

Monkland and Stretford Parish Council

***Minutes of Monkland & Stretford Parish Council held on
Tuesday 20th January 2026 from 7.00pm
held in Monkland Village Hall***

Website address: monkland.org

Clerk's email address: thelesleyhay@hotmail.co.uk

PRESENT: Cllr L Brook (Chairman); Cllr J Dunn; Cllr M Marfell.

Also present: Parish Clerk Lesley Hay ; Footpath Officer Peter Povall

The Chairman welcomed those present to the January meeting.

MINUTES

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence: Cllr O Weatherall and Cllr K Hindle. PC Emma Turnberfield. Ward Councillor Mark Woodall.

2. Declarations of interests, Disclosable Pecuniary, Non-Disclosable, Pecuniary, Non-Pecuniary interests, and written requests for dispensation. None declared.

2.1 Exclusion of members of the Public and Press: To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

3. The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25th November 2025 had been circulated. Following a minor amendment to the item 4 – the minutes were considered an accurate record and it was unanimously agreed that these should be adopted and signed by the Chairman.

4. Monkland and Stretford Parish Council – Chair's report January 2026

A very Happy New Year to everyone!

The local Police held a surgery at the Cheese shop on 10th December – in spite of very short notice 5 villagers attended – the Police were delighted! We had lots of useful, wide ranging and interesting chat – speeding, hare coursing, fly tipping to mention a few.

We are very fortunate that we don't have many problems that could require police involvement but important to meet the police when they do attend as they find it more tricky to attend our PC meetings.

The local police group now have 3rd member of their team and a Facebook page- 'North Herefordshire Police'.

I have prepared a letter to send via the A44 Road Safety Group to the Police Commissioner and his Transport deputy to put the case forward for Average Speed Cameras on our section of the A44.

A fairly quiet month or two just now when the weather seems to govern most of what we do. Some flooding over the Common in early December and a sprinkling of snow in early January but luckily we escaped the worst of storm Goretti. The PC have ordered and they have been delivered two pallets of sand bags in case of need.

Peter and Sally Povall continue with their very popular Social Sundays , the last one attracting about 25 villagers, including 3 children – there was lots of chatter and everyone enjoyed Sally's cakes! Thank you to them for taking the initiative.

Thank you also to Peter for 'sorting out' a couple of the new posts on the village green that had become wonky.

The Newsletter in early December was well received and the next one, the Spring edition is due out in early March.

We have grant money available for work to be carried out in Tagwell Lane and Old Road to help improve water flow and minimise the effects of heavy rain, which may lead to flooding.

Thank you to everyone for their ongoing support.

**5. Ward Report - Cllr Woodall, Leominster South sent his apologies.
The following report was later received.**

Community Events

The Victorian Street market appeared to be a success again this year. I enjoyed swanning about in the Santa suit greeting locals and visitors. The shopkeepers I met were very happy and naturally asked for 'free-parking' more often.

The Christmas services at Ivington and the Priory were well attended, welcoming and warm. The late night shop and sip was sabotaged by miserable weather, but it is good to see the business community pulling together to make the event happen.

Public Spaces and Safety Concerns

Leominster Bus Station

The transport services team in Herefordshire council is currently engaged in securing a contractor to work on a minor remodelling of the Leominster Bus Station to make pedestrian access across the platforms safer and hopefully more comfortable for service users.

I have also been following up on the servicing of the public toilets at the bus station, which unfortunately continue to attract vandalism. While I have been assured that a regular servicing schedule is in place, this has not yet been evident on the ground.

The old Clifton Cinema/Bingo building is to be given a second life as a hot-food outlet. This may be a contentious use of what was once a communal building, but hopefully it will find a way to becoming a service which the community can enjoy and provide a warm space for our young people to gather. Let's hope it galvanises the owner of the Royal Oak to make some changes this year.

Thanks to the High Sheriff working with a number of community 'minded groups', there is potential for a new charity led community garden to be established this year in The Dingle, off Ryelands Road. With nature based activities for young families, support for people experiencing homelessness or isolation, and the flexibility to host visiting groups, this project could become a significant asset for the town.

After some persistence, the Co-op has now repaved and reset hazardous paving on Black Swan Walk, with new inserts clearly visible. However, a Biffa bin in the area continues to attract litter. I understand that this bin belongs to the new vape and sweet shop, but I have not received a response from the owner. I will continue to raise this issue and undertake litter picking in the meantime.

Housing development

The Pegasus development consultancy firm has submitted two massive outline applications for the area sometimes known as the Leominster Urban Extension (in the Herefordshire Local Plan) or Leominster Sustainable Urban Extension (in Leominster Neighbourhood plan).

While new housing is needed, it is essential that developers focus on creating a genuinely sustainable community, rather than simply a large housing estate. A development of approximately 1,650 homes, delivered over 10 years or more, will have a transformative impact on Leominster. Residents want high quality housing that does not worsen flood risk or damage the local environment, alongside a safe and functional road network that helps to divert heavy agricultural and goods vehicles away from the town centre. These concerns are compounded by the possible relocation of Aldi from its current site on Westbury Street to the Morrisons end of town.

These issues represent only part of the wider considerations arising from the size and scope of the applications. Given their long term implications, I strongly encourage residents to submit comments via the Herefordshire Council planning portal. I would also like to thank Leominster Town Council for raising awareness by providing display space in the library foyer.

The current development sites of the Cholstrey Road (Hawthorne Park and West Winds) are ongoing. The contractor Living Spaces, delivering the social accommodation for Stonewater, is facing delays due to works with the utilities services etc, but the council

expects to have access to 26 dwellings by March this year and the remaining 28 by end of July (barring more delays). The Persimmon development is progressing well. However I received reports of surface water flooding across the A44 where their SuDS drain pipe crosses under the road, which was alarming. The planning enforcement officer and site project manager have been alerted and I'm expecting a report on the outcome.

Flooding issues / rivers

There was a very well attended Rivers Conference held in November which focused on the Lugg and Wye catchment areas. There are fantastic initiatives by private landowners, charities and farmers to diversify land use and help control water movement by returning the vegetation most suited to absorbing, holding and filtering the overloaded river courses. Dredging and channel clearing was discussed and recognised as a blessing and a curse because while it helps relieve the fields and roads in the countryside it funnels water downstream at greater speed and volume so it hits the urban areas around Hereford much harder overwhelming their capacity to control it. It was good to see so many invested groups wanting to improve not just water management but our wellbeing.

5.1 Open Session -

5.1. Play Area Capital Investment Grant – (previously circulated)

At the last meeting it was agreed that Cllr Weatherall and Cllr Dunn would further look into this scheme and, if thought a feasible opportunity for Monkland, would let the Clerk have their presentation before the end of January. However, Cllr Dunn reported that it had agreed not to submit an application at this time.

5.1.2 Small sparks : a microgrant scheme (previously circulated) .

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5.1.3 The Clerk reported that the Notice Board on the Bus Shelter has, in the past, been repaired many times but continues to leak and it is now not fit for purpose. After discussion, it was agreed to obtain a guide price on a replacement which the Clerk will circulate with a view to installing a replacement.

5.1.4 Cllr Marfell reported continuing problems with dog walkers i.e. obstructive car parking; dog fouling; walkers not keeping to the designated footpath routes and dogs not being kept on their leads whilst walking through fields with livestock. The Footpath Officer reported that he had made some notices which will be erected along the footpath routes. The Footpath Officer agreed to forward a copy of this notice together with a short editorial for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

5.1.5 It was noted that the hedge opposite Manor Cottage had now been lowered by a Harpers Contractor.

5.2 The Chairman closed Open Session.

6. Finance

6.1. It was unanimously agreed to settle all December invoices - schedule of payments had been circulated.

6.2 The Clerk confirmed she had received a half-yearly audit certificate as required within the adopted financial regulations.

6.3. The Clerk confirmed she had submitted the Precept application for 2026 and 2027; receipt has been acknowledged.

6.4 Cllr Dunn reported that he had, as agreed, approached a local Accountant who may be prepared to audit the Parish Council Accounts – it was agreed that Cllr Dunn will forward details to the Clerk who will make contact.

6.5 At the last meeting, it became apparent that the defibrillator on The Monkland Arms wall will become obsolete next year and batteries and spare parts are no longer available. It was generally agreed that a replacement defibrillator located on the A44 was essential. Cllr Dunn brought to the table information on various defibrillators and favoured a semi-automatic one at a cost of £990.00 inclusive.

In the meantime, the Clerk had approached the 1st responders at Dilwyn and they had provided her a link with the BHF who were advertising Defibrillators free of charge. The Clerk will make further enquiries and report back. A vote of thanks was extended to the 1st Responders from Dilwyn who had provided two Bleed Out Kits and these are now housed with the Defibrillators at the Monkland Arms and Village Hall.

In the meantime, it was unanimously agreed that it would be sensible to consider providing a defibrillator near to the church and Cllr Marfell offered to have one located on Brick House.

All issues raised to be followed up and, if possible, findings to be circulated before the next meeting.

7. Village Newsletter. The Chairman reminded those present that the Spring edition for the Newsletter would be going to the printer's around the 20th February. It was agreed to increase the number of issues printed and the Clerk will liaise with Barrington Print regarding the costs to increase from 120 to 130/140.

Cllr Marfell offered to write an article on Country Matters. Cllr Dunn offered to write an article relating to the Church, and about attracting new members to the PCC and for villagers to sign up on the Electoral Roll. Peter Povall offered to submit material of the

Social Sundays, his recycling scheme and changes therein, and a copy of the poster prepared to deter irresponsible dog walkers near in –lamb ewes

Hopefully Cllr Weatherall will once again be able to include an article for Children's Corner. The Clerk will send round a reminder nearer to the editorial cut-off date.

8. Highways and Environmental/Footpaths

8.1 Footpath Officer's Report. During the coming months, work has been continuing with the replacement of stiles for self-closing dog friendly gates.

Footpath Officer, Peter Povall, confirmed that he had written to the various landowners thanking them for their co-operation over the past year in allowing work to be undertaken on their land.

8.2 Update drainage/ditching grant funding for 2025/2026

At the last meeting it was agreed to make an application to use some of the drainage grant funding on offer by Herefordshire Council in order to get further drainage work completed before the winter months. The Clerk confirmed that she had submitted an application but that the funding had been reduced. However, much of the work on Tagwell Lane had now been undertaken by Herefordshire Council so it was agreed to use some of the grant available in trying to rectify the ongoing the drainage problems in Old Road. The Clerk will liaise with D C Gardening when he returns from annual leave.

8.4 The Clerk confirmed the daffodil banks had been cut in December.

8.5 The Clerk reported that she had spoken with T& T Plant Hire based at Brinsop who were offering road sweeping/scarping; gully clearing etc. It was agreed to approach both D C Gardening and T& T for a quote to road sweep/scrape Old Road; Pleck Lane and Baker Lea. This work could be funded from within the Lengthsman Grant but the work has to be completed before end of March and by invoiced mid-April.

9. Police report – Apologies were received from PC Emma Turnberfield.

An email received from Emma confirmed that she checked the system and there is nothing to make you aware of ahead of tonight's meeting.

10. Planning – no new applications received to date.

11. Date of next Parish Council meeting: Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 7.00pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 pm.

Signed:

Date: