

Monkland and Stretford Parish Council

*Minutes of Monkland & Stretford Parish Council held on
Tuesday 21st July 2020 from 7.00pm*

Website address: monkland.org

Clerk's email address: thelesleyhay@hotmail.co.uk

**Due to present Government restrictions this meeting was
a 'virtual 'meeting held via Zoom.**

PRESENT: Cllr L Brook (Chairman); Cllr A Turner (Vice
Chairman) Cllr P Povall and Cllr Tony Neave.

Present: Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk) Ward Cllr Trish Marsh;

The Chairman welcomed those present to the July virtual/Zoom
meeting.

Minutes:

- 1. Acceptance of apologies for absence:** Cllr M Louth
- 2. Declarations of interests,** Disclosable Pecuniary, Non-Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary interests – no recorded.
- 3. The minutes** from meeting held Tuesday 17th March 2020 had previously been circulated. It was unanimously agreed that these represented a true record and therefore should be adopted. The Chairman signed the minutes.
- 4. Ward Councillor's report – please full report attached to the end of these Minutes.**

(4.1) Part pedestrianisation in Leominster town centre.

To give shoppers enough room to move safely on Leominster's

narrow streets and pavements, High Street and Corn Square will soon be open to pedestrians, buggies and cyclists only from 10am - 1.00 pm Monday to Saturday. There will also be a 20mph zone in the town centre and along to Leominster primary school.

This is part of a national move to make more room for pedestrians and cyclists. The works will be done under a temporary traffic regulation order by Herefordshire Council

(4.2) Leominster Shopmobility

Although our Shopmobility base has been closed for the last few weeks, we have continued to offer a service to those in need and have provided wheelchairs and scooters by arrangement. We hope to open our base again before too long: our priority is the safety of our customers and volunteers. In the meantime, to arrange to borrow a wheelchair or scooter, please ring Chris Cook on [07960863107](tel:07960863107)

5. Monkland and Stretford Parish Council – Chair’s report July 2020

A lot has happened in some ways since we last met in March! We were locked down as COVID19 rapidly moved into and across the UK.

At first there was fear, disbelief, even slight panic as almost overnight, everything changed! This never happens to us – but yesit has done ...and now! Face masks, gloves became the new norm and a whole new vocabulary followed – lockdown, shielding, furloughing, R value and so it went on! There was queuing for loo rolls and flour, prescriptions and vegetables. The Government held daily briefings, which were gloomy but necessary. Boris caught the virus and it nearly toppled him.

The dangers were that the isolation and loneliness would mean that vulnerable, housebound and often elderly people would suffer and not be able to get provisions and support.

At this point, in stepped Dave Jeffery and the village support group! We owe a HUGE thank you to Dave for the time and effort he put into sourcing groceries, fresh veg, fish and everything else imaginable. Sunday lunches, prescription collections – you name it and Dave fixed it! (Even including the timings of the International Space Station!) With of course the willing help from those in the village who were less vulnerable and able to venture out and do the necessary.

The virus drove us apart by social distancing (another new term to learn, and a new way of living for us to quickly grasp!) but in fact it has drawn us closer together as a community, which is wonderful. We have got to know each other better, including those who only recently came to live in the village – thank you to everyone for joining in so enthusiastically.

We clapped to celebrate the work of the NHS – the whole village now needs a BIG clap for everything that has been achieved and for the enhanced community spirit which has been achieved as a result of this ghastly situation, which is marvellous!

A BIG Thank you to Dave and to everyone who played their part!

Thank you also to Alan who recently carried out a litter lick along the A44 – a great job done.

Now there is a slow easing of the lockdown situation – please don't be too adventurous!

The Parish Council are now meeting again – online to ensure that it is business as usual – well as usual as it can be!

Chair of Monkland and Stretford Parish Council

6. Monkland Common and Footpath's Officer Report

6.1 Monkland Common Working Group

You will all have noticed that the common has been cut and baled for hay, and is looking so much better for the work. The bulk of the hay has been taken by Mr Jenkins for his work.

I am sure you will all join me in thanking Derek for his work in cutting the rough areas around the edge of the common, which were not cut for hay. Thanks also go to Derek and to Tom Powell for their work on the trackway along the back of the common which is looking in a much better condition.

Thanks also to the Marfell family for their help in so quickly removing the fallen tree from Tagwell Lane during a very difficult time for them.

The common is also attracting more visitors which is a bit of a double-edged sword. It is great that more local people are using the common but not so good that this has attracted vehicles, which are parked on the common, and some irresponsible dog walker who are not cleaning up after their dogs.

I have spoken to three people who have parked on the common and they have been quite understanding about why we deter vehicles from the common. We have this beautiful open space and want to preserve it for generations to come.

Peter Povall Monkland Common Working Group

Email: peter@hufc.com Tel: 01568 720250

(6.2) Footpath Officers Report

"The sun has shone, the grass has rizz,

I wonder where those footpaths izz?"

A bit of a random quote and I can't think where I heard it but seemed appropriate to start this report. I've given out three copies of the local footpath map and have a small supply if anyone else would like one. Please call and see me or give me a call or an email if you would like a copy.

