Monkton Matters website ([www.monktonmatters.co.uk](http://www.monktonmatters.co.uk)) and the PC website.
- Funded delivery of the village news to every property in the parish with the community events leaflet.
- Applied for available grant funding to deliver projects / priorities including Community Fridge, Country Park, Youth Café / Summer Food Project and wider LCN Children and Young People Working Group SALC Health and Wellbeing Grant funding, acting as the Lead Council.
- Became a NALC Star Council Awards Finalist for Climate Response of the Year – Highlighting innovative projects that show an understanding of climate change and how its impact is being mitigated locally. WMPC was the only finalist from across England and Wales to be a finalist in this category.





## Priority D: Delivering our Projects

The Parish Council has continued to work hard to deliver a number of key projects all aimed at improving the Parish and all who live, work or visit. A summary of the achievements on each project is provided below:

### Sports Pitch Delivery

- Groundworks to install drainage and seed the pitches took place during 2024.
- Application to vary planning permission submitted in July 2024; determination / outcome awaited.
- Further work to roll pitches, fertilize and verti-drain to increase grass growth planned.
- Access road and utility connections works to commence shortly.





## Priority D: Delivering our Projects

### Poppy of Honour Memorial Delivery

- Planning Permission obtained for pavilion.
- Fundraising campaign 'Operation Tribute' has commenced.
- Cost of pavilion in region of £100-140k.
- £1496.72 of donations received from individuals and businesses.
- £2100.00 of plaque purchases.
- Poppy of Honour visits to events and shows planned throughout 2025 to help raise awareness and fundraise.



#### OPERATION TRIBUTE - POPPY OF HONOUR

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING  
THINKING OF A UNIQUE GIFT FOR YOURSELF OR  
A LOVED ONE!

We are seeking donations in order that a Pavilion can be erected to house the POPPY OF HONOUR at Somerset Wood in the Maidenbrook Country Park in Taunton. When built it will become an official Commonwealth War Memorial. Visitors will be able to view Free of Charge.

The POPPY holds 1,117,635 individual remembrance poppies inside its encasement, representing the number of British and Commonwealth servicemen and servicewomen listed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as 'Killed In Action' or 'Missing In Action' together with those 'Shot at Dawn' then later pardoned and those who died from their wounds after the Armistice in WW1. You will have the unique opportunity to have yours or a loved one's name on a plaque. Businesses can also contribute. These will be placed near to the pavilion for all to view for perpetuity.

Minimum donations are £25 for a small plaque, £50 for a medium and £75 for a large plaque. This operation will continue until funding is complete. For information is available via this link or by scanning the QR code.

<https://westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk/operation-tribute-poppy-of-honour/>

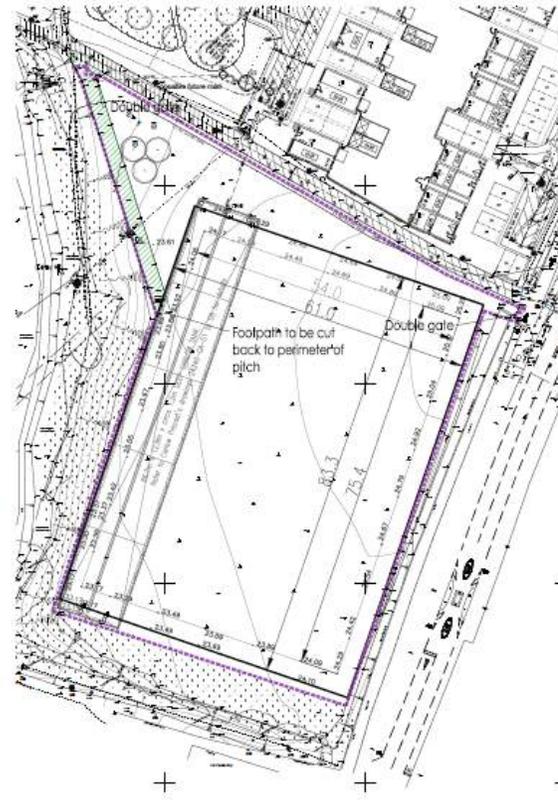




## Priority D: Delivering our Projects

### Bridgwater Road pitches

- Held the Developer to account to ensure the delivery of Junior Football Pitch provision at Bridgwater Road.
- The Parish Council plans to acquire the land / completed pitches (expected to be completed by September 2025) through a lease arrangement with Somerset Council. Parish Council to make the pitches available for the community and junior football clubs (using the facilities available at the BACH to support their use).



