

*Monkland and Stretford Parish Council*

*Minutes of the Monkland & Stretford Annual Parish Meeting held on  
Tuesday 21st May 2019 from 6.30 pm in Monkland Village Hall, Monkland.*

**PRESENT:** Cllr A. Turner; Cllr L Brook; Cllr M Louth.

Parish Clerk: Mrs Lesley Hay

Twenty-four members of the public. Wendy Jancey (Village Hall Representative)

**Acceptance of apologies for absence:** Chris Blaydon (Footpaths Officer); Ward Cllr T Marsh; Cllr T Neave and Cllr P Povall.

**1. Approval of minutes from 22nd May 2018** - Minutes approved, adopted and signed as a true record.

**2. Chairman's Annual Report - Lesley Brook - May 2019**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the Monkland & Stretford Annual Parish Meeting 2019.

Welcome to our Ward Councillor, Trish Marsh who has been re-elected earlier this month. I would like to thank her for her continuing support of the Parish Council (PC). Since her election as Ward Councillor she has been a regular attendee to our Parish Council meetings. Thanks also for being so proactive with items arising from the meetings.

**Thanks to:-**

Karen Hindle stepped down as a Parish Councillor in September 2018 to spend more time with her business, and Rachel Allen stepped down in April 2019 to spend more time with her family. Many thanks them both for their support and work on the Parish Council which has been marvellous. We hope they will continue to take an interest in parish affairs and to help keep us posted on events on the Common especially.

In their place we have welcomed Tony Neave who joined the Parish council in Nov 2018 and Mick Louth who has just joined us. Many thanks to them both for stepping forwards to help us on the PC. I would like to say a special thank you to Janet Butler who lived in the village for over 20 years and who has now moved away to live in Ludlow. Over the years when Janet lived in the village, she did much wonderful work and gave much support in the village and the church. Best wishes to her in her new life.

### **A44 and traffic**

A perennial problem for the village! This year we have campaigned again to try and get the speed restrictions reduced from 50 to 40 mph. We have met with representatives from Balfour Beatty and Safer Roads to no avail. One meeting we held in the Monkland Arms car park with the healthy roar of traffic in the background to emphasis our point! The sticking point is the fact that the A44 is a major trunk route into Wales – which of course makes it more dangerous for the village as it passes through the village. Signage at the bridge on the approach to the village from Leominster has been improved with anti-slip red material being painted on the road surface and a warning/advisory sign for 35 mph is in place.

Other areas for discussion on road safety have included possible village gates at each end of the village to tell motorists that they are entering a village area. We have also investigated the installation of a SID (speed indicator device) on the hill into the village from the Dilwyn direction. Our aim is to improve the safety of the road for locals but none of the available assistance comes without significant cost, or without limitations. Our investigations are continuing.

### **Newcomers to the village**

The builders have almost completed the 5 new houses in Pleck Orchard at the end of Old Road, one of which is now occupied. New residents have moved into Pleck Cottage on the Common, into The Hollies and Hopbine Cottage in Old Road, and there are two other houses for sale along Old Road following the deaths of longstanding

residents, Harry Lee and John Edwards. We welcome all the new arrivals to the village and hope they will be very happy in their new homes.

### **Village Show 2018**

This took place in August 2018 in the village hall. It was very well organised by a small and dedicated committee. A wide variety of skills and expertise was demonstrated and the show was a great success. Villagers entered into the spirit of the show and supported all the classes on offer. The plan is to hold a similar event during the late summer of 2019. The schedule has been prepared and will be circulated.

### **Monkland Arms**

The pub continues to offer food and drink in the village with a range of activities such as Morris Dancers, darts and folk singing.

### **Precept 2019 – 2020**

#### **Why has the Parish Council had to increase the Precept this year?**

In a nutshell we wanted to avoid a Mr Micawber situation!

