

Monkland and Stretford Parish Council

*Minutes of the meeting of Monkland & Stretford Parish Council held on
Tuesday 17th September from 7.00pm
in Monkland Village Hall, Monkland.*

Website address: monkland.org

PRESENT: Cllr L Brook (Chairman) Cllr P Povall; Cllr M Louth;
and Cllr T Neave.

Present: Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk) Ward Cllr Trish Marsh; Locality Steward Lee
Fishwick

Four members of the public present.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the September meeting.

MINUTES:

1. **Acceptance of apologies for absence** – Cllr A Turner (Vice Chairman);
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.

(3.1) Cllr Louth asked whether there had been any follow up on the Smart Water Project. The Clerk explained that she had recently received an email from the Police Commissioner with regard to Community Engagement and that it was the Police Commission who had originally initiated the Smart Water Project. The Clerk will contact the Police Commissioner's Ambassador with regard to both projects and will report back to the next meeting.

4. **Ward Councillor's report:** please see attached at the end of these minutes

5. **Chairman's report**

A quietish time over the summer!

The main issues affecting us have been:

5.1 Hay making on Monkland Common

We accepted that it was 'our job' (Custom and Practice) for the PC to organise the management of the Common each year, including the cutting of hay and preparatory tasks e.g. harrowing and mole eradication.

However, as relatively new Councillors it has meant us asking more questions about why? how? by whom? etc on a variety of issues. In order to get some answers to those questions, Parish Councillors met with Phil Pankhurst the previous Locality Steward (now Lee Fishwick) to discuss responsibilities on the Common.

Important to note that during and after the hay making for this year:

- It had taken over 5 plus months for us to organise this. All councillors consulted a former councillor for advice, Herefordshire Hub, Pembridge PC (as they have meadow lands similar to our Common); lots of local farmers.
However, due to a very low hay price throughout the W Midlands, no-one was interested so we advertised in Hereford Times – we had several replies but none feasible.
- We had several complaints before the work was fully completed about the standard of work done - subsequent action taken could well have compromised the contractor making the hay.
- We had several complaints after the work was fully completed about the standard of work done.
- Issues arose about responsibilities – who is responsible for what - making the PC concerned about responsibilities and liabilities so it was decided to contact Helen Beale the Senior Estates Officer (with responsibilities for Commons) for HCC for clarification on ownership and responsibilities re the Common.
- It was decided to hold an Extra Ordinary meeting to discuss issues relating to the Common on 26th August 2019. Helen Beale attended the meeting.
- Helen confirmed that both Monkland Common and Monkland Village Green areas are registered under the protection of section 45 of the Commons Act 2006 as there is 'no known owner of the land'. This means that a local authority (which covers county, district or parish council) have the "powers to protect" the land but no duty to do so.
- By powers to protect, this means steps can be taken to protect the land from unlawful interference on the land (such as what an owner in possession would do) and institute any proceeding against someone for an offence committed in respect of the land. Herefordshire Council have a policy of not getting involved in section 45 commons and village greens.
- It became very clear that it is quite within the rights of the parish council to step away from any form of management of the common or village green.
- Monkland common have three people (Mr Bengough, Mr Marfell and Mr Crick) who have registered grazing rights so they actually have more say on the management of the common than anyone else. They can also take appropriate action should they feel that their rights are

being interfered with. Any outside management of the common should be with the approval of the commoners.

- It was agreed to set up a Common Committee to take charge of the management of the Common.

There have been several events in the village since we last met:

5.2 Church fete – 2nd August at The Beeches – very successful and raised £1300

5.3 Village Show – was held on Saturday 7th September in the village hall – very well supported with an excellent standard of exhibits.

5.4 There will be a Macmillan Coffee morning in aid of Cancer Research on 27th September in the village hall

5.5 The Harvest Festival and lunch will take place on Sunday October 20th

5.6 Remembrance service will take place at 11.00am on Monday 11th November in the church

6. Footpath Officer's report

Cllr Povall reported that he had now meet with some local landowners in the hope of establishing a good future working relationship between the Footpath's Officer and the landowners.

The landowners have agreed that he can make some modifications to stiles in order to make them more dog walking friending but that they must, of course, remain stock proof.

Some crop blocking remains a problem but all routes are passable by walking around the edge of the fields although sometimes this is proving too long a distance for some walkers. However, it is hoped that, with the new working relationship between the Footpaths Officer and the landowners – next year will see an improvement in accessibility across the newly planted crop fields.

6.1 Lee Fishwick – Locality Steward - report

The Chairman introduced Lee Fishwick as the new Locality Steward for Monkland. Mr Fishwick outlined his duties as a Locality Steward and how jobs logged are categorised accordingly to priority.

Mr Fishwick was asked about the on-going lack of 'cats eye' replacement along the local roads. Mr Fishwick confirmed that this was a Balfour Beatty responsibility but due to financial restraints was not to priority. However, he will make further enquiries and report back.

It was confirmed that the flash flooding by The Monkland Arms had been reported; inspected and logged for further attention – but again was subject to priority.

The stagnant water lying in the ditch by Pleck Cottage was thought to result from work carried out recently by Lugg Drainage. Mr Fishwick will assess the problem and contact Lugg Drainage accordingly.

