

## **MONKSILVER PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**

**JUNE 2024**

### Parish Meetings - 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Three meetings were held in the EMN hall on 13th May 2024, The Annual Open meeting, The Annual Parish Meeting and the Quarterly Parish Council meeting. Minutes are displayed on the Parish Council notice board at the accommodation block of the Notley Arms.

At the Annual Parish Meeting, Katherine Adams and Sue Westbury retired from their roles as Parish Councillors. The newly re-elected Chair, Mervyn Orchard-Lisle 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. Lydia and Paul Appleton were co-opted onto the council.

### Notley Arms Community Asset Status

Many of you will know that some years ago the Notley Arms had been given the status of a Community Asset. This required that if its owner sought planning permission for a change of use from a public house, it should be offered to the community to buy it as a public house. That status has expired, so with the specific assistance of a member of the community, the Parish Council has submitted a new application to reinstate that Community Asset status. A decision on that application is expected in July 2024

### 20MPH Speed Limit

Following meetings with Avon & Somerset Constabulary'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. Thanks to several parishioners, sufficient money has been raised 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.

### Potholes

With the help of Kathryn Tyson of Somerset Council Highways, many potholes have been repaired, but there are still more outstanding. Also, some of the damaged road signs have been replaced, with additional signs erected at Elworthy Cross and Fair Cross to discourage HGV drivers from travelling through Monksilver.

### Drainage

In previous years the Parish Council has lobbied for flood protection works to deal with the mud and water that come down towards people's homes from the surrounding hills, roads and pathways when it rains. In 2018 we secured a £170,000 grant from the Somerset Rivers Authority for an improved drainage scheme focusing on problems at the northern and southern ends of the village, which was designed by Somerset Council's Highways Department. Beginning in April 2019, drains were improved down Beech Tree Hill and along the B3188, and down Birds Hill Lane into High Street. These works built on earlier projects secured by the Parish Council such as underground CCTV surveying, drain-jetting and de-silting near the Notley Arms.

With the help of Kali Martin of Somerset Council, 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.

### Flood Monitoring

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.

## Website

Prior to Summer 2023, the Parish Council website hadn't had much attention and as a result required refreshing and several updates and documents needed to be uploaded. Black Cat Websites have updated and improved the MPC website so that it looks better and is more user-friendly. They support us on website maintenance and each quarter we send documents for upload and any requests for changes to website.

## Sewage Pumping Station

On investigation, it was noted 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. The pumps are meeting Wessex Water's requirements, but they are possibly going to replace macerators.

## Riparian (Riverside Property) Owners' Responsibilities

In November, a meeting was held with Elliott Jackson of the Environment Agency (EA), involving a walk round the village inspecting the river, and discussing the riparian responsibilities of landowners.

Those responsibilities are to ensure that riparian owners clear anything growing into or out of their stretch of river as well as clearing any loose debris. The purpose of this is to keep the river flowing as quickly as possible through the village, which in turn reduces the risk of flooding

The EA are responsible for carrying out those duties on the parts of the river where there is no relevant land owner, but they will not maintain parts where there is an identifiable riparian owner. The EA have been carrying out their duties on a biennial basis, but this is likely to become less frequent as budget cuts hit, so the vigilance of riparian owners is now more important than ever.

## Waste Management Contract Deficit

Suez, Somerset Council's waste contractor, has disclosed figures showing significant annual losses on its Waste Management contract. Further information can be found in the Parish Council minutes, but discussions are currently ongoing to ensure service is maintained.

## Somerset Council Mowing Routines

From May 2024, where safe to do so, mowing routines across managed highway verges, open spaces, country parks and council property grounds will be reduced, although safety and visibility around verges and public spaces such as play areas will be cut more regularly. On wider verges, only a one-meter swathe is mowed, leaving the rest untouched to maintain biodiversity.

## Pathways

It was reported that the path between the pub and the churchyard had become overgrown again. The churchyard team (all willing volunteers – thank you) has been asked to keep the church side cut back. We ask that property owners on the other side of the path endeavour to keep their side clear as this route needs to be accessible for everyone, but especially people with mobility problems.

## Neighbourhood Watch

Lydia Appleton has taken on the responsibility for Neighbourhood Watch. Lydia should be the first point for any concerns parishioners may have regarding Neighbourhood Watch. She will be meeting with the Neighbourhood Policing Team in the near future and make herself known to them.

## Miscellaneous Information

### Lithium Batteries

Lithium battery fires are on the increase. These batteries are of the type used in e-bikes, scooters and many other similar devices.

There have been over 1000 in the past few years, nearly 200 injuries and a dozen fatalities. Homes have been destroyed and the cost to the UK runs into £billions.

This issue is being raised in parliament but the purpose of this message is to ask parishioners to ensure they use these batteries only in accordance with the manufacturers' guidelines and that they are disposed of in the correct manner. Many waste management site fires are as a direct result of incorrect disposal of lithium batteries.

### Exmoor National Park Forum

An informal event to get together and hear more about the work of Exmoor National Park Authority

Exmoor House, Dulverton Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 6:30–8:30pm

Tea, Coffee and biscuits will be provided.

The event is free, but booking is essential (see booking form on the Exmoor National Park website).

The evening will centre around 'Nature & Climate' and will include:

- Welcome and introduction on the work of Exmoor National Park Authority from Sarah Bryan CEO of ENPA
- Presentations on ENPA Partnership Plan priorities, Nature recovery and 'Exmoor Pioneers' project.
- Qs and informal discussion at the end.

Please visit [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk) where you will also find the latest edition of Exmoor ParkLife.

### Quad Bike Theft

A quad bike was stolen from the Wheddon Cross overnight 6th/7th June. Having spoken to Mike Storey from the rural affairs unit, the theft of quads and trailers are increasing in Devon and in East Somerset.

## Dates of next Parish Council meetings

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.

All meetings are held in the EMN village hall and the public are invited to attend

Contact details of all Parish Councillors are published on the Parish Council website <https://monksilver.org/>

**MONKSILVER PARISH COUNCIL**

<https://monksilver.org/>

[monksilverparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:monksilverparishcouncil@gmail.com)