

Somerset

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Related subject: West Monkton, Taunton

The Parish Council's response to the consultation is available as a separate document that has been uploaded below.

Attached Documents:

- [division-boundaries-for-somerset-council-jan-25.pdf](#)



West Monkton Parish Council

Division Boundaries for Somerset Council

Consultation Response

1. Introduction

This document provides the response of West Monkton Parish Council on the Divisional Boundaries for Somerset Council consultation.

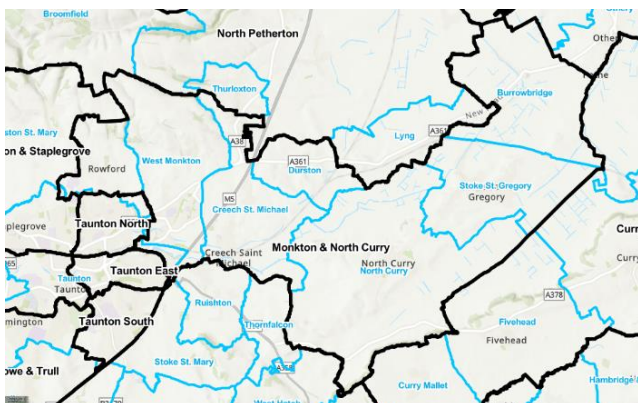
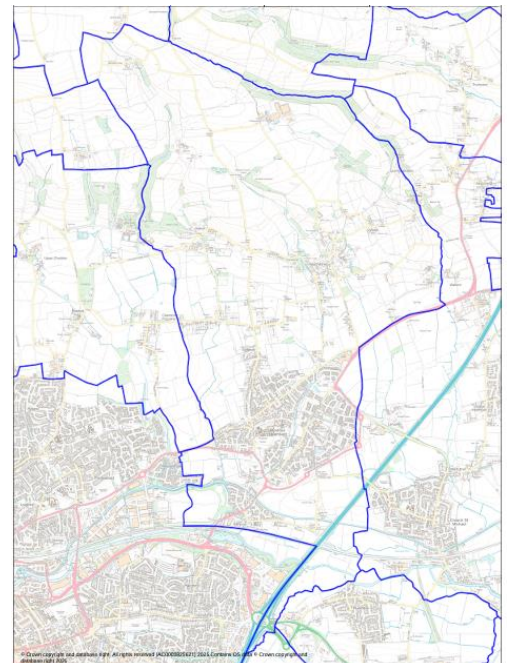
Within the document the current parish and divisional boundaries are outlined, information about the Monkton Heathfield Development Plan is provided including a summary of the recent growth of Monkton Heathfield and the future development planned prior to 2030. It also summarises recent evidence about the identity of our local community and the local facilities that residents access. Finally, in conclusion, the Parish Council identifies and recommends options for serious consideration for the future Somerset Council divisional boundaries in relation to the parish of West Monkton.

2. West Monkton Parish

The Parish of West Monkton lies to the north east of Taunton and contains a network of locally distinctive villages and hamlets surrounded by an ecologically rich and diverse farmed landscape. The historic and picturesque parishes include the villages and hamlets of Gotton, Goosenford, parts of Coombe, Overton, Bathpool, Monkton Heathfield and West Monkton. A small part to the northwest of the parish of West Monkton falls within the Quantock Hills National Landscape.

The Monkton Heathfield Phase 1 (MH1) Development commenced in 2011 and between 2012 and 2021, 1291 properties (of the 4500 proposed in the Monkton Heathfield Development Plan), were constructed and are now occupied, significantly increasing the number of households in the community.

The Parish is diverse, containing a mix of rural, sub-urban and business areas and has changed a lot in the last decade. The number of electors in the Parish as at 2023 is 4484. Despite this change and the diversity of the Parish, a strong local community now exists. Following a Community Governance Review that was undertaken prior to the formation of Taunton Town Council the West Monkton parish boundary to the south and south west was amended slightly to that illustrated above.



3. The Current Monkton and North Curry Division

The Parish of West Monkton is currently included in the Somerset Council Monkton and North Curry Division along with neighbouring parishes of Cheddon Fitzpaine, Creech St Michael, Durston, Stoke St Gregory and Burrowbridge.

The division has two Somerset Council Councillors and an electorate at 2023 of 9786. Following the formation of Taunton Town Council the current divisional boundary does not follow the current West Monkton Parish boundary to the south and south west.

