

MONKSILVER PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7.25 p.m. in the EMN Hall.

Councillors Present:

Mervyn Orchard-Lisle – Chairman

Andrew Howe – Vice-Chairman

MPC Councillors:

Katherine Adams – Retiring Councillor

Dan Cotterill

Christopher Hill

Somerset Councillor Christine Lawrence

Applicant Councillors

Lydia Appleton

Paul Appleton

In attendance:

Mary Jacobs (clerk)

- Apologies for absence** were received from Councillors John Stace and Sue Westbury (Retiring). Cllr. Lawrence submitted apologies from Marcus Kravis. (Christine is attending the Monksilver PC meeting and Marcus is attending the Dunster PC meeting).
- Election of chairman and vice-chairman.**

Mervyn stood down as chairman. Mary asked Mervyn if he wished to stand as chairman again. Mervyn declined. Mary asked Andrew, as the vice-chairman, if he was willing to stand as chairman. Andrew stated that he is willing to continue as vice-chair but does not wish to take on the main role. Mary informed the meeting that it is usual for the vice-chair to step up to the role of chairman when the chairman resigns. Mary then asked the other councillors if any were willing to take on the role of chairman. They all had other commitments, or were fairly new in the post of councillor.

Mervyn reluctantly agreed to continue for a final year but gave notice that he will stand down in May 2025.

Election of chairman – Mervyn Orchard-Lisle
Proposed by Andrew Howe. Seconded by Dan Cotterill. All were in favour.

Election of vice-chairman – Andrew Howe.
Proposed by Dan Cotterill. Seconded by Mervyn Orchard-Lisle. All were in favour.
- Acceptance of the offices** of chairman and vice-chairman declarations were signed by Mervyn and Andrew and countersigned by Mary.
- The code of conduct and the standing orders** were re-adopted without amendment.
- Retiring Councillors.**

Mervyn on behalf of all the council and the community thanked Kate and Sue for their service, particularly for the flood prevention and for the fundraising for the defibrillators.

Two applications have been received. The Somerset Returning Officer has confirmed that at least 10 requests to hold an election had not been received and that therefore Monksilver Parish Council may co-opt in accordance with the standing orders.

Co-option of councillors:
The two applicants, Lydia Appleton and Paul Appleton left the meeting for the councillors to discuss the applications.

Whilst both applicants were considered suitable. One councillor had concerns about a husband and wife jointly serving as councillors at the same time. Somerset Councillor, Christine Lawrence, confirmed that this is acceptable under the Local Government regulations.

Paul and Lydia were then invited to rejoin the meeting and were welcomed as councillors.
- Acceptance of office as councillors.** Lydia and Paul were handed copies of the code of conduct and signed the acceptance of office forms, which were counter signed by Mary.
- Declaration of interests** – none were declared.

8. **Allocation of Parish Councillors' areas of responsibility:**
- Planning – Mervyn
 - Highways – John and Chris
 - Flooding and drainage – John and Paul
 - Defibrillator monitoring - Lydia
 - Neighbourhood watch – Lydia
 - Newsletter – Paul
 - Website - Chris
 - Footpaths – Dan
 - Deer Management – Dan
 - Eyes on the ground – Andrew
 - In addition, Mervyn requested help with progressing the proposed work in upgrading the Coleridge Way footpath through the churchyard, specifically relating to grant applications. Lydia agreed to help.
9. **The minutes of the annual parish council meeting** held on 15th May 2023 were approved as correct and signed by the chairman.
10. **There were no matters arising**, other than itemised on the agenda.
11. **Approval of the income and expenditure** for the year ended 31/03/24 had previously been circulated and published on the website for inspection. All councillors present approved the spreadsheet for inspection and approval by the internal auditor, Sarah Watling. John gave his approval prior to the meeting.
12. **AGAR.** The councillors present all gave approval, and John gave approval prior to the meeting, to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Part 2, including approval of the following by the council:
- Certificate of Exemption
 - Internal Audit
 - Section 1 – Agreement of the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23
 - Section 2 – Accounting Statement.
- Mervyn and Mary countersigned the AGAR.

The meeting gave approval for the AGAR to be inspected and approved by the internal auditor, Sarah Watling and then sent to P.K. Littlejohn, the Government appointed auditors for parish councils.

The meeting thanked Sarah for auditing the accounts.

13. **Notice of contact details.** All councillors must now provide a published telephone number and it is best practice to publish an email address. All councillors have complied with this request and the contact details will be published on the parish notice board and also on the website.
14. **Overview of the year.** Mervyn summarised the activities of the Parish Council since the last Annual Meeting.
- April 2023 saw the formation of the new Somerset Unitary Council. Two county Councillors were elected, Christine Lawrence and Marcus Kravis.
 - With Tina Coggan moving out of the village resulting in her standing down, Chris Hill was co-opted and welcomed as a new councillor.
 - Because of an accident Carol Juffs had resigned as Parish Clerk. Luckily Mary Jacobs volunteered to be our new Parish Clerk and we have been lucky enough to benefit from her vast experience in Local Government, all at no cost to the Parish.

Significant achievements have been made during the year, namely:

- Following meetings with Avon & Somerset Police's Dan Cox and Somerset Council's Kathryn Tyson, the wish to reduce the speed limit through the village down to 20mph, became a practical proposition which received the support of most of the village in August. Several parishioners agreed to fund the project and it is now due to be implemented in September. At the same time the positions of some of the signs will be relocated into more logical positions.
- With the help of Kathryn Tyson of SC Highways, many potholes have been repaired, but there are still more outstanding. Also, some of the damaged road signs were replaced, plus additional signs erected at Elworthy Cross and Fair Cross to discourage HGV drivers from travelling through Monksilver.
- With the help of Kali Martin of SC, a new drain run has been reconstructed down Birchanger Lane and High Street. Also work has been carried out to reduce the risk of flooding opposite Wisteria Cottage and at The Granary.
- After much discussion a Telemetry Device has been fixed on the bridge near The Forge to give advance warning of rising water levels in the river, and consequential flooding risks.
- The new Website maintained by Black Cat is now up and running.
- On investigation, John Stace made us aware that the village sewage pumping station was not watertight and that if flooded, raw sewage would add to the floodwaters. Having brought in the CEO of Wessex Water into the problem, the whole pumping station has been rebuilt, with Wessex Water regarding Monksilver as an example for them to follow elsewhere. However, as reported at the open meeting, sewage continues to seep into the river and there is further work to be undertaken with the pumps.
- In November, a meeting was held with Elliott Jackson of the Environment Agency, involving a walk round the village inspecting the river, and discussing the riparian responsibilities of landowners. A further meeting is proposed for the 20th May at 10:30am and residents are encouraged to attend

Particular thanks are due to John Stace who has spear-headed most of these initiatives.

In response to the review, in reference to the speed control, two councillors commented that some residents were opposed to the scheme, but nevertheless had not objected. Somerset Councillor, Christine Lawrence confirmed that she had attended the open consultative meeting where the matter was fully debated with those both for and against and she confirmed that MPC had acted appropriately.

15. There was no further business and the dates of the next meetings were confirmed as:

12th August 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

25th November 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

24th February 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

12th May 2025 annual meetings at 7.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at 8.30 and was immediately followed by the quarterly meeting of MPC.