

MONKSILVER PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF QUARTERLY MEETING HELD ON 26th FEBRUARY 2016 AT EMN COMMUNITY HALL

Present: Cllrs. Mervyn Orchard-Lisle, (Chairman), Andrew Howe (Vice-Chairman), Kate Adams, Dan Cotterill, John Notley, David Vere Hodge, Ross Urquhart (Clerk); County Cllr. Christine Lawrence, Debbie Dennis (Village Agent)

Apologies: Sue Westbury

1. Minutes of last meeting were agreed without amendment.

2. There were no **declarations of interest**.

3. Matters arising:

3.1 The appeal relating to the solar panels at Aller Farm has been dismissed.

3.2 It was agreed to add the defibrillator to the Parish Council insurance at a premium of £25 per annum. Proposed by Andrew and seconded by David.

3.3 Publicity for the defibrillator appeared in WS Free Press on 26th Feb, thanks to Sue. Ross has distributed information to all the villagers on the recommended procedure if it needs to be used.

3.4 Mervyn requested his mobile no. be added to the contacts list on website.

3.5 No further Code of Conduct training courses are planned by WSC in the near future.

3.6 Kate reported that the coffee mornings at the pub were no longer taking place as the result of minimal attendance.

3.7 The next Deer Management Group (DMG) meeting is in April, so there is nothing to report.

4. Loneliness and Well-Being.

Various options for using the SCC £500 grant were discussed and discounted. These options included funding for a stroke rehabilitation club, a subsidy for the Valley Luncheon Club and an additional handrail on the slope down to the EMN Hall.

Ross suggested a Community Car Scheme whereby residents with age, disability or living alone issues and without transport could be taken to medical appointments, shopping centres by volunteer drivers. These drivers could have expenses reimbursed through the grant monies held and ring-fenced by the Parish Council. Christine gave details of Jean Humber who administers the numerous schemes in operation in West Somerset. Ross will contact her to get full details. Her contact no. is 01643 640983 and e-mail address is jeanhumber@btinternet.com

Ross reported that car insurance companies, in most cases, will cover such journeys providing the insured does not claim a payment that represents a profit to them. It would be up to each driver to check with their particular insurers.

It was agreed to progress this scheme. Proposed by John and seconded by Dan.

5. Village Agent: Debbie Dennis introduced herself as the Village Agent for 11 villages in the area, including Monksilver. Her role is to offer free, confidential support to local people and community groups on health and social care through home visits. The scheme is lottery funded. Debbie distributed a number of information leaflets which David offered to circulate in the village through 'Pathways' magazine.

6. Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) and flood alleviation funding.

6.1 The Watchet Lane storm drain has coped well throughout the wet winter. It has been cleared on two occasions by SCC, Andrew and John. John highlighted that the drain cover is bolted down and therefore can only be removed by SCC. This was potentially a problem if a sudden surge necessitated clearing a blockage. Ross will query this with Glenn Martin.

6.2 Tim Parrish (ENPA Ranger) has e-mailed details of work proposed around the storm drain at the foot of Birds Hill bridleway, copies of which have been passed to all Councillors. This involves installing a ramp to allow any debris that accumulates around the drain to be placed on the 'unowned' land north-east of Hornbeam House. Tim will be contacting Paul Brandwood to get his acceptance for the scheme. In addition three gratings will be installed some 20-30 metres up the stream alongside the bridleway.

John expressed a concern that the grills could result in water being diverted onto the bridleway and therefore bypassing the storm drain. Agreed that Ross will seek further details from Tim together with a site visit in the presence of at least one other Councillor.

Highways have identified work that will be done to lower a drain outside Celandine/Merivale properties, down to the level of the road. Sue Westbury had expressed concerns and intended to contact Highways.

David has concerns about the mud/water that occasionally flows into Herons property and causes flooding. Ross reported that Philip Watts had dug a gully on the property to allow water to flow and exit out of the wall alongside the B3188.

6.3 The SRA has been set up to play a key role in flood protection/alleviation throughout Somerset. They have funding of £2.7m for 2016-17. They are the stakeholder and will distribute the money according to need after doing surveys of all waterways in Somerset. Any work identified as required will be done by the Environment Agency.

6.4 Ross reported that he had just been contacted by Jonathan Hudston (SRA) relating to the scheme proposed for Beech Tree Hill (This is the scheme relating to a new drainage connection along the B3188, and across the farmland opposite Burfords for which a grant had been applied for funding of £40K – now £48K). It is understood that this is in the pipeline for action. Mr Hudston will be sending details to Ross w/e. 4th March.

6.5 Ross attended an exhibition at Othery given jointly by the SRA and Farming and Wildlife Action Group (FWAG). He discussed our problems with Sarah Diamoco, Senior Manager at SRA and Ben Thorne, Conservation Adviser at FWAG. They are very aware of the issues relating to the Monksilver stream. Ben Thorne requested that Ross supply him with names and addresses of landowners of the area upstream from Combe Sydenham that had been highlighted as a potential issue for Monksilver by Adrian Theed at Combe Sydenham. Three owners of land were identified

to Ross. The SRA will be inspecting between now and the summer, and will give advance notice to Ross.

