



# ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES

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**Date:** Tuesday, 23 March 2021  
**Time:** 6:00pm  
**Venue:** Virtual meeting via Zoom

## Present

Cllr Vivienne Hodges (Chair)  
Cllr Mike Warner (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Malcolm Chudley  
Cllr Mike Jeffery (Chair of Planning Committee)  
Cllr Penny Simpson  
Cllr Anna Adnitt  
Cllr Jan Evans (Chair of Finance and Policy Committee)  
Cllr Julian Edwards  
Cllr Paul Dodd (Chair of Open Spaces Committee)  
Cllr Rose Mogeni  
Cllr Farrand-Rogers

## Also Present

Samantha Parkin (Clerk)  
Cllr Jerry Brook, Devon County Council  
14 members of the public

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked everyone for attending and apologised because the meeting was virtual. The Chair noted the meeting had to be cancelled last year due to the pandemic.

## 2. SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S YEAR

Cllr Hodges, Cllr Warner and the Clerk summarised the Council's year accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation.

Cllr Warner summarised the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Fortunately, the Council had been updating the contingency plan prior to the pandemic which influenced the response. The Council worked closely with Wellmoor and Morecare to distribute leaflets and postcards and coordinated volunteer efforts.

Cllr Warner summarised the Council's efforts in reinstating Post Office services in Moretonhampstead, the situation is on-going.

Cllr Hodges updated the community on the future of the BT Phone box and explained the Council had given Wellmoor the use of the phone box. Wellmoor are hoping to renovate the box.

Cllr Hodges noted the Council's new website and explained the reason why the Council moved from the 'Visit Moretonhampstead' site was because Council Business was hard to find.

Cllr Hodges thanked Sian Colridge for volunteering to carry out the Council's internal Audits.

Cllr Hodges thanked Cllr Dodd for overseeing the open spaces the Council manages. Cllr Dodd gives up a lot of his time to paint benches and check the open spaces for issues.

The Clerk summarised the Council's Xmas celebrations which included purchasing new lights for the Square and delivering presents to primary school aged children. The Clerk also thanked all the volunteers who stepped up during the Coronavirus pandemic and noted the Council's 'thank you' presentations to organisations and businesses.

### **3. CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

Cllr Adnitt summarised the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working group's activities throughout the last year.

### **4. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

District Councillor Jeffery informed the community that all Teignbridge District Council meetings had taken place virtually last year. Cllr Jeffery favoured virtual meetings as it allows members of public to attend the meetings without leaving their homes. The meetings are also recorded and uploaded to YouTube.

A few interesting facts:

- The cost of running TDC is £15.3 million.
- Band D Council tax will rise 2.85% in 2021/22.
- Car parking charges will also rise - there will be free parking during the winter in Moreton.
- Cllrs community fund will remain at £1,000.
- Rural aid has been suspended.
- Cllrs pay has been frozen.
- Largest cost of services for TDC is waste collection and street cleaning. The total cost of running this department is £10,487,000.

### **5. UPDATES FROM LOCAL CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS**

Updates from Community Clubs/Groups/Organisations were provided:

- Moretonhampstead Scout Group – Mike Collins
- Moretonhampstead Development Trust – John Willis, Camilla Rooney, Richard Foxwell and Andrea Foxwell
- Moretonhampstead History Society – Bill Hardiman
- Moretonhampstead Swimming Pool – Kerry Chappel
- Moretonhampstead Action on Plastics – Alistair Maclaurin

### **6. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

County Councillor Jerry Brook noted the extraordinary year the Council had faced but he reflected on the positives in his report:

- Devon County Council had managed to continue to provide services throughout the pandemic

- County Councillors and staff attended virtual meeting which has resulted in less cars on the road
- On a more global scale, this is the first year DCC have not been inflicted with austerity measures. The Government gave DCC more money for Adult services and Children and Young People services.
- Regrettably, the road network was not given more money.
- Coming to the end of DCC's 4 year period, it is very solvent, probably due to early planning.
- DCC have tried to minimize redundancies, the largest amount of people left the Council due to retirement or a new job
- DCC is still functioning well with less staff and this is down to the hard work of remaining staff.
- Cllr Brook is concerned about the end of furlough and the return of business rates.
- DCC is in really good shape in his opinion because of the people of Devon and the communities generating interest and enthusiasm.