### Waterleaze Playing Pitch

- Worked to acquire playing pitch land currently in the ownership of the Developer at Waterleaze and provide facilities to enable use of the pitch as a pitch for use by clubs and the community.
- Developer has agreed to a S106 contribution towards costs as part of the Nerrols phase 3 planning application.





## Priority E: Delivering our Vision for our Assets



### Maidenbrook Country Park and Somerset Wood

- Achievement of Lottery Funding for three-year project that commenced in September 2024.
  - Deliverables achieved so far:
    - Website [www.maidenbrookcountrypark.org.uk](http://www.maidenbrookcountrypark.org.uk)
    - New Logo.
    - Volunteer Coordinator recruitment.
    - Volunteer Jackets and Training.
    - Design of entrance signage and visitor map.
    - Match funding commitments from grant funding bodies.
- Community events held at the Country Park during 2024 – more planned for 2025.
- Delivery of new memorials including the Taunton Wrens Association Memorial and Bruford Memorial. Additions to the Falklands Memorial and a new WW2 memorial planned for 2025.



#### About

Situated to the west of Monkton Heathfield in Taunton, The Maidenbrook Country Park offers a tranquil area of open parkland and is home to The Somerset Wood. Our 30-acre park has something for everyone, with a range of natural facilities to explore – be it a stroll along Memorial Walk, take in a self-guided lesson at the Forest School, explore an aquatic habitat at our nature pond, or air out that picnic blanket in our relaxing picnic area.

[Read More](#)

#### Photo Of The Month





## Priority E: Delivering our Vision for our Assets

### Brittons Ash Community Hall

- The Hall has been well maintained throughout the year, improvements have included the creation of a parish office and improvements to the audio equipment in the Committee Room.
- Work has progressed with the Primary School with planned solar panels using BACH reserves to support the Primary School and to reduce the carbon footprint of both buildings.
- The Hall continues to be a popular and well-used hub for our community.
- 25% of BACH surplus has also been made available for grants to support Young People in our community.

### Community Fridge

- The Community Fridge has been expanded this year to provide more room to reduce food waste and to share clothes, books and toys amongst our community.
- The community fridge saved 5700 kgs of food going to landfill a year, that's equivalent to 13608 meals.

### Community Garden

- With the help of volunteers and primary school children, the Community Garden is continuing to produce lots of fresh produce.





## Priority F: Delivering Our Neighbourhood Plan Vision

The Parish Council has worked to deliver the Neighbourhood Plan vision:

- The NP Vision is ‘To successfully accommodate the significant growth planned for the area; to ensure a high quality of design with the creation of sustainable places with excellent community facilities for local people to enjoy and during this period of growth, the historic settlements and surrounding countryside will be protected to maintain and enhance the locally distinctive characteristics of the area for future generations’. The Parish Council makes reference to this vision and the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan when responding to planning application.
- The Parish Council has considered and made comment on 56 planning applications in 2024/25.
- With Creech St Michael Parish Council the Parish Council has engaged with developer and Planning Officer regarding MH2 / Langaller Park putting forward concerns on behalf of the Community.
- The Parish Council is actively engaged with the Somerset Local Plan Development process.



West Monkton & Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan  
2021-2026