With lockdown in place and getting to work from home I fully expected to be getting out and about on the footpaths more than ever. Early work included getting onto path MK9 and clearing the path from the Shirlheath road back towards Monkland. Strimming nettles which were nearly as tall as me was very therapeutic.

Unfortunately, ill-health has limited my options for a while and I have fallen behind with clearing paths. I have managed some limited works including short stretches of grass cutting and renewing signage where it was severely damaged or missing. As things improve, I will be back out there and improving the access for us all.

Lastly, a gentle reminder to stick to the footpaths and if you have a dog please clean up after them. If a path is blocked by a growing crop then I am sure the farmer wouldn't object to you walking around the field to join the path on the other side.

If you find any problems with the paths on your walks then please let me know and I will look to resolve these wherever I can, as soon as possible.

Peter Povall Parish Footpath Officer

7. Finance.

Finance: Accounts sheet/schedule of payment sheet circulated.

Finance: Accounts sheets and the schedule of payment sheet had been circulated and it was unanimously agreed to pay the outstanding invoices

7.1 All correspondence associated with the 2019 -2020 end of year accounts had been previously circulated.

7.2 The Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 was approved and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

- 7.3 The Annual Accounts for 2019/2020 were approved and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.
- 7.4 Chairman signed Certificate of Exemption which will now be submitted to the External Auditor.

All documents will now be displayed on the website.

The Notice of Public Rights will be displayed from the 1st September 2020. The slight delay is due to the Clerk moving house but the accounts will be available from that date if any members of the public wish to make an appointment.

- 7.5 It was unanimously agreed to appoint Mr Robert Taplin as Internal Auditor for financial year ending 31st March 2021

8. Highways and Environmental Matters

(8.1) Update on lengthsman Funding Grant.

The Clerk informed the Councillors that Balfour Beatty were offering extra funding towards resolving some of the drainage problems that exist throughout Herefordshire. This work to be undertaken by the lengthsman where possible.

The Clerk confirmed that during a village walk about by the lengthsman, the Locality Steward and the Chairman they had identified local drainage issues which would certainly benefit from additional funding. The Clerk confirmed she had completed and submitted an application form for a grant.

(8.2) Lengthsman worksheet for August/September

Lengthsman to be asked to erect the kissing gate opposite the Cheese Shop.

Lengthsman to be asked to clear the path along the main A44 from opposite The Monk up to Tagwell Lane entrance. The Footpath Officer will look at the overgrown hedge at the Tagwell Lane end of the path with a view to trimming it back to improve visibility/accessibility.

9. **Planning issues** – no new planning applications received to date.

(9.1) Planning application 192808 Land of the West of Mill Cottage. Amended plans with regard to changes to the footpath arrangement had been posted. These plans had been circulated - no comment made.

The Clerk confirmed she had written to Harpers with regard to the over grown hedge opposite Manor Cottage and had received a reply. The letter stated that the hedge would be inspected and cut back in the Autumn to coincide with the lifting of bird nesting restrictions.

(9.2) Planning application P172235 – Land south of Brick House Barn. Variation on condition. Yellow Planning Notices have been posted with a response date of 31st July 2020.

It had been brought to the Parish Council's notice that the Notice shows an incorrect entrance. This has now been discussed with the Planning Officer and he will re-issue Notices with the correct, already established, entrance.

The Parish Council have since received two comments with regard to the current planning and these were discussed.

- (a) It was understood that the entrance was originally planned to service two properties – a house and the barn conversion - but currently the left turn through the entrance to the barn is very sharp and narrow and certainly would not allow access for larger vehicles.
- (b) The plans show a discrepancy in the position of the electric transformer. On the Herefordshire Planning site - one plan shows it inside the current boundary whereas another plan shows it the other side the boundary fence.

Clerk asked to contact Planning Officer for some clarification as the electric transformer could end up in no man's land with difficult access should an emergency arise.

Apart from these two issues – no objections were raised.

10. Newsletter – The Clerk confirmed that the Newsletter was ready to go to the printers and hopefully would be distributed before the end of the month.

11. Website suitability after September. The Clerk reported that she had spoken with Mark Millimore and the Parish Council website is all set - the Accessibility menu is on the website so people can ask for the web page to be "read" to them, navigate via the keyboard rather than using the mouse and make text bigger etc. All within the new government legislation requirements.

12. Date of next full council meeting: Date of next meeting – 22nd September 2020 – 7.00p.m. The venue for this meeting will depend on

the guidelines in place at that time regarding the use of the Village Hall but will probably be via Zoom.

Items for next agenda: To discuss possible increase in village cycling

At the end of the meeting – the Parish Councillors wish it to personally extend thanks to Dave Jeffery and the village support group and acknowledge their help and support during these last few months and sincerely hope this new found community spirit keeps going.

Congratulations were extended to Jed and Allie from The Monk who got married last week.

