

**Minutes of the quarterly Monksilver Parish Council meeting,
held on Monday 11th May 2026 at 7.55 p.m. at the EMN Community Hall, Monksilver.**

Present:

MPC Councillors:

John Stace (Chairman)

Paul Appleton (Vice-Chairman)

Dan Cotterill

Mervyn Orchard-Lisle

Catherine Sleep

Ian Timmins

Somerset Councillor – Marcus Kravis

In attendance – Mary Jacobs

Apologies received from Somerset Councillor Cara Strom

1.0 The minutes of the quarterly meeting held on 23rd February 2026 were agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman. Chairman

2.0 Marcus reported that Somerset Council has a stable budget. The Government has approved exceptional finance of £30m, with £25M used to close the budget gap and £5M allocated to support service transformation and long-term reform. Marcus

The exceptionally wet winter placed considerable pressure on the Somerset road-network. The major works at the Dunster Steep junction have been completed.

Somerset secured over £24M to improve the bus service.

The care training centre in Minehead has closed through lack of support. People now have to travel to Bridgwater.

Children's services in Somerset continue to experience significant pressure, driven by rising demand, workforce challenges and increasing complexity of need, particularly in relation to special educational needs. A significant contributing factor has been a shortage of educational psychologists.

The boundary changes have been confirmed. MPC confirmed that it will fall within Exmoor and the Coast.

Mervyn had lunched with Sir Ashley Fox, MP for Bridgwater, who had stated that Somerset Council finances were in dire straight, compared to other local authorities. Mervyn will speak to Sir Ashley's office to obtain a copy of his report to circulate. Mervyn

John reported that a collapsed drain and pot holes was part of a perennial problem when roads are not re-sealed.

John stated that MPC's annoyance is that Marcus attends our meetings and leaves with a list of questions to be answered, but seldom do we receive the explanations we require. John asked Marcus if we could have his answers within three weeks of the Parish Council meeting. MPC would greatly appreciate this.

Marcus asked that he and Cara Strom be copied into any correspondence with Somerset Council.

- 2.1 Marcus confirmed that Somerset Council is responsible for the Monksilver culvert maintenance. John stated that a repair to the wall of one of the culverts was urgent, as the wall is in danger of collapse. This had been reported to Somerset several months ago.

Marcus then left the meeting.

- 3.0 Review of MPC data requirements to comply with Assertion 10. Catherine

An agreement has been reached with Hugo Fox, one of the Government's recommended service providers. The estimate for transferring the website is £199+VAT. In future the website will be maintained by MPC, initially by Catherine. Hugo Fox will provide a .gov email service for £9.99 + VAT per month. Payment for the website to be made by electronic transfer and the email service paid by monthly direct debit.

Approval for the contract was proposed by Ian and seconded by Paul. All present were in agreement with no abstentions.

Catherine

Catherine, Ian and the Clerk have received a training session on website maintenance. Catherine will send a link to Councillors and the Clerk to view the website. Catherine will hold a training session on setting up the email accounts.

The website and emails are to go live as soon as possible. The Black Cat contract expires in August, which should enable sufficient time for the transfer of emails to the new account.

Catherine

Catherine is to write to David Sykes, thanking him for his service and explaining the requirement of a government site. The minutes will not be published until Monday 1st June 2026 to enable time for this to happen.

Catherine has asked for photographs of the village to refresh the website. Mervyn suggested getting a drone photograph of the village.

- 4.0 Regrading Watchet Lane. Dan will contact John Melrose, open spaces officer and request a date for the work to commence. Dan is to advise the Clerk of the start date. Dan
- 5.0 Paul Elliton, Environment Agency, will give a talk to riparian owners to reiterate riparian responsibility. MPC is encouraging this meeting, to confirm that it is doing what it can to keep residents informed of their riparian rights. It is unfortunate that the EA will not share with MPC, data on whom has riparian rights. Paul
- Riparian ownership and permissive maintenance of the river are two different things. MPC will continue to reiterate the EA's responsibility for routine maintenance. There continues to be sewage discharge into the watercourse in heavy rain.
- MPC has posted a copy of Living on the Edge on its website, which is available for download. It has also notified residents by push email and WhatsApp inviting residents to download a copy.
- Pressure must be kept on the EA to maintain the river. MPC will contact Rachel Gilmour, MP if necessary.
- 6.0 Finance: Clerk
- Cheques were raised and signed for Somerset Association Local Councils Ltd – annual affiliation Fee £56.45 and Zurich Municipal – insurance renewal £112.00. An invoice from D. Sykes – Black Cat is anticipated for the May website upload.
- The Clerk will go back over the previous four years and reclaim any VAT owing. In future this will be undertaken annually at year end. Clerk
- N.B. The internal auditor has subsequently issued a caution and has advised further research. HMRC is in the process of rolling all claims for refund onto specialist software which requires an annual registration fee of £600.**
- 7.0 Highways:
- John has contacted Katherine Tyson reminding her that additional yellow bars signage is still required. This work has been programmed for the summer. The highways priority is catching up on the winter programme.
- 8.0 The completion of the transition project of max 7.5t to all vehicles using the B3188 between Elworthy Cross and Fair Cross is anticipated June 2026. Chairman
- 8.1 Speed control: John rang David Ibbott on Sunday 10th May. Chairman

Like so many he too has noticed the increasing amount of traffic and speed.

They discussed SID's (Speed Indicator Device) and David Ibbott agreed with Superintendent Stephanie McKenna that SID's really do make a difference. He gave the example of Holford, since it went to 20 mph. Previously over two years he would station his vehicle there and get 20 / 30 hits per session with speeds between 45 and 60mph. They then put SID's in and that reduced offending to an average of 2 a session.

The number of cars and vans now parking at the pub and on the road has increased significantly since Barrie and his colleagues arrived and the volume of vehicles is causing traffic to slow but once past the Pub, they speed up taking no notice of 20mph.

John and Ros have nearly been guillotined on several occasions recently as they edge their way onto the road. From their drive they are completely blind to the right until the bonnet is on the road. At 20mph they can stop at 30mph and faster they can't.

SID's have also slowed traffic and reduced offending at Blue Anchor.

To seek the advice and support of Avon and Somerset Police in regulatory monitoring and consider the installation of Speed Indicator Device (SID) at each end of the village.

Superintendent Stephanie McKenna is visiting Monksilver on Tuesday 2nd June, at The Notley Arms.

There is a balance of £2,817 still held in reserve as the move to 20 m.p.h. came in under budget. It is proposed that the two S.I.D.s will be again financed by public donation, so that there will be no impact on the precept.

Paul stated that the safety of parishioners has to be the priority and proposed a motion to seek authority from Somerset Council Highways for the purchase and installation of two S.I.D.s. This was seconded by Ian. All present were in agreement, with no abstentions.

9.0 LCN update:

Ian

- Youth offending continues to a problem in Minehead and Watchet. Initiative under way to help prevent violence towards girls.
- There has been a spate of motorcycle theft.
- Counterfeit £20 notes are circulating.

- The NFU has held a trailer marking event.
- Somerset activity sports partnership announced a campaign to increase health through various activities funded by Sports England. Feasibility study commenced for a new swimming pool at Minehead.
- The food cupboard at Alcombe have grown substantially and are looking for additional trustees to help governance. MPC were reminded that Monksilver has a donation hamper in the Church porch.
- SPARK is the new name of the Community Council.
- The Citizen Advice Bureau is closing due to high overheads. It is not known at this stage whether some satellite provision will be available. Taunton and Bridgwater will remain open.
- Somerset Council has submitted a funding bid to the Government, to reinstate the B3191 Cleeve Hill between Blue Anchor and Watchet.

9.1 Ian confirmed that he makes useful connections through attending the LCN meetings, particularly with local community groups. It is hoped that the new MPC website will enable community information to be published more readily.

10.0 Parish noticeboard. Ian has sourced a noticeboard marketed by Earth Anchors Ltd. A black framed standard single door, wall mounting, lockable, which will take 8 pages A4, will cost £755.94 including VAT (£629.95) net. Paul proposed the purchase of the board, and seconded by John. All present were in agreement, with no abstentions.

Ian

11.0 Dr Murray has notified MPC that the defibrillator battery will need replacing later in 2026. MPC precepts for this and funds are held in a reserve account. The Clerk is to write to Dr Murray and thank him for overseeing the defibrillator and bleed kit.

Clerk

12.0 Any other business
BT Openreach is putting fibre into every house in the village. John is endeavouring to obtain a timeline for this.

Chairman

13.0 Dates of future meetings
10th August 2026 at 7.30p.m.
23rd November 2026 at 7.30 p.m.
22nd February 2027 at 7.30 p.m.
Parish election Thursday 6th May 2027 (if contested)
10th May 2027 at 7.00 p.m. Annual and parish meeting, followed by the first meeting of the new council.

14.0 There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

