



# MORETONHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

## Action Plan 2022/2023



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## Introduction

Welcome to the Moretonhampstead Parish Council. This is our Plan – it sets out what we are going to do over a rolling year period of two years. The Plan takes into account the issues facing us and our ability to respond with the resources available. It makes clear there will be choices, and how the Council will decide which to prioritise.

The Plan has been prepared and approved by your parish councillors. It is essentially a planning tool to assist us with the practical decisions we have to take when we meet monthly, supported by a review process that helps us, and you, look back on our performance. By publishing our Action Plan we can help those that live, work or visit the Parish see what we are doing on their behalf.

## Context

This is our first Action Plan, prepared at a time of austerity across society when all organisations that provide services to the community, be they public, private or voluntary are facing cost pressures and resource restrictions. The emphasis is on value for money, efficiencies, collaboration and accepting that some things just will not get done. Through a planning process though, we can have a shared vision and direction, protect what is important and consider new ways of getting things done. Although not new, encouraging others to help themselves and not to rely on things being done for them is as important as ever.

Moretonhampstead Parish Council, as the first tier of local government, is uniquely situated to provide the forum for understanding and supporting the needs of this community. It provides advocacy on behalf of its residents, uses linkages to other organisations to bring in services, or directly procures them itself. Liaison with Devon Council happens at all levels, and there are linkages to health and social care as well. Day-to-day, the Council will seek solutions for the community, looking for skills and volunteers to make improvements to our surroundings or bringing particular neighbourhood issues to local attention to promote a better quality of life for all. Above all your Parish Council is here to help, support and encourage. This Plan tells you how.



## The Planning Cycle

Planning (and performance) is a continuous process of gathering and assessing information, formulating actions, *doing them*, and then reviewing performance and gathering again.



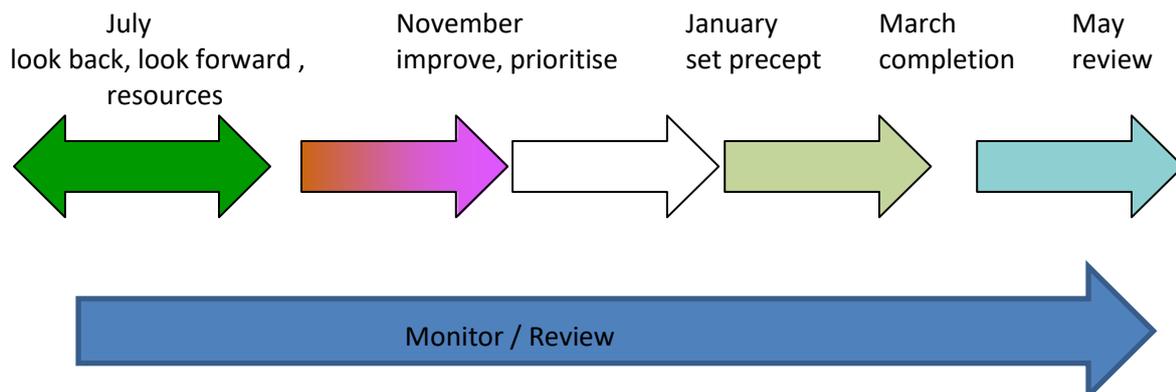
Of course at key stages one has to pause and reflect, and consider how the plan is evolving – and not just once per year, as the plan is relevant to every significant decision made. Once specific actions are agreed to deliver this Plan, they are entered on the Actions Register, which is monitored at every meeting of the Council.

## Linkages

This Plan is linked very closely to the allocation of resources – mostly financial, but people’s time and energy too. Our finance is almost entirely derived from the Council Tax system, which follows the financial year April to March. Our precept, or ‘demand’, placed upon the Council Tax system has to be declared every January, in order that Devon County Council can calculate the overall tax collection sums for each eligible household and produce the billing required.

## Key dates

Therefore this Plan will be drafted from November in each year, allowing it to evolve as the budget is also prepared, for final precept calculations in January. The Plan cycle will run from April to March, to match the funding available, and will be formally reviewed in May and November to assess achievements in the previous cycle, and progress in the current one.





## What is a parish council?

There are two sorts of parishes whose boundaries do not always coincide:

- the Ecclesiastical Parishes centered on an Anglican church with a parochial church council and,
- the Civil Parishes, which are part of local administration, having a parish (or town) council.

A civil parish is an independent local democratic unit for villages, smaller towns, and suburbs of urban areas. Each parish has a Parish (or Town) Meeting consisting of all its local government electors and most (where the electorate exceeds 200) have a Parish or Town Council. Over 13 million people live in such parishes, with approximately 1,800 in the parish of Moretonhampstead.

The parish council is a small local authority. Its councillors are elected for four years at a time in the same way as for other councils. Bye-elections may be held to fill vacancies occurring between elections, or members may be co-opted onto the Council if no election is called. The council is the corporation of its parish in the Devon area; it covers the town of Moretonhampstead and hamlet of Docombe. In May each year the councillors choose a chairperson from amongst their number. In the Moretonhampstead Parish, there are 12 councillors who make up the Parish Council, which employs a part-time Clerk to manage administration.