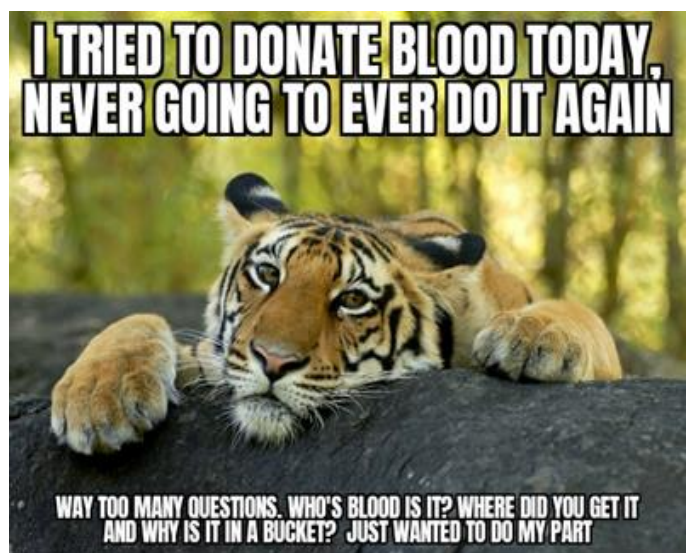
It was also acknowledged that there are villagers who are not at all well at the moment – some even hospitalised – again the Parish Councillors asked to extend good wishes to everyone for a speedy recovery.

Parish Council have been told that, understandably but regrettably, there will be no Open Show this year. Arrangements for the McMillian Coffee morning are still undecided.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15p.m.

Signed:

Date:



Ward Cllr Report Leominster South July 2020

Our last Monkland parish council meeting in 17 March – the last physical meeting I went to (all beautifully spaced) - seems a world away. How quickly the world changed for us all!

At that time the dreadful floods seemed quite sufficient challenge for a single year.

Since then we have become expert at Zoom and other virtual tools and learned to appreciate the smaller things of life- like the weekly clap for carers on our front drives.

Herefordshire has so far had low rates of infection, but still has had over 100 deaths, around half in care homes. The recent outbreak among seasonal workers shows how quickly things can change – and why face coverings, which are compulsory in shops from this Friday - seem like a small and sensible way for us to protect each other.

As lockdown started villages and towns rapidly mobilised to provide practical support. Monkland must be among the best at keeping everyone in the loop, cutting down on trips - and offering unexpected treats. I really welcomed the networking with our own local independent shops and businesses, so giving them a boost as well. We hope the networks built will continue as important ways for us to keep in contact. Talk Communities, a Herefordshire Council initiative, will be building on this and many other networks throughout the county.

I've set up a Facebook page, Leominster Independent Shops, to give some support. It tracks the many re-openings that we have had. So many things we hadn't realised we valued so much till they weren't there. Like the Priory bells - just back. Most shops in towns are now open again and we are just starting to see the return of the charity shops. Grange Court has just reopened but sadly the Museum is not able to reopen this year.

Leominster Foodbank has been both very well supported and immensely busy. They have distributed many Free School Meal bags on top of greater other demand. In addition, they have provided regular Food shares, which are open to all without the need for a referral. Leominster's food waste must have reduced substantially! Their volunteers have put in so many hours in a physically demanding and fast-moving situation.

The schools never closed, working through half term and the Easter holidays, keeping in touch with their pupils remotely and also providing teaching throughout for children of key workers and children with care plans. Several year groups are now partly back in school.

The debate on of how to combine easy access by car to the town centre and safe distancing for shoppers has been lively for the last month, with much discussion with local businesses. Narrow streets and pavements combined with queues, high kerbs and traffic makes it impossible for shoppers to keep even 1 metre apart safely.

The temporary traffic orders are due in shortly and will help make space by pedestrianising High Street and Corn Square from 10am – 1pm from Monday to Saturday. They will also include a central 20mph zone which runs all the way to the Primary School.

The measures can be adjusted as necessary in response to feedback. There are still many free and cheap parking spaces within 50 metres of the town centre and Shopmobility can provide aids on request.

Fortunately, Herefordshire Council has found that remote working works well, both for individuals, teams and councillors and we have had very low rates of staff absence. Staff have been redeployed to act as link workers across the county and enforcement teams have been working with the police. We have had weekly meetings of ward Cllrs with our link workers and the town council. There has

been concerted work with care homes on providing PPE and containing infection, which was exacerbated by the national decision to discharge hospital patients to homes without testing for Covid. Many grants to businesses have been distributed. More recently the Council has led on containing the farm outbreak near Cradley.

But Herefordshire Council's resources have been stretched by both the flooding and Covid19 and by no means all its expenditure will be replaced by central government. Income has been dented by the business rate holiday and free parking.

So, the Council is well out of pocket and is currently working hard on how to address this. Sadly, it is likely this will require further economies just at the time when many of our residents and businesses are also facing financial struggles. However, the capital programme is set to continue, taking advantage of the very low rate for borrowing.

Free parking in Leominster comes to an end this Saturday – but an hour is only 50p in Etnam Street car park and free on-street parking remains. We hope the new traffic measures and the face coverings in shops rule will encourage many that it is safe to venture back into town and enjoy all it has to offer.

The summer and autumn will bring new challenges. Let's keep working even more closely together to find ways through.

Trish Marsh

