

Monkton Combe Parish Council Newsletter

Annual Report 2021-2022

(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 this year and all Councillors continued in post. However, Cllr. Gavin Douglas resigned as Councillor at the meeting on 25th May 2021 as he has moved away from the village. The vacancy has been advertised as required, but remains unfilled. However, Mr. Charles Carr has indicated a willingness to stand as Councillor, and is expected to be co-opted as a member of the Council at the meeting on May 16th 2022.

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
Vacancy	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 6 occasions during the period 2021-2022 which were 6 meetings of the Full Council. The meeting on the 25th May 2021 was the Annual Parish Council Meeting. All meetings were held in the Village Hall under prevailing Social Distancing measures and Risk Assessments. The option to attend Online using Zoom Software was available for any Councillor or member of the public indisposed due to Coronavirus.

The Annual Parish Meeting or Meeting of Electors took place on 18th May 2021 and was also held both in the Village Hall and remotely Online using Zoom Software.

Councillors also attended occasional other meetings with other Parish Councils and B&NES at joint forums and with related organisations such as The Bath Preservation Trust, for the most part, online.

Planning

During the year we have considered a number of 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. Comments have been agreed via e-mail, with as much consultation with residents as possible.

Village Cleaning

The Parish Council employs Ian Croker to keep our public footpaths maintained and the village clean and clear of litter. We have deemed him to be an essential worker throughout the pandemic period, and indeed he has kept the village clean and free from litter throughout, including the various lockdowns. He continues to do a fine job throughout the Parish, and continued 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.

Ian Croker’s work is now fully funded from the Precept, and paid according to Local Government Pay Scales.

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. Again this has been deemed essential work and continued through the emergency. 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.

Highways Maintenance

The council has worked with B&NES Highways to achieve a number of road safety improvements and continues to progress further works. We have agreed some limited parking restrictions for Trollopes Hill with residents and B&NES Highways. The need for these has arisen out of the increased use of the Canal and river for leisure during the Pandemic. Our most recent knowledge confirms that this work should go ahead in the coming financial year.

Parish Works – Repairs and Improvements

Village Hall and Village Car Park – The Car park has been thoroughly swept clean and re-lined. The Parish Council made a grant of £500 towards the cost of the new AV system for the Village Hall.

Village Playpark – The first Playgorund Inspection by RoSPA Inspectors was carried out this year. The work included a meeting with the inspector and a checklist for the monthly inspections. RoSPA will again do the annual inspection this year and subsequent years, with the Chair carrying the monthly inspections from the checklist. Repairs and replacements have continued, following up on items identified in the inspection.

Miss Davis Garden – Other than the general maintenance by Jeff Avis no other works have been required this year.

Phone Box, Mill Lane – The refurbishment of the telephone box having been completed last year, it is now functioning as a Book and JigSaw Puzzle exchange, and information point.

Broadband Improvements for Monkton Combe – As far as we are aware all Broadband improvements have been completed. However, it appears that Truespeed are not now prepared to connect the properties in Tucking Mill.

Lockup Repairs and Maintenance – Some further repairs are necessary and these have been agreed with Historic England, the Contractor approved, with the works likely to proceed in the coming months.

Bus Shelter – The Bus Shelter (on the A36 which is owned by the Parish Council) needs a repair to the roof. We have been in discussion with B&NES and WECA about whether this is the most appropriate location, and to see if they would take over responsibility for it. However, the repair is now sufficiently urgent that we have budgeted to carry this out in the coming year.

Parish Council Finances

Parish Council Reserves at the end of 2021-22 have reduced slightly from last year but are still just at a safe level of £12,841. However, the Lockup repairs of £1,720 have yet to be Invoiced, so the actual reserve for the coming year will be £11,121. The Parish Council has increased the precept by £1,615 to £10,983 having set a budget of £1,000 for the repair to the Bus Shelter. It also reflects the anticipated inflationary increases likely to occur in the coming year.

The Parish Council has therefore set a balanced budget, and so no significant impact on reserves is expected.

Full details of all the Councils Finances can be found on the website at <http://monktoncombec.org/core-business/finance/> where the Audit is currently in progress.

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 in the VILLAGE HALL at 7:30 pm on Thursday 12th May.

The Parish Council is required to hold such a meeting, in person and in public between 1st March and 1st June each year. All necessary Risk Assessments, Social Distancing and other measures, appropriate under the prevailing Government Guidance at the time, will be in place for those attending in person.

You should attend in person, but if unable or uncomfortable attending this public event in person you can attend remotely online using Zoom. The technology available to the Parish Council will inevitably limit your participation to some extent.

If you wish to attend the meeting online, please contact the clerk on clerk@monktoncombec.org in advance of the meeting, in order that the appropriate arrangements and meeting Invitation can be sent to you in good time for your attendance.

Des Wighton. Chairman, Monkton Combe Parish Council.