Cllr Brook ended his report by thanking the Council and community who have either contacted him or supported him in his job. He has thoroughly enjoyed it and thinks Moreton will be an exemplar parish to the rest of Devon in the future.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and updating the community. She noted it is very heartening to hear all the activities that have taken place over a difficult year.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.31pm.

Full reports and PowerPoint presentations can be found in the routine business section under the Annual Parish Meeting heading on the Parish Council website - [moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk/routine-business/](http://moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk/routine-business/)

Written reports from Morecare and the Biodiversity group can also be found on the website.

*MPC Minutes 23.03.2021 Attachment no.1 – Email received post meeting*

Dear Sam

As a newcomer to Moreton, it was very interesting to hear what has been going on in the town for these last 12 months.

However I was very disappointed that there was no opportunity for members of the electorate to make comment or ask questions of the Parish Council. Any person on the Electoral Register of the Parish is entitled to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting and that opportunity was not afforded to the electorate yesterday evening. I did try to indicate that I wished to speak as the meeting was being drawn to a close by the Chairman, but that was either not noticed or ignored.

I was wanting to hear more about current efforts to restore Post Office Services to the community.

We were told about the history of why the Post Office in Moretonhampstead had closed and what happened when the building that housed it was put on the market, but there was very little information about current efforts to restore Post Office provision here. I do of course appreciate that the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions forced councils to work in different ways and to re-appraise their priorities and I must say that Moreton does seem to have rallied round marvellously during all this ably facilitated by the Parish Council and its associated groups.

To return to Post Office provision - as I understand it, the Parish Council is awaiting the determination of the current planning application for the former building that has been submitted. If this planning application is rejected then there seems to be an idea that the the proposal for the Information Centre to move to the old Post Office site will again be pursued and that Post Office service may also be incorporated on that site.

If that is able to take place, that would be wonderful, but there has to be a lot of willingness on all sides for that to happen. Post Office Ltd (the national provider) is not known to be proactive in searching out for appropriate persons and premises in places where Post Offices have shut; they have to be pushed very hard to take any responsibility in this respect.

However I do think that the issue of Post Office provision in Moreton is being deflected by the issue of the building that housed the former Post Office. Once Royal Mail vacated the sorting office there and stopped paying rent, the business model there was unlikely to be viable, as proved to be the case. Post Office provision in any small town or village is now only viable if it is part of another business. I am sure that various business owners have considered taking it on and some may well have been approached by the council, it would have been good to hear that if that had been the case. But as we hopefully come out of lockdown and businesses can re-open properly there will be some businesses that find their circumstances have changed; their clientele and the level of their business may not be the same as it was before the pandemic struck and it may well be that taking on Post Office services would be something that they could consider now when they did not consider it before.

It would be good to hear what efforts are currently being made to engage with Post Office Ltd; I would like to think that our councillors are making it very clear to them that Post Office Ltd have a responsibility to our community to provide proper Post Office services in Moretonhampstead. Post Office Ltd need to be held to account; it would have been excellent if someone from the company had been asked to come to the meeting yesterday evening to explain themselves. Pressure needs to be kept up on them otherwise the needs of our community will be forgotten by them.

I am sorry to go about this, but I am aware that there are many in Moreton who desperately wish to see Post Office provision restored, the needs are well known and understood. As our local Council we look to you to help facilitate the restoration of these services.

Given that I was not afforded the opportunity to speak at The Annual Parish meeting I hope that you can pass this on to the Chairman, the councillors and others present yesterday evening. I also ask that this be appended to the minutes of the meeting as something that would have been said if I had been allowed to say it.

Many thanks

Guy Sheppard

*MPC Minutes 23.03.21 Attachment no.2 – Reply to above email*

Dear Guy,

Thank you for attending the Annual Parish Meeting last night.

I apologise we did not see you signalling to speak at the end of the meeting. At the usual meeting held in the Parish Hall, there is plenty of time for the community to ask questions. However, due to the meeting being held virtually, this proved more difficult and it is hard to engage people when the meeting exceeds 1 hr 1/2.

The full Council meets on the first Tuesday of the month except in August. All public are encouraged to join and there is a public session at the beginning where you can ask questions. Next month's meeting will be held on 6th of April at 7pm, the link to the meeting will be at the top of the Agenda which can be found on our website from the 31st March.

I know, Cllr Mike Warner is happy to speak with you regarding the Post Office situation and has emailed you directly.

Please do let me know if you have any more questions.

Kind regards

Samantha  
Parish Clerk  
Moretonhampstead Parish Council