6.6 Ross and Kate will be attending a seminar on 2nd March at which David Peake (Highways) and Christine Lawrence will be present. As a pre-requisite we have been asked to complete Run-off hotspot forms. Councillors identified three specific hotspots - Beech Tree Hill storm drain, Birds Hill bridleway storm drain and the area outside The Granary.

6.7 We are still awaiting guidance from Peter Owen as to when the application forms are available for an alternative Grant application.

6.8 Debbie Dennis outlined the contents of a Flood Contingency Pack that can be made available to communities. She will provide details for Kate and include posters for insertion in Pathways and for posting on notice boards.

6.9 It had been noted that the flooding outside the Granary had been made far worse by mud blocking the drains. The mud was along both sides of the road and had resulted from tractors which were wider than the road, and thus damaging the verges. Andrew reported that it was not the fault of the tractors, but of Highways who were not maintaining the roads properly. He stated that the tarmac extended under the apparent verges, and that the road was actually significantly wider than visible. Ross will take this up with Highways.

6.10 Mervyn again reported that Adrian Theed had recommended that a gully should be dug downstream of the upper bridge, so that the inevitable gravel and debris that migrates down a river, can go into it, and then be removed from time to time. In addition he had suggested dredging the stream under the bridge. John felt that the dredging under the bridges seemed a good idea, and the same applied to the other bridge further downstream. John stated that he was unaware of there ever having been a deeper gully to take migrated gravel etc. Any work could only be scheduled when the water was at a low level in the summer. It may only be temporarily effective and might need doing regularly.

6.11 The Flood Plan has been updated to include the area around The Granary as an “at risk” area and also further names and contact numbers of volunteers/coordinators have been added. Mervyn had also included some of Adrian’s comments in the Flood Plan, but now suggested that these should be removed since they related to what preventative work needs doing rather than information for residents. This was agreed. Ross will also ask if the SRA have any comments on this when they carry out their forthcoming inspection.

7. Website:

7.1 The website has yet another ‘bug’ whereby no documents can be added or amended. James Forbes has devised a ‘fix’ but as yet nobody on the Council is aware of how to apply it. Ross stated that he was not prepared to do any administering of the site while it was so unstable and error ridden. David has discussed the issues with Edward Martin and David’s recommendation is for the Parish Council to create its own website using another website developer. David stressed there was no financial liability on the part of the Parish Council for the current website; David’s website www.monksilver.org will continue to exist but with a link to the new Parish Council website.

7.2 Ross has received an e-mail from a company offering a website design specifically for Town/Parish Councils. He has received a preliminary quote of £360 for designing a 12-page site. However, he noticed that the software is based on Wordpress, which is the same as the current website and it was agreed we should not proceed with this proposal if that is the case. Proposed by David and seconded by Andrew.

7.3 Ross will follow up on details already supplied by John relating to the Minehead Town Council website and will also find out about the developer of Stogumber Parish Council website.

7.4 David proposed that we should encourage youngsters in the village to get involved with website design and maintenance as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Aware Scheme.

7.5 Mervyn felt that the Welcome Pack could have more information and also it contained subjective comments, and that the Council should not be seen to be promoting one tradesman in favour of another. Ross stated that more content meant more maintenance on his part. The issue of subjective comments was not resolved.

8. Finance. The current bank balance is £883.48. The 2016-17 precept of £700 will be received in April. However, a bill of £311 relating to the second instalment of the election costs is due on 1st May. Also, we have a sum of £500 in the account which is ring-fenced for the Loneliness & Well Being Grant.

9. High speed broadband. Christine reported that the Stogumber exchange is now live with high speed broadband, although this is not yet apparent in Monksilver. The parts of the village on the Washford exchange, which is 'live' on faster broadband, are experiencing speeds of approx. 4mbps.

10. AOB.

10.01. Ross reported that the EMN Hall will stage a celebration of the Queen's 90th Birthday at 15:30hrs on Sat. 11th June. It will comprise a bring-your-own picnic, and beverages will be available, plus a BBQ for sausages, etc. The event will be advertised in 'Pathways' and letters dropped throughout Monksilver, Nettlecombe and Elworthy.

10.02 Mervyn reported a number of scheduled events that Councillors might be interested in attending:

- Flood Warden Training on 5th Mar at Environment Agency, Bridgwater
- Historic Signpost Workshop on 11th Mar at ENPA, Dulverton 10:00-13:00hrs.
- ENPA Meeting Structure Consultation on 11th Mar at Dulverton 10:00hrs.
- Somerset Care in the Community meeting on 9th Mar at Minehead Hospital.

If anybody is interested in attending please contact Ross for further details.

10.03 John reported two large potholes requiring repair; one on Beech Tree Hill and one at Backway. Ross to contact Highways.

10.04 There is mud on the B3188 just south of Inglewood. It results from an accident some weeks ago. Ross will contact RGB Ltd. at Wiveliscombe requesting that they clear the residual mud.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: FRIDAY 20TH MAY 2016 AT 7:00PM, comprising:

- **The annual Monksilver parish meeting, followed by**
- **The annual Parish Council meeting, followed by**
- **The normal quarterly Parish Council Meeting**