Monkton Heathfield Development Plan

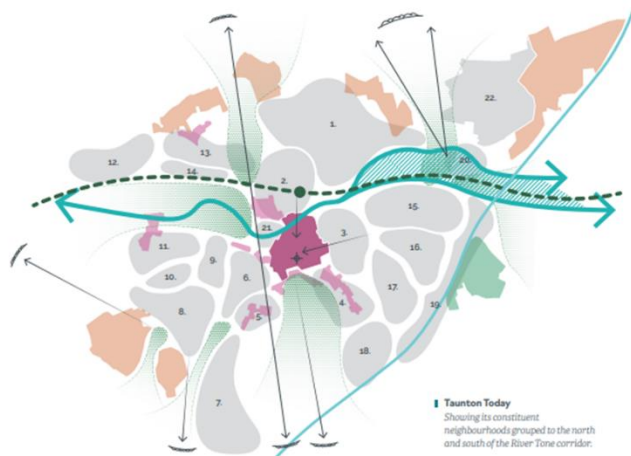
As highlighted above, the electorate of West Monkton has increased significantly in recent years. This follows a policy in the adopted Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) Core Strategy (2011 – 2028) - Policy SS1 Monkton Heathfield. The Policy states that ‘Within the area identified at Monkton Heathfield, a new sustainable neighbourhood will be delivered’. The concept plan here forms part of Policy SS1.

The concept plan shows the extent of the development planned for Monkton Heathfield and a clear natural green wedge that will be created around the completed development providing a sustainable neighbourhood.



Taunton; A Town of Neighbourhoods

The health and vitality of a settlement is determined by the strength of its component parts – a successful town is made from successful neighbourhoods, positively related by the movement network that exists between them – whilst, elsewhere, the development pattern may be broken apart by green wedges that bring the country into the heart of the place.



More recently, the Vision for Taunton Garden Town identifies that Taunton is a ‘Town of Neighbourhoods’ and identifies Monkton Heathfield as a neighbourhood in its own right, as illustrated here.

When the concept plan is compared to the West Monkton Parish boundary, it is illustrated that part of the Monkton Heathfield Development Plan, namely phase 2 (Langaller Park), for which a planning application has been submitted and is currently being determined, is within the West Monkton and Creech St Michael Parishes.



Further development will be delivered as part of the Monkton Heathfield Development plan between now and 2030 including:

Name of Development	Parish	Number of houses	Number of additional electors (1.6 voters per house)
Hartnells Farm (phase 4)	West Monkton	100	160
West of Greenway	West Monkton	150	240
Procktors Farm	West Monkton	120	192
Langaller Park	West Monkton	200	320
Langaller Park	Creech St Michael	250 (further 1000 after 2030)	400
Langaller Farm	Creech St Michael	33	53
North End	Creech St Michael	100	160
South of Langaller Farm	West Monkton	300	480

In summary, the planned development will increase the electorate of West Monkton Parish by 1392 by 2030 to 5876 and Creech St Michael Parish by 613 by 2290 to 2903.

West Monkton Parish Council and Creech St Michael Parish Council have established a joint working arrangement in relation to the Langaller Park development which will span both parishes. Our current two Somerset Council Councillors also support this working arrangement and represent the area well.

Although the Parish Council understands the reason for a reduction in Somerset Councillors from 110 to 96 and the preferred model of one Somerset Councillor representing each division, West Monkton Parish Council does not support this proposal and feels that this arrangement will not best serve our community.

As the planned Langaller Park development will span across both the West Monkton and Creech St Michael Parishes, West Monkton Parish Council feels that it would be ineffective for divisional representation to be divided and that West Monkton and Creech St Michael Parishes should not be separated into two separate divisions.

The whole of the Langaller Park development will be north of the M5 motorway which runs between the development and Creech St Michael village and facilities. As a result, it is reasonable to suggest that the future residents of the Langaller Park development will naturally identify as being part of the Monkton community due to the facilities that they will access, including the local Primary School, Secondary School, shops and businesses will be within easier access in the West Monkton Parish.

Our Community, its identity and access of facilities

In 2021/22, West Monkton Parish Council carried out a survey of its local community that asked questions about the community that they felt that they belonged to and the location of the services and facilities that they accessed. More than 86% of a very good 492 households that responded confirmed that they felt that they belonged to the West Monkton and Monkton Community and were content with the current level of local representation. A copy of the survey results is available on request. The results informed the extent of the Taunton Town Council boundary, and that didn't incorporate any of the West Monkton Parish residential areas when it was formed following a Community Governance Review in 2023.

