

Monkton Combe Parish Council Newsletter

Annual Report 2017-2018

(This document and a comprehensive range of Monkton Combe Parish Council documents can be found on our website:- monktoncombepc.org)

There were no Parish Council elections were held this year and all Councillors have continued in their post for the year.

Parish Councillors and their individual responsibilities

Lyn Alvis	Footpaths and Bridleways, Rights of Access and Stiles, Neighbourhood Watch, ALCA Representative, B&NES Parishes liaison, Village Bus Service; Bus Shelter, Planning
Ross Buchanan – Vice Chairman	Village Signs – footpaths, roads etc., Grit Bins, Village Sweeper Truck, Public Seating and benches, Planning, Mill Lane Phone Box
Simon Call	Road Safety, Broadband, and School Liaison, Finance, Planning, Mill Leat and Weir
Gavin Douglas	Graffiti and Litter, Fly Tipping, Litter bins, Dog fouling, Monkton Combe School liaison, Police Authority liaison, Planning
Ann Stewart	Footpaths and Bridleways Rights of Access and Stiles, and Hedgerows and Verges, Planning
Des Wighton - Chairman	Planning Applications, policy and consultation, Parish Plan, ALCA Representative Village Hall liaison, Village Hall Car Park and Garden, Village Playground – health safety and maintenance, Village Lock-up
Mike Wareham	Church liaison, Roads and Highways, Gullies and Drainage
Geoff Davis – Clerk	Responsible Financial Officer, Parish Notice Boards and Communication Telephone 840201. Email. clerk@monktoncombepc.org

Meetings

The Parish Council met on 6 occasions during the period 2017-2018 which were 6 meetings of the Full Council. The meeting on the 15th May 2017 was the Annual Parish Council Meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting or Meeting of Electors took place on 18th April.

Councillors also attended meetings with other Parish Councils and B&NES at joint forums and met with related organisations such as The Bath Preservation Trust and Highways England in order to represent the electors and to be kept informed of any plans that may affect the Parish.

Planning

During the year we have considered many different planning applications for works in or near the Parish. We only comment on purely ‘Planning’ grounds, using Local and National planning policies for guidance which still support the purposes of Green Belts and AONBs.

The Parish Council also responds to Planning matters in the neighbouring county of Wiltshire, monitoring any activities on the Wiltshire side of the valley.

Village Cleaning

The Parish Council employs Ian Croker to keep our public footpaths maintained and the village clean and clear of litter. He continues to do a fine job throughout the Parish, so a huge vote of thanks is once again due to him. He clearly makes a very noticeable difference to the village and surrounding roads as a whole, and is one of the most important services we provide.

B&NES Council are reviewing the scheme which funds this service, and the Parish Council has been mindful in setting the budget and precept that this funding may reduce or cease.

Footpaths and Open Spaces Maintenance

The Parish Council employs Jeff Avis Garden Services to keep the village car park area, Miss Davies’s Garden, and the playground mown and maintained. This also makes a very noticeable difference to the village and this fine job throughout the Parish also deserves a huge vote of thanks.

The council has also worked with B&NES Council and Landowners to maintain and improve footpaths and open spaces.

Missing Footpath - between Summer Lane and footpath BA16/1

The footpath has been fully restored with gates, waymarks and clearance of the path. Additionally, the fence line through which people had been passing to exit through the landowner’s private property was also made good by the volunteers.

Highways Maintenance

The council has worked with B&NES Highways to achieve a number of road safety improvements and continues to progress further works.

Parish Works – Repairs and Improvements

Village Playpark – Several items of play equipment need replacement to ensure the playpark remains a safe place for children. The parish budget has been set accordingly to achieve at least some of this during this year.

Phone Box, Mill Lane – The refurbishment of the telephone box as a village information point and book store has been planned and was put forward as an appropriate project for funding by the Community Empowerment Fund from which £280 has been made available. The total project cost is £600 and this has been placed in the budget for next year.

Broadband Improvements for Monkton Combe – Your Council continues to work to improve the provision of Broadband to the village. Following the attendance of Tony Najdoski of True Speed, a provider of fibre connections to premises in rural communities, at the previous meeting there has been much correspondence and discussion. Similar correspondence and discussion has taken place with BT OpenReach. Following this there was a meeting with the Wheelwright Arms and the School. It is intended to put a proposal to OpenReach for the central area of the village to include the school. The Parish Newsletter recommended residents signed up for a grant, however, the process is very difficult so not many have done so. Truespeed are holding an event at Hinton Charterhouse Village Hall on Wednesday 11th April at 6:30 p.m. and this may be an opportunity to make some significant progress.

Tucking Mill & the Viaduct – The re-routing of the footpaths and fencing of the fishing lake have all been completed this year.

Parish Council Finances

Following on from the deficits incurred in previous years, the year 2015-16 generated a surplus of £1800 to begin to remedy the reduced reserves. The year to 31st March 2017 continued this process with a surplus of £2,200. This year 2017-18 has continued this process again with a surplus £2,876, and has restored reserves to a safe level of £13,483. Nonetheless, it is considered that substantial Parish and Other Works will be needed in the year ahead, and that the Parish Works budgeted expenditure should be increased from £500 to £4,500 to reflect expenditure of £1,000 to repair and re-surface the village carpark, and £3,000 to replace items of play equipment in the play park. It was also considered that the Other Works budgeted expenditure should be increased from £600 to £1,600 in order that the Parish Council would be able to provide a grant of £1,000 towards the cost of replacing the Village Hall floor. The Parish Council is also mindful that B&NES are considering reducing or ceasing the funding for the Village Cleaning and a significant increase in precept would be necessary to cover this. Thus the precept has been set at £7,268, a £1,000 increase on the previous year's precept, to meet some of this increased expenditure, the rest being met from the reserves. This precept represents a 15% increase in the average household contribution of the Parish Council proportion of Council Tax. The Parish Council also receives a now much reduced Council Support Grant of £30.

B&NES Ward Councillor support - Finally, we thank Neil Butters, our Ward Councillor for his ongoing help and support throughout the year.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in Monkton Combe Village Hall at 7:30 pm on Monday 23rd April.

This is an opportunity for all residents of the Parish to attend a meeting with the Parish Council and other local groups, the Church, the School and the W.I and allows us all to hear from you – question us on our actions, give us suggestions of what you'd like us to do in and for the village, and get involved.

Please try to support the Council by attending.

Des Wighton. Chairman, Monkton Combe Parish Council.