

Monkland and Stretford Parish Council

*Minutes of the meeting of Monkland & Stretford Parish Council held on
Tuesday 15th January 2019 from 7.30pm
in Monkland Village Hall, Monkland.*

Website address: monkland.org

PRESENT: Cllr L Brook (Chairman) Cllr A Turner; Cllr R Allen; Cllr P Povall and Cllr T Neave.

Also present: Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk) Ward Cllr T Marsh.

Members of the public: one

The Chairman welcomed those present to the January meeting.

MINUTES:

1. **Acceptance of apologies for absence** – Mr C Blaydon
2. **Declarations of interests**, Disclosable Pecuniary, Non-Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary interests – none declared
3. **To receive a report from the local Police Officer** –no representative present. However, the Clerk reported having received a recent email with regard to – Crime Prevention Advice. It was agreed that the Clerk will discuss with Paul Crumpton exactly what is on offer and then prepare an article for the Newsletter asking local folk if they would be interested in attending a Crime Prevention meeting. Cllr A Turner agreed to monitor responses.
4. **Footpath Officer's report** – Mr Blaydon was not present at the meeting. The most recent footpath report was discussed and some anomalies on footpath marking resolved. To be discussed further with the Footpaths Officer at next meeting.

After discussion, it was agreed that the owners of the properties along the common backing on to The Moors should approach the landowner to erect a No Public Access sign to prevent walkers from walking along the backs of their houses and appearing intrusive to their privacy.

Cllr Provall commented that many of the stiles along the footpath routes were not dog friendly. This item was discussed at length and it was agreed to approach the various landowners in the first instance requesting their permission to make alterations to the stiles in order to allow easy access for walkers with dogs. Clerk to prepare letter.

It was suggested and agreed that a copy of the Monkland footpaths would be available on the website – Cllr Povall will liaise with clerk.

5. Ward Councillor Trish Marsh's report for Leominster South

I have attended briefings on:

Planning training.

Nutrient Management seminar- upgrade of Leominster sewage plant scheduled to improve water quality in the Lugg, an SSSI.

Domestic abuse strategy.

Herefordshire Centre for Community-Led Housing – new organisation in the county.

Children's services re recent unfavourable court judgements and measures now in place to address these issues

Took part in meetings of General Scrutiny and Group Leaders.

I attended the Parish summit, scheduled to be the first of several. I pushed for future meetings to be more practically focussed on ways of working together and more two way. I will be attending the next session on 24th January and will do my best to put forward your views.

I was honoured to lay wreath at our War Memorial on the centenary of the Armistice on behalf of the council in glorious sunshine.

I met with incoming interim Director Richard Ball to discuss matters of interest to Leominster, including development of the Public Realm and Transportation appraisal for the town - now due for consultation in the new year.

On the publicity front, I was pleased to be on the BBC's Sunday Politics West Midlands in October and be able to get some points across about Herefordshire, including the extreme difficulty of buying houses for most residents. I have also taken part in the videos to encourage more people to stand for Parish and Herefordshire Council seats next May, part of a campaign by Members' Services starting shortly.

I led a successful motion to press for the county pension fund to look seriously at divestment from fossil fuels, on financial as well as environmental grounds. This was passed with cross party support.

I have been working with Officers and Extinction Rebellion to raise the profile and momentum of the council's considerable work on reducing carbon emissions to help combat climate change.

I have also been working with other councillors on potential alternative budget, both revenue and capital.

The Council's page on the forthcoming elections on 2nd May is now live, encouraging people to stand as both parish and county councillors.

Cllr Trish Marsh

Herefordshire Council Ward Member for Leominster South - Green Party

6. Chairman's report

Chairman's report to Parish Council November 2018/January 2019 – some notes

6.1. Thank you very much to:

a) Wendy Jancey, Dee Griffiths, Janet Bottom and others for their wonderful job preparing poppies for the Armistice Service. Attended by 45 people from the village.

b) The Lengthsman and Peter Povall for tidying up verges and strimming work to make the village look neat and tidy.

