



MOULTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

Moulton Parish Council

Parish Office

Moulton Community Centre – Sandy Hill

Reedings

Moulton

NN3 7AX

01604 642202

info@moultonparishcouncil.org.uk

Parish Councillors

Cllr David Aarons (Chairman)
Cllr Geoff Paul (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Neil Bennett
Cllr Chris Curran
Cllr Stephen Fehnert
Cllr Tony Morrow
Cllr Gary Moss
Cllr Yvonne Swallow
Cllr Martin Swannell
Cllr Kevin White
Cllr David Conway
Cllr Josh Marshall
Cllr David Hinkson

Executive Officer

Jane Austin CiLCA, CertHE: Community Governance

Mission

Moulton Parish Council's vision is for Moulton to be a successful, vibrant and attractive community where people want to live and work. Council represent the community and aim to protect and promote the heritage and identity of Moulton in order to preserve the parish for current residents and to provide a legacy for future generations.

Our values underpin our decisions and actions. We aspire to be:

Efficient and Effective: Delivering services, ensuring value for money and evaluating the impact of our actions.

Open and Democratic: Consulting with residents and organisations in appropriate decision making.

Proactive and Innovative: Finding solutions and acting in the best interests of local people.

Diligent: Complying fully with legislation associated with local government, equal opportunities, health and safety and approved governance procedures.

The Council is made up of 14 elected councillors (1 seat currently vacant) representing Moulton parish. They are responsible to the residents they represent and can be contacted directly on any matter. They receive no allowance but have a passion to be involved in the community. Councillors have four main areas of work:

- Decision-making through attending meetings
- Monitoring, making sure that decisions lead to efficient and effective services
- Getting involved with the local community
- Appointed as Lead Councillor on council projects and initiatives

Chairman's Report Cllr David Aarons

Following last year's gradual recovery from the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, this year has seen a rapid return to "business as usual".

The first major surprise of the year was when Vice-chair, Geoff Paul, and I attended the NCALC (Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils) AGM to be greeted unexpectedly with their Council of the Year Award (<https://www.northantscalc.com/news/2022/10/council-of-the-year-2022>). The award to Moulton PC was for "its work promoting health and wellbeing and for its service to the community".

Much of this activity has been seen at Moulton Community Centre (MCC).

Moulton PC now supports something like 80 community groups, some with just a handful of members others with events for 100+. At MCC we provide support, services and activities across a full range of ages. In a discrete corner there are scales for new parent to keep track of weight for their babies and added soft furnishing is being used by families with young children. Story-time sessions are increasingly popular and usually over-subscribed.

Several activities are aimed at school-age visitors during term-time and there is always a programme of activities during school holidays.

MCC now has a dedicated "warm space" for daily use and a weekly food larder to help families in need.

As always, our senior residents have their games morning each Friday and a community lunch twice a month.

This is a small selection of what Moulton PC is organising to support Moulton and its residents. As always, there is more to do and the Health & Wellbeing team is constantly look out for new and better ways to do this.

Organisations such as Weight Watchers and the local National Trust groups also help to make MCC the thriving venue we see today. We also support outside public agencies such as local NHS teams and the Police & Crime Commissioner's office.

Having made the decision to run the café rather than let the space to a tenant it now forms a much more integrated part of all of the activities taking place. Following a necessary refurbishment and restocking programming the café has steadily increased its hours to deliver the best possible service to all our centre visitors and hall hirers. This has led us to using Section 106 funding, from local house building, to expand the café seating area and build on this success which will provide us with the space to provide even more services to residents.

None of this would have been possible without the strenuous efforts of our Executive Officer, Jane Austin, and her hard-working team. They have gone "above and beyond" to deliver the best possible service to our community.

Councillors have also been hard at work this last year.

Unfortunately we said goodbye to two of our councillors. The resignations of Trevor Ward due to ill health and Steve Morrow owing to a house move. Trevor has acted as our longstanding expert leading the planning team and Steve was our police liaison councillor. David Conway, Josh Marshall and David Hinkson were co-opted as new councillors during the year.

Our green spaces have benefitted from the efforts of Councillor Martin Swannell and his small team of helpers. Martin works to ensure that these precious areas benefit from good management as he oversees our long-term plan as well as planting large numbers of new trees in Crowfields Nature Reserve.

Councillors Kevin White and Tony Morrow continue their work to develop provision for teenage residents, sometimes a forgotten group, in Moulton.

