

Monkland and Stretford Parish Council

*Minutes of Monkland & Stretford Parish Council held on
Tuesday 22nd September 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;
Cllr Tony Neave and Cllr M Louth.

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

Present: 3 members of the public

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

1. **Acceptance of apologies for absence:** none
2. **Declarations of interests,** Disclosable Pecuniary, Non-Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary interests. None declared
 - 2.1 To discuss dispensation for Councillors with regard to future attendance at meetings.

The Clerk reminded Councillors of the six-month attendance legislation in force despite the Covid19 guidelines and that it was a realistic assumption that restrictions, with regard to public gatherings, would probably remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Whilst it was acknowledged that some Councillors do not have access to Zoom facilities, it was agreed it may be possible that provision could be made for these Councillors to share facilities. However, guidelines with regard to households meeting in neighbouring houses are also subject to regular change.

It was agreed that the Clerk should remind Councillors of their responsibilities to attend at least one meeting in a six-month period but to point out that this is not a local requirement but Government legislation. See below:

Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six-month consecutive period, in order to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor

Parish Councillors need to be aware that the six-month attendance rule is still in place during this Coronavirus pandemic.

3. **The minutes** from meeting held Tuesday 21st July 2020

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 21st July 2020 were agreed as a true record and it was unanimously voted that they be adopted and signed by the Chairman.

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

4.1 Open Session for members for the public to raise matters for future discussion.

There was a discussion with regard to the possible provision of brown bins for use for garden/green waste.

Councillors were reminded that it was necessary to make an appointment if wishing to use the local recycling facilities.

There was discussion with regard to the re-use of black plastic garden pots – it was suggested that Herefordshire Community Recycling and Re-use Group may be worth contacting as they may know of an outlet.

A resident new to the village enquired what action had been taken to try and reduce the speed on the A44 passing through Monkland. The Chairman explained that this had been an ongoing problem for over 35 years and within the last three years had been a major issue – with visits from the Police Commissioner and his Ambassador; two visits from Ian Connolly West Mercia Safer Road Partnership and two visits from Ray Wallace, Senior Engineer for

Balfour Beatty. It was also explained that Balfour Beatty had initiated a full investigation by ADL Traffic and Highways Engineering but there was no support/evidence for reducing the speed limit from 50mpm to 40mpm.

Following discussion, it was agreed that it was now up to the Parish Council to try and introduce speed restriction/monitoring measures like joining the Gateway scheme; introducing Speed Indicator Devices (SID). It was explained that the village could not take part in a Speed Awareness Scheme as participation in this scheme can only operate in areas with a 40mph and under speed restriction in place.

At this stage, the Chairman suggested the idea of possibly holding 10 meetings per year instead of the present 6 - every other month. With this in mind, it was agreed to hold an additional meeting in October – there will be the usual agenda items but this meeting is principally to discuss introducing possible speed restrictions on the A44.

Cllr Neave agreed to re- present information, (well in advance of this Road Safety meeting), about village 'gates' and how they may act as a 'warning' to people that they are entering a village.

Cllr Louth, who had joined the meeting via Zoom was, unfortunately, unable to take part due to some technical issues and therefore unable to express an opinion or vote on any issues being discussed. Cllr Louth left the meeting.

5. Chairman's report

Monkland and Stretford Parish Council – Chair's report September 2020

It has been a very quiet couple of months since our last meeting. Although the COVID virus is still with us – there has been a certain easing of restrictions and of the lockdown procedures, although arrangements have changed yet again to the rule of 6. Great care is still needed when meeting with others, especially when face to face and in confined areas.

Our support group is now winding down as villagers are able to collect their own shopping and other items – but help is always available should you need it – please shout ...and particularly and unfortunately if we have a further lockdown period.

We extend a very warm welcome to several families who have moved into the village – Jan and Paul Hann at 1, Pleck Orchard, Debbie and Carl Hill and their 3 girls at 2, Pleck Orchard; and Clare and Liam and their 3 children at Castle Bank, where Tagwell Lane meets the main road. Bruce and Jack Boulton have also moved into Bankcroft , with their chickens and cats! We hope that everyone will be very happy here and settle in well into local life.

It appears that the hole in the church roof is now mended – which is wonderful, and before the winter weather begins. Money is still needed to help pay the bill.

Some drainage work has been started in the village and is ongoing – hopefully before the winter rain.