6.2. Villagers to beware of the Nottingham Knockers!

Men have been calling at houses in Old Road and on the Common selling brushes, cloths etc at exorbitant prices – the police have advised to let them know if they are seen again. Beware of getting drinks for them – allowing them to pinch money etc by leaving the door open whilst getting drink etc. Very credible, hard luck stories etc etc.

6.3. SID assessment – some of the PC members met with James Howell and a colleague from Balfour Beatty on Wednesday 31st October to make an informal assessment of the siting of possible SIDs. A very helpful meeting in which we were advised to consider having only one SID and that to be placed at the western end of the village.

6.4. We have a busy time approaching. Herefordshire CC (and other CCs) are 'strapped for cash' and as a result are divesting responsibility for many of its former responsibilities to local PCs. In addition, our PC (and others) will receive less funding as eg our Lengthsman funding (£467) and P3 funding (£630 for footpaths) will cease. Consequently, it falls to the PC to take over responsibility for these activities and to pass on the cost to village households.

Plus, we need to consider taking some action for improving road safety on the A44 and so we are investigating arranging to install a SID on the A44 to monitor and hopefully curb excessive vehicle speeds.

We also needed to set the Precept and then perhaps write to households to explain why an increase is necessary. Hopefully we can keep any increase with the rise in annual inflation. Thanks to everyone for dealing with that in December allowing us to meet the CC deadline.

6.5. We were saddened to learn of the death of Harry Lee towards the end of last year after several patches of poor health. More recently we are also very saddened to learn of the deaths of Terry Cornes and John Edwards.

6.6. Newcomers to the village – could/should we prepare a 'Welcome Pack' eg latest copy of the village mag, plus a helpful list of local amenities etc.

6.7. Thank you very much to everyone on the PC and to Lesley and Trish for their support and practical work to keep the village well looked after.

The Chairman opened the Open session:

Ward Councillor Marsh was again asked to raise the issue regarding the financial implications of withdrawal of lengthsmen and P3 funding by Balfour Beatty and the subsequent impact on residents having to pay twice for maintaining their villages i.e. through the rates and again via the precept/budget

Ward Cllr Marsh explained that she had emailed the PC's concerns to Jonathan Lester, Leader of the Herefordshire Council and had received an emailed reply. The Clerk will forward copies of both these emails to the resident.

Various other items were raised by the resident - these include: the possibility of the primary school week being reduced to a 4 ½ day week; the lack of information with regard to the Christmas bin collection; BT are laying new cabling to the new houses at the end of Old Road – this cabling is copper and not fibreoptic as apparently too expensive; the local bus time table has been changed. Cllr Povall offered to produce a laminate copy of the revised bus time table to be displayed on the bus shelter and a copy will be put in the Newsletter; the clerk confirmed the road sweeper has been requested and job logged and the removal of the hay at the bridge bend has also been logged for removal.

Other items raised were discussed as agenda items.

The Chairman closed the Open session.

7. **Approval of minutes** from Annual Parish Council meeting held on the 9th October 2018. It was agreed these to be a true record and it was unanimously voted that they be adopted and signed by the Chairman.
8. **Parish Clerk's Update:**
 - 8.1 HALC – information corner circulated. The Clerk explained that she had received an invoice with regard to hosting the website domain until October 2019. It was agreed this should be paid but that cheaper alternatives were available. Note made to defer item until August.
 - 8.2 Baker Lea trees – further to a resident's recent concerns, the Clerk confirmed that the Locality Steward had been to look at the trees; had confirmed that were the responsibility of Balfour Beatty and had logged for a tree survey and trimming where necessary.
 - 8.3 There was a lengthy discussion on village trees particularly those on the common. The Chairman thanked Cllr A Turner for the time he had taken in mapping the various trees – 24 in total - and this will act as a reference for the future. It was acknowledged that there is no legal owner of the common and therefore the Parish Council do not have any legal responsibility for the existing trees or their safety. However, it was eventually agreed that although a professional tree survey was not necessary at this time, Councillors would

regularly self-inspect the trees and if a serious problem arose – the Clerk would inform Balfour Beatty.