A working group to consider how we can mitigate some of the impact of climate change has just begun. Our first tangible benefit is the upcoming installation of solar panels (funded by Section 106 money) at MCC. This should result in a considerable reduction to our electricity bills over the long-term.

Councillor Yvonne Swallow spends a great deal of time working with the library and H&W team to help them deliver their much-needed service.

Councillors Stephen Fehnert and David Conway have battled with Mulberry Homes and WNC planners in order to establish a proper level and use for ground allocated for Moulton FC when the development on Boughton Road was first planned several years ago.

Councillor Chris Curran continues with his ongoing (sometimes frustrating) dialogue with WNC Highways on subjects such as pot-holes and community transport.

The Finance Committee under the chairmanship of Councillor Geoff Paul work hard to ensure that we achieve a proper balance between maximising service delivery to our community and judicious use of funds. In this endeavour he is ably supported by Councillors Stephen Fehnert, Gary Moss and Yvonne Swallow.

Our WNC ward councillor, Mike Warren, has become a welcome member of the parish council team for the life of this council. There have been several challenges over the last year and Mike has been active in assisting MPC in trying to overcome them.

Lastly, all of this activity is underpinned by the volunteers who step forward to enable us to make these things happen and they have my heartfelt thanks.

All-in-all another good year for MPC and the community it serves – bearing in mind there is ALWAYS more to achieve!

Executive Officer Report Jane Austin

Last year's activities differed greatly from the previous two years of the pandemic. As ever, we are -----always faced with many demands, challenges and pressures on council resources and finances and each new year brings different ones! Financial pressures are high, we began running the café last year which required some investment. We aim to see that element of our business breaking even during this new financial year.

Although in a much-reduced capacity, Covid is still with us and during the autumn we experienced a number of booking cancellations at short notice. I am pleased to report that since Christmas bookings for the Community Centre remain at a very healthy level and are back at pre pandemic levels. I must thank Louise and Caroline who not only manage the bookings but keep the building open and well maintained! We have more than 40 service contacts linked to the community centre

and Louise and Caroline interrogate each contract continually to ensure we are obtaining the best possible service and value from each one.

The past year has seen many advances on parish projects, and these are detailed later in the report. Our Health and Wellbeing Hub continues to grow and visitors to the library number approx. 10,000 per month. Working closely with the café staff provides the best service for all users at the community centre. Such is the parish council's commitment to our Health and Wellbeing initiative we are fortunate enough to employ two Community Connectors, Rachael and Dionne. This has enabled us to deliver so many events and provide more services to all ages of our population, as well as managing the library. In October 2022, we were honoured to receive the 'Ncalc Council of the Year Award' for our Health and Wellbeing provision. This provision increased during the winter months when we became a 'Warm Hub' supporting residents who are affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Huge thanks must go to Rachael and Dionne our Community Connectors and Annette, our Hospitality Manager for their work in supporting our community and providing such a warm welcome to all visitors .

Although we are still a parish council, we have the operation and function of a small town council. Below is a small example of how our parish has grown in the last 7 years:

	2016	2022/23
Population	3454	6500
Dwellings	1474	2500
Contractors	5	45
Staff	2	26
Play Areas	1	5
Attenuation Basins	0	7
Public Open Spaces	4	9
Community Buildings	1	2
Library	0	1
Cafe	0	1

New housing developments in Moulton parish are coming to an end and at the present time, Mulberry Homes will be the last one to be completed. Although development in Overstone parish will continue over the next decade, the need for community infrastructure will be significant and Moulton will continue to feel the impact of this for some time to come.

Sadly, in September the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II necessitated following a strict protocol as detailed in Operation London Bridge, the process required following the death of a monarch.

I must pay special tribute to the Chair and Vice Chair who appreciate the dedication and relentless hard work of my team and never fail to thank them. Their steadfast support enables us to continually strive to improve services and provide best value for residents. It's a great advantage that this council understands the difference between Governance and Management.

The Parish Team continues to grow and develop and comprises of very experienced individuals all with great strengths. Our staff team has grown to 26. We accept and rise to any challenge thrown at us. The threat of Covid may have receded but we had to work hard throughout the winter on our parish wide initiative to ensure we were able to help alleviate heat and food poverty for our most vulnerable residents. Our Community Larder initiative began in September 2022 and continues to run weekly. Huge thanks must go to Claire Watt, who not only manages all our Finances (including securing a clear audit) and Human Resources but somehow manages to find time to produce two Moulton Scenes each year!