### **INCOME**

	Notes on difference between now and 2018-2019
Precept – paid by villagers via Council Tax	Increased – to pay for income deficit
Lengthsman *	Was £500 – now £0
Bank interest	Remains the same at £1
VAT refund	Remains the same
P3 **	Was £630 – now £0
Website	Remains the same
Newsletter	Remains the same
Hay crop from Common	Probably remains the same or less

\* in previous years Herefordshire County Council (HCC) have made a contribution towards some minor highway works required within the parish

\*\* Parish Paths Partnership scheme (P3) - in previous years HCC have made a grant towards footpath upkeep based on the number of footpaths in the Parish

## EXPENDITURE

	Notes on difference between now and 2018-2019
Monkland Church to assist with graveyard tidy	Annual payment - slight increase
Internal/External audit	About the same
Herefordshire Assoc Local Councils (HALC)	Was £500 – PC decided not to re-join as very poor value for money! Instead we have joined the SLCC – see below
Information Commissioner	About the same
Insurance	About the same
Election expenses – mandatory in an Election year such as this - in case we needed a local election for PC – not required this year so money saved!	£300 – additional cost
Village Hall hire	About the same
Clerks Salary and PAYE	About the same
Expenses	About the same
Training	About the same
Road Safety	Increased – in case we purchase village gates or hire a SID (speed indicator device) to try to address speeding on the A44
Contingencies	About the same
P3	As income completely removed – expenditure cut from £850 to £250

Lengthsman	As income completely removed – expenditure cut from £1000 to £750
Newsletter	
Website	
SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks)	£50 – to replace HALC as source of information

The precept has increased because:

- There is now a large shortage of funds (over £1000) coming to the Parish Council (PC) from HCC
- We are keeping our own costs as low as possible
- Our Auditor advised us to gradually build up our financial reserves to prevent the PC from going bankrupt
- A ‘catching –up’ because our reserves are very low
- Always a concern that in times of austerity the precept will be capped, so our reserves would have to be used
- We were advised to budget for the recent local election. Luckily there was no need to hold these for the PC so this money has been saved!
- We need to pay for a litter pick down the A44 as it is far too dangerous for volunteers to collect and pick litter up there
- The hope is that next year any increase will be minimal!

I hope this attempt to explain the increase for 2019/2020.

My thanks to all of the Parish Councillors for the time and effort they give to the Parish Council and the village.

Thanks to Chris Blaydon, our village footpaths officer and to Peter Povall for ensuring that the network of Monkland footpaths is navigable and safe. We have forged links with Hugh Vernon from Eardisland who has been developing walks in the two parishes to commemorate local soldiers who died in action during WW1. The walks overlap both parishes and include a wonderful new wooden kissing gate in our parish which is due to be officially opened on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Many thanks to the lengthsman, Dave Campbell, for his work in and around the village, for keeping us looking neat and tidy and safe.

*and last, but by no means least -*

Our huge thanks go to our Parish Clerk, Lesley Hay for her continuing hard work keeping the parish business in order together with publishing the Monkland Newsletter. Lesley has had a tough 12 months both personally and as Parish Clerk. She has kept us on the straight and narrow sifting through numerous documents and instructions, to ensure that Monkland Parish Council is in line with new regulations that came into force in May 2018, and with election procedures to mention a couple. All of this while coping with difficult home circumstances. Thank you very much Lesley H!

Village hall report given by Wendy Jancey

Monkland Village Hall 2019

Charity No: 1008776

The Village Hall continues to be very busy with all sorts of activities: Painting, Yoga, Belly Dancing, Leominster Stitches, Marches Scribes, Tia Chi and two other sewing classes. Parish Council, Church and Pony Club meetings, Harvest Festival Lunch, Macmillan Coffee Morning, Friday evening Bingo and various celebrations. The Village Show in September and as a Polling Station for elections.

During the year a full electrical check has been carried out and necessary work done. The old cooker and fridge have been replaced. It has been suggested by the plumber that the root insulation needs replacing.

The Hall is financially sound with a bank balance of approx. £6000.00p. The accounts are audited and copies sent to the Charity Commission yearly.

I thank Harry, Derek, Steward Alan and Dave for the odd jobs they have done around the building. I thank Ed from CVC Window Cleaning for cleaning the windows.

**Guest speakers:**

Rural and Business Crime Officer – Paul Crumpton of West Mercia Police gave a Crime Prevention Presentation on how you can stay safe at home, work and online.

Hugh Vernon gave a short presentation on Memorial Gate – Eardisland/Monkland Parish border.

No issues were presented for open discussion that will not be covered during the Annual Parish Council Meeting. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 p.m.

Refreshments followed.

Signed: .....

Date: .....