Thanks are due to Derrick Richards and Dave Wall who have quietly got on with various maintenance jobs in the village –cutting up the tree which fell and blocked Tagwell Lane, tidying up around the Common, and with Tom Powell helping to improve the track running by the river along the side of the Common, and which had become very rutted. Great work everyone and thank you very much!

After the Common was cut in the summer, a donation was made to the church roof fund – thank you very much for that.

Our best wishes also go to Lesley our Parish Clerk on her move to Dilwyn. We hope that you will be very happy there, and that we continue to see your smiling face in our village from time to time!

Lesley Brook

Chair of Monkland and Stretford Parish Council

6. Footpath Officer's report and Monkland Common

As we head into autumn the summer battle with keeping footpaths clear of undergrowth is starting to ease off. Despite the local landowners and farmers making regular efforts to clear field margins I have struggled to keep up this year. There are still a number of paths which are difficult to navigate but I will get to them sooner or later. It can be a little disheartening to walk a path which was only cleared 4-weeks previously and wonder if you have ever been there with the strimmer.

In the last month or so the stile in the field opposite the Cheese Shop has been replaced with a kissing gate which was supplied to us by Herefordshire Council as part of a grant. This now gives a route through to the common from the main road which can be walked without having to climb over any stiles. This will be particularly useful if flooding occurs on the road again making it impassable by smaller vehicles.

I have been out replacing some of the signage and there is still more to do. If you are struggling to follow a path then please let me know.

Since my last report I have also issued seven further copies of the local footpath map which is encouraging. I suspect that with the COVID-19 restrictions people are starting to discover their local environment more and getting out for walks.

As ever, please stick to the footpaths wherever possible. If a path is blocked then please let me know and I will try to resolve it as soon as possible. Some paths are still “crop-blocked” and I am sure the farmers will not complain if you walk around the edge of the crop to get to the other side.

We seem to have an increasing number of dogs in the village so please remember to clean up after your dog if you have one, especially on the common and even in the fields surrounding the village. Dog faeces can pass on disease to livestock and humans alike.

The common is looking particularly good at this time of year with plenty of lush grass and some beautiful wild flowers still showing. This is a popular area for dog walkers and visitors alike. Without being a killjoy, I have spoken to a couple of people who drive into the area and have asked them not to drive on the common. These discussions have been well received and people tend to comply with this request when they understand that we are only looking to protect the common for the future.

It has also been noticed that larger areas of the common appear to be being cut by the households surrounding the common. I should just remind everyone that this is livestock grazing ground and there is no right or permission to cut the grass outside the curtilage of the properties. If anyone is unsure about where the boundary of the common is then please let me know and I will provide you with a copy of the plan.

Thank you for all your comments and support.

Peter Povall

Parish Footpath Officer - Monkland Common Working Group

6.1 With regard to the mowing of the Village Green in front of Pleck Cottage – it was agreed to issue a written letter of agreement between the Parish Council and Mr K Wheeler in that it is understood that this is acceptable but that it does not apply or establish rights to ownership now or in the future.

There is a similar agreement in place between the Parish Council and Mr Bernard Crick with regard to the Village Green adjacent to the Village Hall.

6.2 Cllr. Povall agreed to forward copies of footpath maps to new residents.

6.3 Cllr Neave reported that the stile/gate opposite the cheese shop needs some repair – Cllr. Povall will inspect – and report back whether a repair is possible or a replacement is needed.

6.4 There was a discussion about erecting warning signs along the A44 with regard to bikers and their speed. It was explained that it is not legal to erect signs on major highways – but the Clerk will liaise with the Locality Steward with regard to getting some 'Think Bike' signs erected.

6.5 Whilst it was unanimously agreed that a dedicated cycle lane on the main A44 would be totally unsafe, Cllr Neave is following up the possibility of mapping out a safe cycling route to Leominster.

6.6 An issue with electric quadbikes was raised and Cllr Neave offered to have a quiet word with the riders.

7. **Finance:** Accounts sheet/schedule of payment sheet circulated.

7.1 The Clerk confirmed submission of end of year 2019-20 accounts and the External Auditor had acknowledged receipt and that no further action is required.

7.2 The Notice of Public Rights is displayed on both Notice Boards.

7.3 Schedule of Payments sheet had been circulated.

7.4 It was unanimously agreed to pay all outstanding invoices.

8. **Highways and Environmental Matters** update on lengthsman Funding Grant.