Conclusion and Divisional Boundary Options

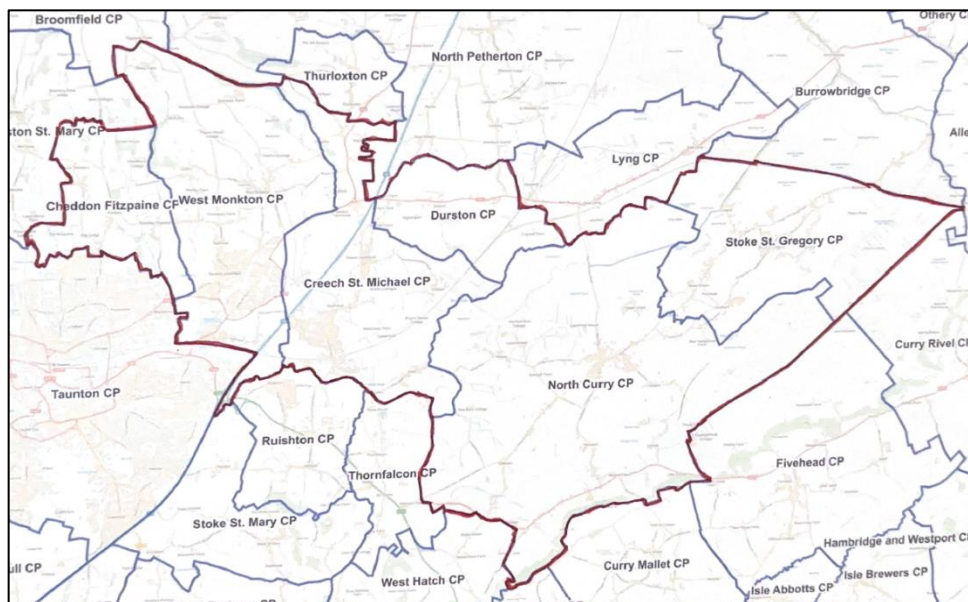
In summary, this document has summarised the current parish and divisional boundaries, provided information about the Monkton Heathfield Development Plan including a summary of the recent growth of Monkton Heathfield and the future development planned prior to 2030. It also summarised recent evidence about the identity of our local community and the local facilities that they access.

Considering this information, West Monkton Parish Council makes the following recommendations regarding the future divisional arrangements:

1. That the Divisional Boundary is amended so that it reflects and follows the West Monkton Parish Boundary to the south and south west as outlined in section 3 above.

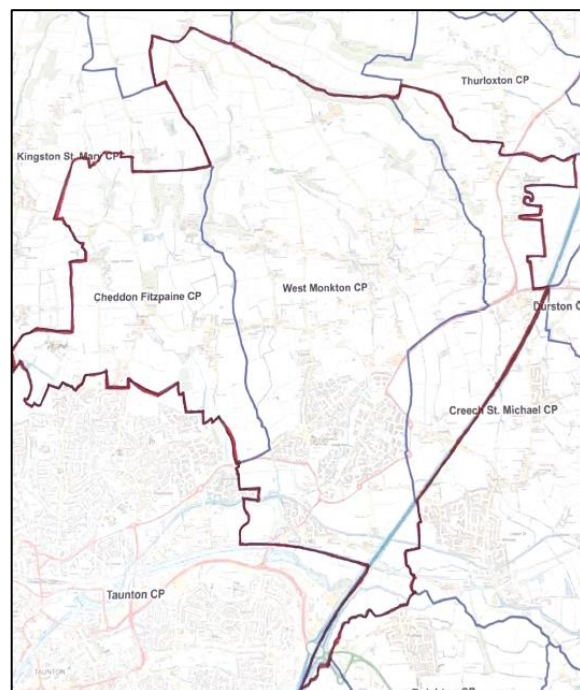
And either:

2. The Monkton and North Curry Division remains, but with the removal of Burrowbridge Parish, the priorities and issues for which align better with parishes to the north, east and west. The slightly amended Monkton and North Curry division, as illustrated here (the extent of the division is the red line) has two Somerset Councillors representing the Division.



Or

3. The Monkton and North Curry division is amended, and the parish of West Monkton is put in a separate division to Creech St Michael but that the division boundary between West Monkton and Creech St Michael is the natural boundary line of the M5 motorway as illustrated here (the extent of the division is the red line) and that one Somerset Councillor represents the Division.



Either of these options will ensure that the current community of West Monkton and the future community that comes with the remainder of the Monkton Heathfield Development Plan is represented by the same two or one Somerset Councillor and that the divisional boundaries reflect the identity of the community and the facilities that it accesses.

Finally, West Monkton Parish Council has reviewed a document prepared by Kingston St Mary Parish Council suggesting divisional boundaries for the whole of Somerset to align with the Local Community Networks. West Monkton Parish Council is not supportive of the proposal put forward. The proposal that relates to West Monkton includes a divisional boundary that divides West Monkton Parish in two, dividing our established community.