

**Minutes of the Monkton Combe Annual Assembly of Electors
(Annual Parish Meeting)
held on Wednesday 8th May 2013 starting at 7pm
in Monkton Combe Village Hall**

The Annual Assembly of Electors, or Annual Parish Meeting, is a meeting of the Parish electorate. It is not a Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council Chairman calls and chairs the meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting must be held between March 1st and June 1st (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 14). There is no prescribed format for this meeting and its recommendations are not binding on the Parish Council.

Attending:

Parish Councillors: Gavin Douglas (Chairman), Lyn Alvis, Peter Bossom, Ross Buchanan, Des Wighton

District Councillor: Neil Butters

Parish Council Clerk: Ian Russell

Registered Electors of Monkton Combe Parish: 29

Visitors from outside of the parish: 12

Apologies for Absence:

Simon Wilsher (Waterhouse)

Donald Gorrie (St Michael's and All Angel's Church)

Sylvia Young (Monkton Combe Women's Institute)

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all those present and commented on the large turnout, acknowledging that this was probably as a result of the huge concern expressed in the village over the proposed licensing application for Waterhouse made by Simon Wilsher. He noted that a representative of Waterhouse was in attendance. He also welcomed others who would speak on behalf of their organisations later in the meeting.

2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting of May 2012

These were approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising from Annual Meeting of May 2012

a. Item 7: Parish Notice Boards

The Chairman informed the meeting that a new parish council notice board had been erected at the petrol station on the A36, and that the old and decrepit notice board in Mount Pleasant had been replaced with a new one. He announced that the Council was about to order a new village notice board to replace the one donated by the Hawk and Owl Trust, which is situated beside the main gate to the church. He also mentioned that a new bench has been installed at the top of the drung in Shaft Road to Commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

b. Item 8:

- i. Parking issues – this appears to have been resolved
- ii. MCS Music Block lighting – this appears to have been addressed

4. Waterhouse developments:

- a. It was noted that the licensing application by Simon Wilsher for a premises licence for Waterhouse has caused huge upset and concern in the village, largely because of the breadth of its scope. A similar situation was referred to involving Combe Grove Manor Hotel in 2007, whereby the noise and light pollution from their events marquee had a big

impact upon the village. At that time the school, parish council and village combined in their efforts to oppose the application. The outcome of the subsequent public hearing was that strong conditions were placed on the hotel, namely that there would be no marquee and no sound or light pollution outside of their grounds.

- b. It was noted that, although Waterhouse is legally in another parish (Limpley Stoke) and county (Wiltshire), geographically and by its address, it is part of the village of Monkton Combe. Waterhouse sits within the Midford Valley, which is like a large natural amphitheatre, which by its shape amplifies all sounds that occur in the area.
- c. Responses to and submissions concerning the application must be in writing and should reach Wiltshire County Council by 13th May 2013.

An open discussion followed:

d. Comments by District Cllr Neil Butters:

- i. He has received many messages of concern
 - ii. There are strict restrictions on the website as to who may respond – these even appear to preclude him from responding. However, he phoned Lisa Grant of the Wiltshire Licensing Department, and she told him that the law has now changed. Anyone can now write a submission.
 - iii. The new Limpley Stoke District Councillor, Magnus MacDonald, will be working closely with Neil to oppose this application.
 - iv. There is likely to be a full hearing of three Wiltshire councillors responsible for licensing in early June, certainly before 11th.
 - v. **Question: Will there be a site visit by Licensing Committee?** Neil said he would ask
 - vi. Waterhouse representative, Johnny Wrench, explained that he will be hosting a Wiltshire Council Officer and also a Police representative within the next two days to look at the site and to consider roadsafety issues
- e. The chairman explained that he had attended Limpley Stoke PC meeting on 7th May and that they were also very concerned

f. Questions asked of Johnny Wrench (Waterhouse):