## What can we do?

### Powers and Duties

Parish councils have a number of formal powers, set out in a wide range of legislation. A duty is something that a council must do, a power is something that it may do, if it so decides. A parish council cannot do anything that is not permitted in law.

Parish Councils are entitled to be consulted on planning applications, which include work to listed buildings and on proposals in conservation areas, and are often consulted on such things as schools and roads. They put the parish's case at public inquiries. Recent moves from Government toward greater 'localism' are set to increase the role of Parish Councils even further, especially in the field of development control and planning.

There is now the power to create a Neighbourhood Plan which allows local people to get the right development for their community but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area.

### Accountability

You elect its members every four years - the next time will be May 2023 - and you are entitled to attend the annual parish meeting (in May) and to say what you think. You can also go to every meeting of the Parish Council and meet the Council members, listen to their business and participate in the time especially set aside for that purpose at the start. The accounts are strictly audited every year and published.

You can find out more about what we do, how we do it, and our meetings on the parish website at [www.moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk](http://www.moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk)



## What do we do?

The Parish Council provides a number of direct services to the community, and acts as custodian to a number of assets held in the 'public name'.

The assets held in the public name are the Allotments, Burial Ground, Triangle of land in Pound Street, lease of the Sentry, a Notice Board, the War Memorial, Street Furniture, Penny Farthing bike stands, George Bidder (Memorial), de-commissioned BT kiosk, Xmas Lights, benches in the Sentry, 3 x litter bins and Churchyard, Playground Equipment comprising of Multi Play, Climbing Frame, Rocking Horse, Somersault Bars, Playhouse, 2 bay swing, sweeping seesaw, Monkey bars, Swinging Steps, Spring Motorbike and the surface beneath the equipment in the play area. Office Equipment comprising of Printer/Cables, Toshiba Laptop, Dell Screen and a Laminator. The Council is responsible for maintenance, repairs and insurance for these items and facilities.

Although Dartmoor National Park Authority is the Planning Authority (DNPA), the Parish Council is consulted on each planning application made in the parish. Councillors consider planning applications at their meetings and inform DNPA of their views.

At each meeting of the Council, reports are received, and Councillors seek to provide support where necessary or requested in order that local groups can continue to thrive. The Council can act as advocate for residents, a conduit for communicating information, and will liaise with appropriate departments of other public authorities to ensure that views, comments and necessary actions are dealt with.

## What we achieved in the last year

Between April 2021 and March 2022, we have achieved a wide range of improvements, both to the way we work, and to the community we serve:

**Adopted** new Financial Regulations based on a national model from the National Association of local Councils;

**Established** an Equal Opportunity Policy;

**Awarded** grants to 7 local groups and organisations;

**Signed** the Devon Climate Declaration;

**Purchased** additional Christmas lights for the town centre;

**Restored** the railings and gates in St Andrews Churchyard;

**Considered** 37 planning applications, most of which were supported by this Council



## What do we want to do next?

The table below sets out the Action Plan adopted by the Council and arranged over the next two years:

Ser	Issue	Action	Lead Partners	Resource Implications	Timescale
<b>Long-term Overview</b>					
1	Maintain impetus of Action Plan	Formal and regular overview by Parish Council	MPC	Nil	At MPC discretion
<b>Facilities and Services</b>					
2	Providing facilities for children, young people and families	Maintain the recreational area facilities	MPC, Open Spaces c'ttee	As needed	Ongoing
<b>Crime and Community Safety</b>					
3	Maintaining current satisfactory situation.	Maintain current contact with Devon and Cornwall Police Encourage reporting of fly tipping to DCC	MPC,  All residents	Nil	Regular and frequent monitoring
		Begin periodic 'litter picks'.		'Litter pick'.	At MPC discretion
<b>Local Economy and Tourism</b>					
4	Assisting the local economy, including encouraging tourism	Consider better marketing of the local area. Continue encouraging local groups and organisations to apply for grants.	MPC  Finance and Policy c'ttee	Nil, utilize website  Grant budget set annually	Ongoing
<b>Education and Communications</b>					
5	Improve communication of Parish Council activities	Monthly Parish News Facebook Page Noticeboards	MPC	Nil	Ongoing
<b>Open Spaces</b>					
6	Continue to care for Open Spaces	Instruct Contractors to maintain	MPC	Budget set annually	Ongoing



7	Restore Churchyard	Continue with improvements to churchyard – Welcome sign, pathways and compost bin	MPC	Reserves	Ongoing
Ser	Issue	Action	Lead Partners	Resource Implications	Timescale
<b>Housing, Development and the Built Environment</b>					
8	Taking forward local preferences when considering local planning applications.	Work with Housing Enabling Officer to conduct Housing Needs Survey	MPC	Nil	Continuing
<b>Transport and Traffic</b>					
9	Speeding in Station Road	Monitor speed / work with DCC to carry out speed monitoring	MPC	Nil	Continuing