8.4 Newsletter – the clerk confirmed the next edition would be at the end of January and asked for any articles to be submitted as soon as possible.

9. Finance.

9.1 Up to date accounts and schedule of payments had been circulated

It was unanimously agreed that the January invoices should be paid and the clerk raised the cheques and these were signed.

9.1 (a) A November Schedule of Payments had been circulated. Due to the late cancellation of the November meeting – it was unanimously agreed, retrospectively, that the November invoices should be paid and the clerk confirmed that she had raised the cheques and these had been signed

9.2 Financial assistance to Churchyards.

The Clerk reported that National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had put out guidance saying that there was a lack of clarity between the 1894 Local Government Act (which prohibits Parish Councils to contribute to the upkeep of church assets) and the 1972 and 2011 Local Government Acts which appear to allow this; NALCs view being that it was illegal for Parish Councils to make any kind of donation to Churches or to the upkeep of churchyards (except closed churchyards).

The Clerk had approached the Clerk's professional body (SLCC), their advice being that this should be discussed with the Parish Council, giving them the NALC advice and letting them make a balanced judgement. The SLCC felt that as long as the Parish Council could show they had considered the issue and could give the reasons why they have come to the conclusion they had, then there should be no problem in continuing to support the maintenance of the churchyard.

Resolved: the NALC view was noted but the Parish Council agreed to continue contributing to the upkeep of the churchyard. It noted that if any other requests were made from religious organisations or groups within the Parish these would be discussed openly and indiscriminately considered as and when they occurred.

9.3 SID - please see Chairman's report. After lengthy discussion, it was unanimously agreed not to proceed with installing a SID as this time. However, interest was again expressed in the Gateway Scheme and the Clerk was asked to follow up the possibilities of installing this scheme in Monkland. It was suggested that various local firms could be approached with a view to assisting with the initial costs associated with installing this scheme. Item deferred until next meeting.

9.4. Precept/Budget 2019/2020.

The Precept/Budget for 2019-20. The Clerk had previously circulated the current expenditure figures and a forecast for expenditure as of 31st March 2019. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed by a show of hands to increase the Precept from £7,700 to £9000.

This increase is to help offset the loss of the lengthsman and P3 funding; possible road safety measures; plus the forthcoming Parish Council Elections when, should an election be called, estimated costs of £1400 were liable to be re-charged to the Parish Council.

The application form for the Total Precept Requirement will be sent to Herefordshire Council.

10. Highways and Environmental Matters.

10.1 The daffodil banks have been strimmed.

10.2 Lengthsman work sheet for January / February – the bollards on the common have been repaired/replaced but, due to a variation in height, need to be levelled. Clerk to liaise with lengthsman.

10.3 On the common, a swing, which is concreted into the ground, raised health and safety issues. Cllr Povall will remove.

10.4 Signage Monkland bend - no up to date information available despite repeated emails and telephones calls from the Ward Councillor and the Clerk.

Ward Cllr Marsh will again, as a matter of urgency, approach Ray Wallace from Balfour Beatty pointing out that it is now over two years since monies were paid up front for this work to be carried out and, despite reassurances, nothing has been done to extend the 50ph signage or lay the anti-skid road surface. Item to remain on the agenda.

10.5 The replacement/repair of the broken drain outside Manor Cottage. This drain has been reported and inspected by the Locality Steward on two separate occasions and the job has been logged – but, to date, nothing has been done to replace/repair. Clerk to follow up.

11. Planning issues – To consider any new applications – none to date

12. Correspondence: nothing not covered in minutes

Date of next full council meeting – Tuesday 19th March 2019. Start: 7.30p.m.

Apologies from Ward Cllr Marsh.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55 pm

Signed:

Date: