

## **MONKTON COMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual meeting held in the Village Hall on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at 7pm.

Present: Cllr Kevin Murphy (Chairman)  
Cllr Lyn Alvis (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Alison Bossom,  
Cllr Alison Sturgess-Durden, Cllr Ross Buchanan.  
Clerk: Mrs Jane Angell

Others Present: Peter Duppa Miller (Secretary B&NES Local Councils Group).

Apologies: None  
Visitors: 10 visitors attended, including Ward Councillor for Monkton  
Combe Neil Butters.

Minutes:

### **1. Election of Chairman**

The Clerk opened the meeting at 7pm and advised the need to elect a Chairman for the forthcoming year. Cllr Alvis proposed the re-election of the present Chairman which was seconded by Cllr Bossom. The meeting duly re-elected Cllr Kevin Murphy as Chairman and the Declaration of Acceptance was signed. The Chairman then proposed Cllr Alvis as Vice-Chairman seconded by Cllr Sturgess-Durden.

### **2. The Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed all the visitors to the meeting and introduced the new Councillor, Mr Ross Buchanan. The Councillors and Clerk gave a brief introduction to themselves and their connection to the village. The Chairman thanked the Councillors and Clerk for all their hard work in the previous year including Ray Franks. Mr Franks stepped down from the office of councillor at the recent elections. The Chairman also thanked the Village Hall Committee for all their hard work over the past year and congratulated them on the success of their organised events, in particular the recent Royal Wedding Party. The Chairman congratulated Cllr Butters on his re-election as Ward Councillor.

The Chairman then went on to explain the role of the Parish Council and what it does. This work includes attending meetings such as The VPA (Valley Parishes Alliance), BPT (Bath Preservation Trust), PACT (Police and Communities Together) and Liaison Group Meetings. It is consulted and comments upon documents circulated by the Council and other statutory bodies, e.g. The B&NES Core Strategy and Winter Maintenance as well as typically 20 to 25 planning applications each year ranging from tree works, house extensions to larger plans such as the recent Governors' Field application which at the moment is still pending a decision by B&NES. One of the

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aspirations currently being discussed by the Parish Council is the proposed preparation of a Parish or Community Plan.

### **3. The Localism Bill & Community Plan**

The Chairman advised that under the new Localism Bill the Parish Council's role would change and introduced Peter Duppa Miller (also Clerk to Combe Hay) inviting him to give an update and commentary on the Localism Bill. At the moment it is still a bill with 207 clauses alone, and is still at the early stages of discussion with many adjustments required to make it ready for the first reading in December 2011. The second reading is due January 2012. 28 MPs will scrutinize the bill from January to March and comments will be stated in the commons in May of next year. At this stage the bill is still open to change as there will be further debate. The process will be repeated through 2012/13 before it can become an Act and then receives Royal Assent. There is a long way to go on this debate so at the moment it can only be used as a rough guide as to what the bill may become but it is worth keeping an eye on it as there will be changes that will affect parish councils.

The bill lacks clarity i.e. the definition of 'council' is not clear and could refer to any type of council. 'Neighbourhood' is another term that is not precise could mean town, ward, or street etc. Development again not clear and could mean large or small.

Principally the affect on parishes could be:

- Regional Spatial Strategy abolished.
- Standards Board which would include code of conduct.
- Residents / electors would they have the power to call a referendum and in turn would this apply to the precept?

These are just a few examples of the need for clarity. It should be noted that the 'Neighbourhood Plan' referred to in the bill is not the same as the Parish or Community Plan.

Mr Duppa Miller then went on to describe the setting up of a Parish / Community Plan saying that he thought it a good idea to start now as on average it takes 2 -5 years to complete and will need input from the community. The Chairman outlined initial suggestions for the type of plan headings such as, design and conservation, facilities for elderly and the young, improving biodiversity, sustainable employment, services threatened i.e. library / shop and specific projects such as the Mill Leat. It is proposed that residents within the Parish be invited to form a Steering Group as it will need input from many people to help move it forward and provide ideas. As an example Combe Hay have 11 which includes younger folk. They started with an exploratory questionnaire, held open days and a final survey for votes. It was agreed that Monkton Combe School should be part of it as it makes up a large part of the village. The Chairman asked those present to let it be known help would be required and advised that the Parish Council would be publicising this further in the near future.

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#### 4. Clerks Report

The financial statement for the year was discussed and agreed to be an accurate account. The statement will be appended to the approved minutes.

#### 5. Matters Arising from the Annual Meeting on 27th May 2009

- a. **Community Speed Watch:** The layout of the village did not meet the criteria for the speed watch equipment. Traffic calming measures may be something to explore under the Parish Plan.
- b. **Monkton Combe School**  
**Masterplan:** Several applications have come forward the Music Block application had one issue regarding the outdoor performance area included. For the Governor's Field application the Parish Council felt no 'special circumstances' had been demonstrated. The Parish Council had organised a public consultation and taken on board views expressed. The school are considering withdrawing or changing the plan due to comments received.
- c. **Waste Collection and Village Cleaning:** The Parish Council had considered the introduction of a waste bin at the top of Perryhill may encourage litter.
- d. **Grit Bins and Winter Maintenance:** Cllr Alvis reported that salt bags will be delivered by B&NES Council prior to the start of the bad weather. These bags could be stored near the most dangerous spots to be dispensed when necessary with advice on the appropriate use of salt. For example, it appears it is not generally known that a small amount goes a long way.
- e. **Highways & Footpaths:** Survey recorded made.....  
Brassknocker Hill – Flooding problem hopefully solved with extra manholes and drains installed.  
Innox Drung - now repaired.  
Mount Pleasant footpath in a poor state. There are major works in the pipeline at Monkton Prep and B&NES believe it appropriate to hold back on path work until the construction traffic impact is known.  
Hedges will be cut back at the appropriate time so as not to damage the local flora and fauna.  
Bollards on the corner of Church Lane & Summer Lane: There have been no further incidents of large vehicles hitting the house wall since the installation. A visitor wished to thank B&NES for installing the bollards.
- f. **Drainage:** Much improved after gully maintenance.
- g. **Playground:** Inspected quarterly by B&NES. A gate has been installed by the parish Council. Paint work has needed tidying up in places.
- h. **Bus Service:** No change.

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- i. **Viaduct Hotel:** Waiting for restated planning application to go in to resolve planning issues. Still residential.
- j. **Combe Grove Manor:** No Complaints of noise recently. The Parish Council contact with the hotel is good queries dealt with rapidly.
- k. **BT Phone Box:** Long debate with BT as to whether the box was viable eventually the light was fixed and the box is still in working order.
- l. **Mobile Library Service:** The service has been deleted by B&NES due to inadequate use and safety issues for the vehicle to park. May this could also be a Parish Plan item.
- m. **Parish Policing:** Generally theft is minimal but there have been incidents. At the moment metal is being targeted. There are no police vehicle visits now, so ideas are needed to promote contact such as a timed walk around visits from the PCSO would be helpful.
- n. **Oldfield Old Boys Rugby Club:** Issues with noise still a concern. This is the noise associated with the club house not the playing field. Parish Council trying to keep communication open with the Club.

#### **6. Valley Parishes Alliance (VPA)**

The VPA incorporates the nine parishes running through the Limpley Stoke Valley meeting every 4 – 6 weeks. At the last meeting attended by Cllr Alvis the Alliance advised the World Heritage Site environs had not yet been defined but it was suggested that the green spaces around Bath would become part of the Heritage Site. There was a discussion on broadband speed which is very poor in the area the VPA are looking in to setting up a website. The lack of representation by the VPA on the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust Committee is a concern and efforts are being made to rectify this so that the views of people living on the canal are put forward to the Trust. The VPA have a representative on the Bath & North East Somerset Transport Committee and have voiced worries that not all the accidents on the A36 have been recorded thoroughly. The VPA have been told this will now be more comprehensive. The £100 per year subscription to the VPA contributes to costs such as the post of Clerk and the website. The subscription is calculated on the size of each parish.

#### **7. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)**

Each year the CPRE hold a best village competition. This is not just about the best flowers and the look of a village/area it is also about the community and the achievements made by the community on local projects. It was suggested this may be a useful aspiration when considering the parish plan.

#### **8. Website & Village Communication**

The Chairman thanked Peter Bossom for the monthly newsletter and the distributors of the newsletter. It was suggested that the communication within the village could be further developed. This might include promoting use of the website, perhaps introducing a Facebook of Twitter page, and swapping

contact details among the various groups within the village. This could for example, help gathering the views of the parish on planning applications and provide items for the newsletter.

**9. Open Discussion**

- The point was raised that the demographics of the parish have changed and there are now more families. Should we therefore be looking into having more play facilities or having events at the hall that would be tailored for children and teenagers? The Chairman thought this would be an important aspect in developing the Community Plan.
- There is a need to establish the ownership of the fence at the back of the Village Hall as it is in a poor state and needs attention.
- There have been new developments in energy saving which as yet are not under the government scheme but may be worth keep an eye on in the future.
- A sign has gone up that the company Mendip Fire based at the Mill are adverting that they intend to move towards energy saver products i.e. solar panels.
- The question of when the Annual Meeting Minutes should be signed was raised. This will be reviewed by the Parish Council.
- A point for the Parish/Community Plan what will be the visual impact on wind turbines in neighbouring parishes if the matter arose?
- Increasing councillor numbers-Cllr Butters had been in touch with B&NES solicitors who have advised that other parishes were looking to increase numbers and that this being the case the intension was to do all 51 parishes in the district together. It was noted that with only five councilors it was difficult to keep the quorum.
- Cllr Butter also announced that after the elections the B&NES control had changed with the Conservative and Lib Dems each having 29 seats. Working with the others Lib Dems expected to take minority control.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

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