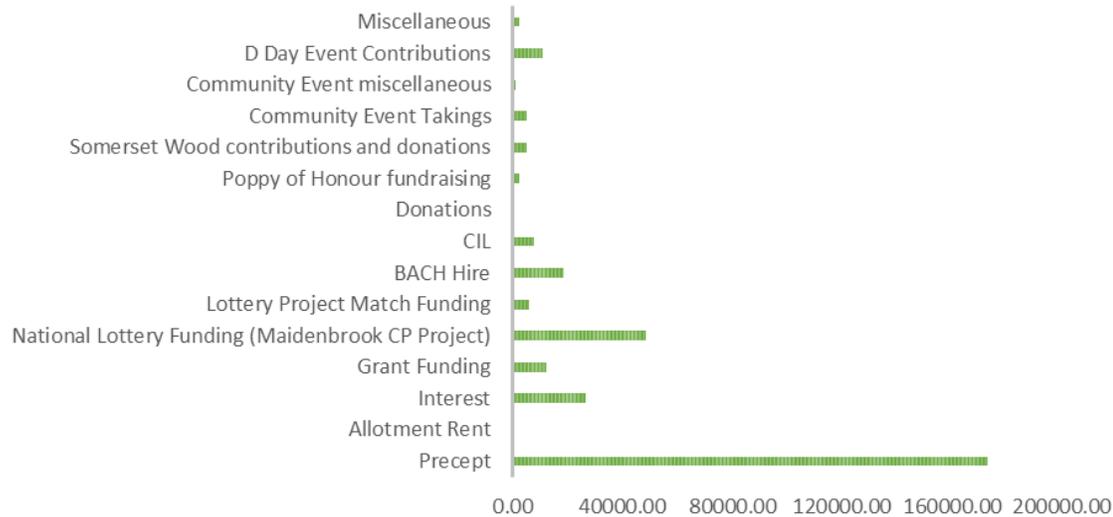


West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils  
June 2021

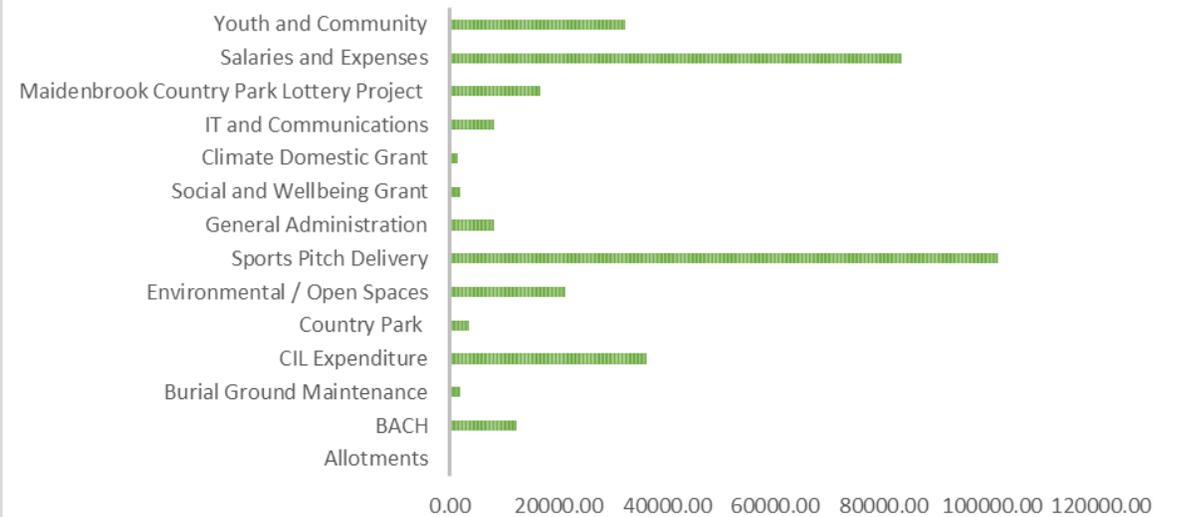
## Our Resources

The charts below illustrate the income received during 2024/25 and the source of the income and what the Parish Council has spent money on. If you are interested in further details, please do not hesitate to contact [clerk@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### INCOME



### EXPENDITURE



West Monkton Parish Council

## 2025/26 Meetings

Meetings are held in the Committee Room at Brittons Ash Community Hall (BACH) commencing at 7.00pm. All PC meetings are open to the public and there is usually a Public Question Time (at around 7.10pm) where the formal meeting is suspended whilst questions and comments are welcomed.

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## Contact Us

If you would like to contact the Parish Council, please use the following details:

Website: [www.westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Maidenbrook Country Park: [www.maidenbrookcountrypark.org.uk](http://www.maidenbrookcountrypark.org.uk)

Community Website: [www.monktonmatters.co.uk](http://www.monktonmatters.co.uk)

Amy Shepherd, Clerk / RFO: [clerk@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk) / 07380 912775

Kate Welsh, Assistant Clerk Community: [community@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:community@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk) / 07505984006

Candy Sully, Country Park Volunteer Coordinator: [maidenbrookcountrypark@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:maidenbrookcountrypark@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk) / 07888387525

Jessica Cox, Admin and Events Assistant: [adminevents@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:adminevents@westmonktonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

If you would like to make a donation towards our community events:



If you would like to make a donation towards the Poppy of Honour:

