

***Monkland and Stretford Parish Council***  
***Minutes of Monkland & Stretford Parish Council held on***  
***Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026 from 7.00pm***  
***held in Monkland Village Hall***

Website address: [monkland.org](http://monkland.org)

Clerk's email address: [thelesleyhay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:thelesleyhay@hotmail.co.uk)

**PRESENT:** Cllr L Brook (Chairman); Cllr J Dunn; Cllr K Hindle

Also present: Parish Clerk Lesley Hay ; Ward Councillor Mark Woodall.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the March meeting.

## **MINUTES**

**1. Acceptance of apologies for absence:** Cllr M Marfell. Footpath Officer P.Povall

**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 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026 had been circulated. 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 March 2026**

It has been a relatively quiet couple of months in the village, with no major events or developments to report. The winter period has generally passed without significant incident, and many activities have been operating at a steady, routine pace.

The most notable issue during this time has been the recent flooding following the period of incessant and heavy rainfall. Prolonged wet weather led to surface water accumulation in several areas, with some localised disruption to roads and footpaths. While the water levels have now subsided, the episode has once again highlighted ongoing concerns about drainage capacity and the resilience of local infrastructure during extreme weather. It is hoped that lessons can be taken forward to mitigate similar issues in future.

On the highways front, an application has been submitted requesting the installation of average speed cameras along our section of the A44. This proposal will not come as a surprise to many residents, given longstanding concerns about vehicle speeds and road safety. Unfortunately, initial responses suggest that the relevant authorities do not appear to treat road safety on this stretch as a priority. This is disappointing, particularly

in light of repeated community feedback. Efforts will continue to press the case, ensuring that residents' concerns remain clearly and consistently represented.

Thanks to Peter and Sally Povall for organising their Social Sundays which are a terrific success, even when the lane was flooded! A great opportunity for villagers to have a get together.

On another positive note, the Spring Newsletter has now been published and distributed. The newsletter includes updates on village matters, forthcoming events, and contributions from local groups. Thank you to everyone who provided articles and information, and to those who assisted with editing and delivery. The newsletter remains an important way of keeping residents informed and connected. Thanks to Harry and Peter for distributing copies around the Parish.

As we move into the spring months, we look forward to improved weather, renewed community activity, and continued engagement on the issues that matter locally.

Lesley Brook Chair of Parish Council

## **5. Ward Report - Cllr Woodall, Leominster South**

### **Leominster Bus Station**

I have again been following up on the maintenance of the public toilets at the bus station, which unfortunately continue to be less than sanitary for public use. I hope to report some progress soon.

### **New Public Realm Contract**

As many should be aware by now the current Balfour Beatty Living Places public realm contract ends on 31st May, with **M Group** taking over from 1st June. Transition is well underway to minimise disruption and many management roles are being moved in-house to Herefordshire's Public Realm team in the Economy and Environment directorate. Councillors are being given presentations on the future plans and being consulted on how the IT reporting systems could/may be improved so we can get better quality information about what is being done where and why, and how jobs get rescheduled or re-prioritised.

The Reporting App will continue as a public means of reporting issues but will hopefully get improved so it will be easier to use on a smart-phone, which most people use when recording issues like potholes in the road. Issues can be re-reported, which help to escalate them. Herefordshire Council will be taking on responsibility for more of the coordination, scheduling and contract management of jobs, so that we are not restricted to using only one contractor for all works. This should provide more flexibility, value for money and faster responses on repairs. There is also an expectation that the council will do better monitoring and enforcement so that repairs are checked and quality improved.

Similarly road diversions and works signage needs to be improved to clarify whether a Road Ahead Closed sign means what it says and encourages traffic along the best routes.

### **Parish Summit**

Parish Summit was well attended, with several groups attending on-line. A large section was used to discuss the 'unfair' Fair Funding allocation from the government, which although confirming funding provision over 3 years rather than 1, is actually going to lead to a £17 million funding reduction for Herefordshire, which will have to be met by cost cutting, using reserves and 'efficiencies' such as £3 million from business reserves and a rolling 4.99% council tax increase. So Council approved a council tax increase of 4.99% (inclusive of 2% adult care precept) above the rate of council tax for 2026/27 at its meeting on 13 February 2026. The council's band D council tax for 2026/27 becomes set at £2,067.63.

There was also a section explaining the government's Devolution plans, and the preparations being made by our Chief Executive to negotiate suitable partners for the Strategic Foundation Authorities, which is where neighbouring unitary councils will be combined into a Strategic authority representing approx. 1.5 million residents. Early talks are going on between Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire as the obviously stronger economic neighbours, but these are not going to be confirmed until those neighbouring councils have become unitary authorities like Herefordshire. There will also be considerations for our West Mercia police, Fire Service and NHS Integrated Care Board to synchronise up with these new strategic authorities. So any administrative changes to council, elections and wards will be unlikely before 2029.

