

Monkton Combe Parish Council Newsletter

Annual Report 2019-2020

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

2019 was an Election year and the following people were nominated for election:- Alvis, Lyn: Bradby, James Christopher: Buchanan, Ross: Douglas, Alastair Gavin: Wareham, Michael John: Wighton, Des - Simon Call and Ann Stewart did not wish to stand for re-election.

There being only six nominations a vacancy was automatically created. Furthermore, Ross Buchanan declined his Acceptance of Office thereby creating a further vacancy. The vacancy created by lack of nominations was filled by Co-option of Andreea Imecs at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 13th May 2019. The other vacancy was duly advertised, and the post filled by Co-option of Adelle Brenner at the Parish Council meeting on 8th July 2019.

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, Village Sweeper Truck
James Bradby	Church liaison, Village Signs – footpaths, roads etc., Footpaths and Bridleways Rights of Access and Stiles, and Hedgerows and Verges, Planning
Adelle Brenner	Road Safety, Public Seating and benches, and School Liaison
Gavin Douglas	Graffiti and Litter, Fly Tipping, Litter bins, Dog fouling, Monkton Combe School liaison, Police Authority liaison, Planning
Andreea Imecs	Finance, Broadband, Planning, Mill Leat and Weir, Grit Bins
Mike Wareham	Vice Chairman Roads and Highways, Gullies and Drainage, 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, Mill Lane Phone Box
Geoff Davis – Clerk	Responsible Financial Officer, Parish Notice Boards and Communication

Meetings

The Parish Council met on 7 occasions during the period 2019-2020 which were 7 meetings of the Full Council. The meeting on the 13th May 2019 was the Annual Parish Council Meeting. The final meeting in the year on 20th March 2020 was the Coronavirus Civil Emergency meeting and took place remotely Online using Zoom Software.

The Annual Parish Meeting or Meeting of Electors took place on 29th April 2019.

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, and continues to work throughout the Emergency, so a huge vote of thanks is once again due to him. He clearly makes a very noticeable difference to the village and roads as a whole, and is one of the most important services we provide.

B&NES Council have now ceased the Parish Sweeper scheme, and following protests from this and other Parish Councils, are providing transitional funding to phase it out. The Parish Council resolved to continue the Parish Sweeper scheme by funding it from the Parish Precept. This is the reason for the further increase in the Parish Precept this year. Similar increases will be necessary in the following year to compensate for the funding from B&NES reducing to zero.

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. Jeff Avis has also been asked to continue his work throughout the Emergency period.

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

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 – The Parish Council continues to progress the items of play equipment that need replacement to ensure the playpark remains a safe place for children, with some significant repairs this year. Reserves continue to be carried forward to achieve more of this refurbishment during this year.

Phone Box, Mill Lane – The refurbishment of the telephone box as a village information point and book store is now an ongoing project, and the replacement windows, display boards and maps, and paint have all been procured. Parish Councillors volunteered to complete these works in the coming months, but weather and the current situation have prevented further progress.

Broadband Improvements for Monkton Combe – Your Council continues to work to improve the provision of Broadband to the village. Truespeed are now active in the area, and continue to progress the development and installation of their service into the Parish.

Parish Council Finances

Following the restoration of Parish Council Reserves in 2017-18 to a safe level of £13,483, the Parish Council further increased the precept to fund substantial Parish and Other Works in the year, budgeting expenditure of £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, over and above day to day repairs. It also increased the Other Works budgeted expenditure 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.

Again this year funds for the Car park and Playpark are carried forward in the reserves to further progress these works during the coming year.

B&NES Council ceased the Parish Sweeper scheme last year and implemented the transitional funding in order to phase it out. In the light of this reducing funding to pay for the Parish Sweeper the Precept has again been raised by £700 to £8,668. This increase compensates for the further reduction in Parish Sweeper funding. As the funding from B&NES reduces to zero over the next year, it is expected that a similar increase in precept will arise in the following year.

The Parish Council has set a deficit budget for 2020-2021, showing a deficit of £1,712 reflecting the cost of the remaining anticipated works to the playpark and carpark. This will yield reserves of approximately £10,500 by the year end.

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

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held REMOTELY – ONLINE using ZOOM at 7:30 pm on Tuesday 12th May. Please just click on the online invitation on the agenda to join the meeting. This gives free and automatic access. But please call or e-mail the clerk on 01179860369 clerk@monktoncombecpc.org if you need any help to do so.

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.

On this occasion it is also an excellent opportunity to share with other residents and the Parish Council your experiences of the Coronavirus Emergency Lockdown, to support each other and your Council.

Des Wighton. Chairman, Monkton Combe Parish Council.