(a) Drainage leaflet – circulated

7. Monkland Common issues:

7.1 Update from the Extra Ordinary Meeting – covered in the Chairman’s report.

7.2 Common Committee. Cllr P Povall was unanimously elected as the Parish Council’s representative on the Common Committee and he will be contacting the other residents who registered their names. The Clerk to forward the contact list.

7.3 Grants and funding update - an email from Helen Beale had been circulated. This will be discussed by the Common Committee and taken forward.

7.4 Cllr Povall produced copies of a more definitive map of routes across the common which showed all present routes as established. It was suggested a map showing all Monkland footpaths should be made available to all residents – it was agreed a map could be included as a flyer in the next Newsletter. Clerk and Cllr Povall to liaise.

Open session - Matters raised by local residents.

There was a lengthy discussion on the rubble which has been used to fill in the pot holes and ruts on the common. There were mixed and varying opinions as to whether it was necessary and whether it was lawful without a licence. The Chairman explained that the tenant farmer had liaised with Mr Bengough with regard to filling in these ruts/pot holes in order to prevent further encroachment on to the common over the coming winter months. Although the Parish Council had been informed of this – they were not in a position to give or withhold permission.

Whilst it was acknowledged that, although this rubble is unsightly at the moment, it will be weathered down over the coming months and will soon blend into the common. It was generally agreed that there was little to be done about its appearance at the moment but that hopefully, by next Spring, it will provide a firm base for the contractor’s vehicles and prevent further encroachment onto the common.

The Chairman closed the open session

7. **The minutes** from Parish Council meeting held 23rd July 2019 were unanimously approved as a true record and were adopted as such and signed by the chairman.

The minutes from the Extra Ordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 27th August 2019 were subject to an amendment. The two paragraphs with regard to the rubble and the routes across the common were removed from the open session and placed in the closed session

prior to the Planning. Once this had been agreed – the minutes were approved as a true record and were adopted as such and signed by the chairman.

9. Finance.

9.1 Current Schedule of Payments had been circulated and it was unanimously agreed to paid the outstanding invoices and the clerk raised the cheques.

9.2 The Precept application form for 2020/21 has been received and the precept will be discussed and set during the next meeting in November. The clerk to prepare a forecast and circulate prior to that meeting.

10. Highways and Environmental Matters.

10.1 Lengthsman worksheet - September/October – nothing outstanding.

11. Planning issues – no new planning applications received to date.

11.1 It was noted that work has begun on Plot A – land previously owned by Mr Marfell. There is an electric transformer in the field which will need to be moved. An entrance has been made in the hedge but the owner is waiting for the Herefordshire Council to come and lower the grass verge. Once this is done – this will then be the main entrance/exit for lorries delivering building supplies etc.

12. Correspondence:

(12.1) Community engagement – circulated. Clerk to contact with regard to meeting/newsletter - plus discuss Smart Water (see item 3.1)

(12.2) Invitation to Parish Summit – 20th September – circulated. No one from Monkland Parish Council able to attend.

13. Date of next full council meeting: Tuesday 19th November 2019 – 7.00p.m. To set the Precept for 2020/21. Update on Smart Water.

Signed:

Date:

Monkland: Ward Councillor report 17th Sept 2019

Things have been very busy as a new Cabinet member with wide ranging responsibilities. Mine covers Economy, Environment and Skills, also broadband, tourism and the climate emergency, so it's quite a portfolio!

Today I've romped through quite a stretch of it, which I've detailed below so you get a glimpse of the range of the services Herefordshire Council is responsible for.

I started at Leominster Industrial Estate celebrating the arrival of full fibre broadband to local businesses. This coverage will extend over the whole of Leominster town in the next year or so and should help attract digital companies to locate in our lovely area.

Then on to the library to publicise Get Online Week, encouraging everyone to take up the free sessions we offer to help them feel confident and safe online. The internet is such a valuable tool for keeping in touch with family and friends, wherever they are in the world!

I went on to the Local Enterprise Zone board meeting at Rotherwas. Among other things the subject of bats came up, as several species live in a copse adjacent to the site. Our responsibility is to ensure they will continue to thrive as new businesses arrive on site: ecological monitoring is ongoing.

Next stop a briefing on the council's responsibilities for keeping children safe, a major part of our responsibilities. This included some recent scenarios our social work teams have faced, giving us a more vivid picture of the challenges in deciding what will be the best way forward.

Finally, before arriving with you, a discussion on animal licensing with our environmental health team. The new rules on kennels are much more process and policy driven, which is a challenge for many longstanding businesses. Another manifestation of how more and more things depend on being online. Our staff are purely responsible for helping people comply - they cannot, alas, alter the requirements of national legislation.

I'm pleased to say the new administration is putting extra emphasis on the environment and climate emergency, responding especially to the strongly expressed views of our young people. The council has now adopted a target of zero carbon by 2030 for both the county and the council's own carbon emissions. This is a major challenge - but one forced on us by the global reality of climate breakdown. It is important that we play our part here and I look forward to a wide partnership, working with many voluntary groups as well as farmers and businesses.

A consultation on Herefordshire Councils draft aims for the next four years is now open at herefordshire.gov.uk/ambition – please take a few minutes to have a look and make your input to the next four-year plan for Herefordshire. There will also be a pop up at Leominster Market on October 4 from 10-2pm with staff to speak to.

Trish Marsh