Highways and Environmental Matters - the Clerk confirmed that the application for the Lengthsman Funding Grant had been successful. D C Gardening plans to start to undertake the various tasks outlined in the application once his grass cutting programme comes to an end. Cllr. Povall is already liaising with landowners and Lugg Drainage in advance of any drainage work being undertaken.

The Clerk explained that applications for the second phase of funding had now opened. The on-going flooding problem at Mill House/Mill Cottage were discussed. It was agreed that the clerk would ask D C Gardening to liaise with Cllr Turner to see if there was a solution to help elevate the problem – if so, then a second application for grant funded would be submitted.

It was acknowledged that this particular issue could pose a problem as it is not clear if this is a private road or still part of the Highways network – having been part of the original main highway before the bypass was constructed and consequently has not been decommissioned to a private road.

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

It was noted that The Barn has now been sold.

(9.1) Update on the hedge opposite Manor Cottage- the Clerk explained that she had, again, emailed Harpers without receiving a reply to date. It was agreed to send a second email.

10. **Newsletter** – The Clerk explained that the next Newsletter was due out at end of October. After some discussion, it was agreed to postpone the next issue until after the October Parish Council meeting- when there will be a second set of Minutes available mainly about the proposed A44 Speed restrictions.

The Clerk confirmed that the Web site had been upgraded and now met all the regulations /accessibility as set out by the Government to be implemented by September.

Date and time of next meeting – Tuesday 20th October 2020 – 7.00p.m.

It is hoped to get help/support to Cllr. Louth so that he is able to join the meeting with full Zoom technology.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30p.m.

Signed:

Date:

Ward report for Monkland parish council – September 2020

Glad to report that at present positive Covid19 test rates in the county are low at 8 per 100,000 in the week up to 19 September. The BBC have a useful data set by postcode at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51768274>

However, this useful document from our local data team, <https://understanding.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/1927/covid-19-impact-in-herefordshire-v15-without-links.pdf> shows the high rates of people in the county who are socially and economically vulnerable to the wider impact of Covid19 as well as those whose health is at risk.

Locally 1 in 3 people are at increased risk of severe illness from Covid19. When you add in all those who live with them and the others committed to keeping them well, it's easy to see that a very large number of our residents need to take extra care to keep their distance from others in order to feel it's safe for them to be out and about. Thanks for all your sustained networking and shared shopping in Monkland. It has enabled people to stay in as much as they need to, get the things they need and feel connected to the rest of the village. A three-way win!

I am committed to encouraging everyone in Leominster to continue taking sensible precautions so people from the villages feel safe to come into Leominster. Your market town needs your business! High Street is now closed on Fridays from 10-1pm for the Corn Square market, so it's a good time to shop outdoors with extra space and maybe catch up with old friends. Of course, you are very welcome any day! The town has lots of central parking at very reasonable rates, as well as free on street slots.

The water quality in the Lugg and Wye continues to breach legal limits, stopping most development in the Lugg catchment. Joint working across the border continues to look for ways forward to lower levels of pollutants reaching these rivers, protected at European level because of their importance for nature. Unfortunately, we are not alone in these problems: recent reports show that a tiny number of England's rivers are in good condition and that most of the biodiversity targets set internationally in 2010 have not been met. We need to find different ways of doing things, like remote working, that both help cut down environmental impacts and save us time and money. Initiatives like the Herefordshire Community Recycling and Reuse group help too, check out their Facebook page to see the range of materials that need not go to waste.

To visit Leominster Household Recycling Centre, you now need to book your slot online before visiting. This is because Halo are happily now reopening sporting activities in and around the leisure centre, so need their carpark back. The booking system has been in place at several county recycling centres for a while and is working well. Bookings are available on the council website at: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/rubbish-recycling/household-waste-recycling-centres> The system will need details of your address and vehicle registration number as part of the booking process. Time slots are 15-minutes long with first entry from 8.00am and last entry at 17.45. You will receive a pass which will need to be presented on arrival.

Herefordshire Council meetings have continued on Zoom and we are all becoming more adept. Monkland Parish Council and residents are taking to Zoom meetings like ducks to water! It is easier to attend briefing meetings that are a distance away online than it is in person, which I find a bonus, especially as the nights draw in. However, it is very important to meet people face to face as well: I look forward to the time when we can meet up in person once more, at least in smaller groups.

Trish Marsh, Ward councillor for Leominster South and Monkland.