### **Housing Development**

The public meeting arranged by the Leominster Civic Society about the Leominster Southern Urban Extension applications on 6th Feb was well attended. Speakers were invited to discuss the major topics of planning, transport, ecology and economic impacts of the Pegasus outline applications. The public asked questions and debated the issues, and hopefully left feeling more informed and encouraged to add responses to the public consultations on both Eastern and Western Parcel applications. There was a healthy boost in responses on-line doubling the number of comments to 603 on the western and 529 on the eastern parcel (including professional bodies responses). The council development team manager has approved the call-in request from Leominster ward councillors to debate the application in Planning Committee when the planning officer has made a determination, which still may be long after the 29th May target date.

### **Flooding issues / road & rivers**

Whilst there appears to have been some work on clearing grips and gullies along Ivington and Brierly road, there was still high level of flooding on the fields in the Newton & Ivington area with many blocked culverts which will require clearing before the summer storms replace the spring rains.

## **5.1 Open Session -**

**5.1.1** An email from Ben Johnson with regard to the establishing of a River Arrow Trust had been circulated. The Clerk explained that Dilwyn Parish Council were planning an Open Evening in June and that an invitation would be extended to Monkland and other neighbouring parishes to attend the presentation. The Clerk will keep Councillors update on date/time etc.

**5.1.2** At the last meeting 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 replace the Notice Board and, after discussion with the Chairman, Clerk confirmed she had ordered a suitable replacement.

**5.1.3** Following the Chairman's report, there was discussion on the refusal to the request to instal of average speed cameras along our section of the A44. It was agreed that Ward Cllr. Woodall would approach our Member of Parliament, Ellie Clowes, to ask for her support in organising a possible appeal to challenge this decision, and other possible contacts with influence.

**5.1.4** The hedge alongside the path by the bus shelter was again subject to discussion. Councillors were reminded that the hedge is in no man's land and although the Parish Council had, in the past, offered to get this lowered – the offer was opposed by residents and neighbouring residents. Cllr Hindle stressed that as the wires that go through the overgrown branches are BT/Giga clear, if any branches should come down, this would affect everyone's phone and internet access.

**5.1.5** The fallen tree is still to be removed from the village green, However, the recent inclement weather may have made access difficult. A reminder has been sent to Cllr Marfell.

## **5.2 The Chairman closed Open Session.**

## **6. Finance**

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

**6.2** Assertion 10: Digital and Data Compliance – to support the 2025/26 AGAR review. The Clerk explained that – to comply with the above - all Parish Councillors were now expected to have a personal Parish Council email .gov.uk address. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed to go ahead and the email address would be – initial.surname@monkland-stretford-pc.gov.uk.

**7. Village Newsletter.** The Chairman reminded those present that the Summer edition for the Newsletter would be going to the printer's around the end of May. A reminder for articles etc will be circulated nearer to time.

## **8. Highways and Environmental/Footpaths**

**8.1** Footpath Officer's No Report available. Apologies received.

**8.2** Update drainage/ditching grant funding for 2025/2026

The Clerk reported that she had approached both D C Gardening and T& T for a quote to jetting and a road sweep/scrape along Old Road. The Chairman had met with T & T's representative and after discussion it had been agreed to go ahead with their quote of £1500 for this work. The Chairman confirmed that the work will be completed on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026. This work to be funded from within the 2025-2026 Lengthsman Grant.

**8.3** The Chairman and Clerk signed the 2026-29027 Lengthsman Agreement

**8.4** Consider 2026-2027 drainage grant funding. The Clerk reminded Councillors that applications must be in by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026. The Chairman has made arrangement to meet with D C Gardening; Locality Steward and Cllr Karen Hindle for a 'walk about' to discuss possible projects.

## **9. Defibrillator**

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 Would be beneficial and Cllr Marfell offered to have one located on Brick House.

Unfortunately, as Cllr Marfell was unable to attend the meeting, it was agreed to defer any decision until the next meeting. However, in the meantime, Cllr Dunn asked about moving the telephone box from the village hall to Brick House which could then house a new defibrillator. The Clerk offered to approach the planning department to see if planning permission is necessary. Item deferred until the next meeting.

**10. Planning** – no new applications received to date.

**10.1.** Garden Cottage. It was reported that the planning application to change conditions 4 and 5 has been refused.

**11. Date of next Parish Council meeting:** Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7.00pm.

This meeting will be the Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm.

Signed:

Date: