

MONKTON COMBE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Monkton Combe Parish
held at 7:30 p.m. on 18th April 2023 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr. Des Wighton (Chairman), Cllr. Lyn Alvis, Cllr. James Bradby, Cllr. Adelle Brenner, Cllr. Charles Carr, Cllr. Penny Tranter, Cllr. Mike Wareham, Mr. Geoff Davis – Clerk, Frank Dunn, Mr. Ray Franks, Fiona Gourley, Olly Lynn, Emily Marr, David LeTall, Diana LeTall, Becki McKinlay (School), Ward Cllr. Neil Butters

1. Apologies for absence None

2. Chairman's Report. The Chairman opened the meeting, introduced the Councillors present, and welcomed everyone. He then summarised the Annual Report, which has been distributed to households within the Parish via the Parish Newsletter, highlighting the main points. The report is available as a separate document. He thanked Ward Councillor Neil Butters, on his retirement, for all his work on behalf of, and contributions to the Parish.

3a. Monkton Combe School: Becki McKinlay Director of External Relations – Monkton Combe School, Olly Lynn Director of Operations addressed the meeting as follows:-

Pupil numbers at the school have remained stable following the return from the pandemic, with around 400 Seniors (220 boarding) and 300 Prep (50 boarding).

No. 4 The Croft has been put up for sale and so in future it will have more permanent residency. The Quarry planning Application remains current and has yet to be determined. The School is looking to repair the potholes in the Clank, but a more substantial repair is too expensive. The Coronation Week-End is an Exeat End of Term will be 6th July, and the usual Summer Camps will take place.

3b. St Michael's and All Angels Church. Cllr. James Bradby gave a report as follows:-

Average attendance has returned to pre-Covid levels, and if anything slightly higher at around 35 for normal services, and rather higher for special services. Dee Clark, assisted by a couple of School pupils has started a childrens group with 6 – 8 attending, and this has renewed the long link between the School and the Church. Dee has also organized a regular Craft event, 3 – 4 times in the year, with some 60 people attending and participating in a wide range of Crafts.

The Church itself is in reasonably good repair, although gutters had fallen from the tower, and these have now been replaced by steeple-jacks. The Churchyard wall has been repaired and Roger Crocker carries out well, the quite difficult work of maintaining the Churchyard.

Finally, a Cream tea is planned for the Coronation Sunday at 3 p.m. followed by Songs of Parise.

3c. Village Hall Committee: Cllr. Des Wighton, as chair of the Village Hall Management Committee reported as follows:-

After a slow restart to activities by some of the regular users of the Hall, bookings picked up and were largely back to pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year, albeit the balance of activities had changed somewhat.

The year was kicked off in style with the ever popular Burns Night Supper with catering provided by the W.I., who, although no longer meeting in the hall itself, were ready to prepare the excellent meal to accompany the festivities.

The audio-visual system came into its own again in June as the Platinum Jubilee celebrations were televised to the large screen in the hall and attracted a large local audience who gathered to watch together and partake of a buffet lunch provided by the Church. On a similar, but more austere occasion, it was used to show the Queen's funeral service in September which was not so well attended, people probably wanting to mark the day in the comfort and quiet of their own homes .

Further discussions regarding the replacement windows occupied a lot of the committee's time in 2022 with various options being examined and appraised together with attempts to raise some funding from the National Lottery scheme which so far have proved unsuccessful.

Despite this we can look forward to next year with optimism. Our bank balance remains healthy although recent inflation rises need monitoring.

All our committee members have stuck with us and, I hope, are looking forward to helping manage this great village asset for another year at least.

In what has become a standard 'last word'. I should like to thank my fellow officers, Mike and Martyn for their time and effort in keeping the Hall functioning and profitable but also to all committee members, and David in particular, for their continued work on making it a safe and comfortable environment for all our users and to safeguard its future for the benefit of the whole community.

There will be a live screening of the Coronation on Saturday 6th May in the Village Hall

4d. Women's Institute. Monkton Combe MCWI continues to meet at Claverton Community Hall on the second Thursday of each month but despite the location of our meetings, we still feel historically linked to Monkton Combe. Some of our meetings are open to the public and we would very much like anyone from Monkton Combe to come along and hear our speakers. Our next open meeting is in September when our speaker will be Gavin Bates, a veteran of several Everest attempts. It promises to be a very good talk! Our latest charitable involvement was to supply cakes for a coffee morning at The Packhorse in Southstoke to help raise money to repair the water wheel at Claverton Pumping Station. This was quite a success. We very much enjoy catering the Burns Supper each January and hope you continue to need us. Our other annual event now is a stall at Claverton Horticultural Society's annual show each September where we showcase our typical WI skills of jams, chutneys and cakes.....plus a wide selection of paperbacks at bargain prices! Our membership remains fairly stable, but as with many organisations nowadays, we would welcome new and younger members. Pass the word around!

5. Other matters highlighted or discussed:-

- The Valley Parishes Alliance has effectively been moth-balled, and funds contributed by each Parish returned to them.
- It was highlighted that wooden footbridge over the brook has a number of rotten timbers. The Parish Council will discuss with B&NES Public Rights of Way to arrange an inspection and any necessary repairs.
- A suggestion was made that grant funding might be sought for the Lock-Up repairs as it is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- The Chair has dealt with the Izeo-Construction vehicle that has been parked in the Village Car Park for several weeks.