- i. **Will marquees be permanent?** He replied 'No'.
- ii. **Where is this all leading to?** JW explained that he could not speak for Simon, but he could tell the meeting what he knew. He explained that Simon Wilsher had taken advice from Wiltshire Council. Their advice had been to make application as wide as possible. There would then be three possible outcomes:
 - 1. Granted in full
 - 2. Refused in full
 - 3. Granted, but with restrictions.He explained that it is not the intention to have events every night or even every Saturday; they want to be able to serve drinks to guests; maximum wedding numbers up to 150, but they are expecting a modification downwards following the hearing.
- iii. **Will you turn down a wedding every Saturday if asked?** He replied to say that Waterhouse is a commercial operation.
- iv. **What noise monitors were used at the Easter wedding?** Staff went around village that night to listen. It was felt that ears were better than machines.
- v. **Who owns the Waterhouse Lane?** Simon Wilsher has taken the responsibility of maintaining the lane.

Further comments from the floor:

- vi. No-one minds about indoor licence, but no outside events are wanted

- vii. An attendee who is a consultant to a wedding venue company stated that the local wedding market is huge. It will be very difficult to see Waterhouse turning down weddings as the economic pressure will be huge.
 - viii. Disappointment was expressed that Simon Wilsher has changed his position repeatedly over the last year or so regarding the various Waterhouse developments. His reassurances have changed over time so that there is now considerable mistrust on the part of villagers. **Question: It was asked how he is going to instil trust once again after all these the changes of plan?**
 - ix. JW explained that Simon Wilsher has offered to meet with the chairmen of Monkton Combe and Limpley Stoke Parish Councils immediately upon his return to the UK early next week.
 - x. There were several comments by villagers that music from the recent wedding at Waterhouse had disturbed them until very late, as had light pollution from disco lights.
 - xi. It was felt by the meeting that the application is too broad and too comprehensive. Had the application been confined to indoor events, it was far less likely that this level of concern would have been raised. It is events outside that people object to.
 - xii. Immediate neighbours of Waterhouse expressed concern about the infrastructure surrounding Waterhouse, such as traffic volume and the A36 junction. It was noted that there have been fatalities there.
 - xiii. Waterhouse Lane is currently closed to large County Council vehicles due to the recent landslip, yet an increase in vehicle traffic in the lane is being proposed.
 - xiv. Neil Butters commented on a recent similar situation in Hinton Charterhouse Parish. There, an events venue manager said he found it very hard to moderate the volume of guest music at a wedding venue.
- g. The Chairman brought discussion to a close, thanked everyone for their comments and questions, thanked Johnny Wrench for his willingness to attend and answer questions, and reminded attendees of the rapidly approaching deadline for comments and submissions.

5. Chairman's Report on the activities of the Parish Council

The chairman urged the meeting to consider standing for the council. 'We need more parish councillors!'

He outlined some of the areas of responsibility of the council, such as, footpaths, roads, grit bins, playground, liaison with the school, planning, trees in conservation areas, etc.

He explained that the council liaises other parish councils such as Limpley Stoke PC and others, particularly through the Valley Parishes Alliance etc.

He explained that the council was in negotiation with English Heritage about urgent repairs that are needed to the Lockup in Mill Lane.

Also, the council was planning to effect repairs to the retaining wall surrounding the garden, car park and playground.

He expressed gratitude for the way Wessex Water had responded to parish concerns about their development to the Tucking Mill reservoir area.

6. District Councillor Neil Butters (Bathavon South) remarks:

He expressed thanks to the Chairman and Councillors for their work on behalf of the village.

He explained about his work with the Two Tunnels Project and that he is currently holding a Ward Councillor's Initiative Fund Grant, which can be used to benefit local communities.

He has up to £3000 still available and MCPC could bid for a grant. He particularly would like to use £2000 of that to install a 'YouTurnRound' audio device on the Sustrans cycle way above Tucking Mill. This could have audio clips about Monkton Combe and the surrounding area – e.g, history, school, community information etc. He asked if there was anything else for which a grant might be used in or around the village?

He went on to talk about his role last year as Vice-Chairman of BathNES Council, and that he was shortly to become Chairman. As Vice-chairman he had attended 70 events during the year, but as Chairman he anticipated that next year this would be closer to 500 events per annum.

7. Reports on the activities of the following organisations:

a. Monkton Combe School – Amanda Cracknell, Bursar

- i. The bursar meets with the Chairman and Vice Chairman at least once a term
- ii. Governors' Field Appeal – school had no choice but to appeal because of the refusal wording, which would have prevented any parking taking place on the field, even the occasional parking for large events that had previously taken place
The school is working closely with MCPC to landscape the site sensitively with trees/planting schemes, so as to screen it from the road and from the north as much as possible.
- iii. Pre-Prep planning consultation: Application now in and registered. The bursar thanked those who had attended the consultation.
- iv. Art & DT Block – school is planning a small extension which will not be visible from the village or from across the valley.
- v. Pupils have an Eco Committee – e.g. one boarding house saved 35% of its electricity bill by a switch-off initiative

b. Question to the Bursar:

Is there a proposal to re-route the Sustrans cycleway, which currently passes through the school, down Mill Lane instead?

i. Response:

1. Sustrans are carrying out surveys.
2. Current school route is very dangerous too
3. The school has not employed any consultants to carry out surveys of a possible new cycle route. These are being carried out by Sustrans. The school has definitely not employed Mr John Grimshaw, as stated in a recent letter from a local resident to others living in the area.

ii. Comments from floor:

1. A route down Mill Lane would be very dangerous for cyclists, residents and school maintenance staff because of the steepness of the slope and the blind narrow bend by the Lockup. **It was requested that the school takes note of village concerns and those of Mill Lane residents in any consultation they have with Sustrans.**

c. St Michael's and All Angels Church - including plans for a new hospitality suite

James Bradby (Apologies from Donald Gorrie whose daughter has just given birth to a baby.)

- i. The church is planning to install a new hospitality suite comprising a disabled toilet and kitchenette. This will involve new plumbing, water, sewage, disabled access and improvements to the pathway outside.
 - The new disabled toilet facility will become a convenience that visitors to the church and churchyard can use, as the church is now unlocked during the day.
 - All developments except the pathway will be inside the building and will be in keeping with the age and structure of the building.
 - Plans will be on display in church for 1 month from this weekend (11th May).
 - There are many visitors to the Harry Patch grave.
 - The church has raised a lot of money towards this and will later make a public appeal.

- ii. A graveyard plan is available from Jane Bradby if anyone is interested
- iii. Special event on 2nd June – Coronation Evensong, 7.00pm, with refreshments.

d. Village Hall Committee – Des Wighton (Chairman)

- i. The hall was built in 1928 for improving the lives of Monkton Combe inhabitants
- ii. The committee plans and runs social events – some of which are more popular than others. The summer barbeque and the Burns' Night are both very popular
- iii. Essential roof repairs resulted in an operating loss last year
- iv. Lettings are also made. Bookings can be made via Mike Newton, whose contact details are on the Village web-site

e. Oldfield Park Table Tennis Club – John Higgs

- i. The club is the oldest, biggest 'and best' in the Bath area. It is also the most popular venue in the Bath league. It runs through the winter season only.
- ii. In the early days (1930s) it was based in Oldfield Park Baptist Church, It then moved here 30 years ago when its premises there were redeveloped.
- iii. This year they have held a new non-competitive session on Thursday evenings. This has grown well. All are welcome that night.

f. Women's Institute – Liz Lee (Chairman Sylvia Young sends apologies)

- i. WI has been here for 90 years
- ii. It has 43 members and meet Tuesdays once a month. It runs a range of other activities.
- iii. It supports charities.
- iv. It also has some political involvement.
- v. It welcomes new members.

8. Open Discussion

- a. Access through the car park to the field by Village Hall must be kept clear.
ACTION: The parish council promised to look into it and perhaps post a notice.
- b. Peter Bossom (Village Newsletter Editor) requested news items for the Newsletter.
- c. Cllr Neil Butters offered thanks to the Parish Council Clerk for his work.

9. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.35pm.