For some years, Moulton has held the reputation of being the best run council in the County. Notwithstanding the strong working relationship with council, I believe this to be down to the best group of people I could ever wish to work with, all of whom work many more hours than they are paid for and the many contractors to support our efforts in running the parish.

Governance

Public scrutiny of Parish Councils has continued throughout 2021 and the Parish Council recognises the importance of demonstrating both the impact of our services and the integrity in which it operates. The Parish Council is committed to meeting the highest standards of governance in all its activities and to ensuring that everyone who acts in the name of the Council - councillors, employees and volunteers meet the highest standards of conduct and probity. The Parish Council has adopted Standing Orders and a Code of Conduct and conducts an annual review to support continuous improvement.

2022/23 Council and Committee Meetings Calendar

All meetings of the Council and Committees are open to the public – see Calendar of meetings below. Each meeting agenda includes a period when the public can address the Council. For more information please go to the meetings pages on our website

[Agendas & Minutes | Moulton Parish Council \(moultonnorthants-pc.gov.uk\)](https://www.moultonnorthants-pc.gov.uk/Agendas%20&%20Minutes)

Councillor Attendance at Council Meetings 2022-2023

Councillor	Full Council (Meetings Held 12)	Finance (Meetings Held 8)	Planning (Meetings Held 1)
CLlr D Aarons	10	7	1
CLlr G Paul	11	8	N/A
CLlr N Bennett	6	N/A	1
CLlr C Curran	5	N/A	1
CLlr S Fehnert	9	5	N/A
CLlr T Morrow	8	N/A	0
CLlr D Conway	5/8 appointed Sept 22	N/A	N/A
CLlr G Moss	8	5/6	1
CLlr Y Swallow	10	6	N/A
CLlr M Swannell	10	N/A	N/A
CLlr J Marshall	3/3 appointed Dec 22	N/A	N/A
CLlr K White	10	N/A	N/A

Council Meetings

Council meetings are mostly held on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.15 p.m. in Moulton Community Centre. Meetings are held in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and other appropriate legislation.

Committee Structure

Throughout the year the work of the Parish Council was supported by the Finance Committee. The Planning Committee meet on occasion to discuss large or sensitive planning applications in order to advise council of an appropriate response. Each Committee has Terms of Reference approved by Full Council and are reviewed annually. Committees generally meet in advance of Council meetings with minutes of meetings provided to the Council together with any recommendations.

Delegated Authority

Within its Standing Orders the Council has a formal schedule of matters specifically reserved for its approval which cannot be delegated to its Committees and these are defined within the relevant terms of reference. Day to day management of the Council is delegated to the Executive Officer and her team and the Council reviews its scheme of delegated authority on an annual basis.

Notwithstanding any delegation the Council remains collectively accountable for the work of the Council.

Risk Management

The Parish Council has overall responsibility for ensuring that there is an appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise across the Council to provide reasonable assurance that relevant laws and regulations are complied with, that assets are safeguarded against unauthorised use or disposal and that proper records are maintained and information is reliable.

Financial Review

The Parish Council receives income through the Precept which is an annual sum of money collected with the Council Tax by West Northamptonshire Council. In addition, income is received from Cemetery fees, hall hire and developer contributions.

Details of the income and expenditure for 2022-2023 can be found on our website using the following link: [Finance | Moulton Parish Council \(moultonnorthants-pc.gov.uk\)](https://www.moultonnorthants-pc.gov.uk)

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, consisting of five councillors meets most months. Its functions include the consideration of new policies, developing strategy, monitoring of the actions in support of the Business Plan, oversight of the Council's budgets, accounts, property, resources, investments and internal controls. Moulton Parish Council is open and transparent in the way it manages its finances. Information on the way the Council mitigates financial risk and what it has spent money on can be found on the Council website [Finance | Moulton Parish Council \(moultonnorthants-pc.gov.uk\)](https://www.moultonnorthants-pc.gov.uk)

The Council's finances are monitored on a day to day basis by the Responsible Financial Officer and the Finance Committee. The Council appoints an internal auditor who assesses the Council's compliance with relevant legislation and a further audit is carried out by an external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission.

Finance Committee Chairmans Report Cllr Geoff Paul

This has been another challenging year for the finances of Moulton Parish Council. We started the year coming out of the Pandemic, with the challenges to our income from hire of the Parish facilities.

Fortunately, the vast majority of our old established hirers have returned, and we have continued to seek additional users – much of this growth has been as a result of the outstanding work by our new Community Connectors, who continue to develop our ‘offering’ to the community.

Once the pandemic subsided, we were then faced with unexpected inflation of our cost base, following the invasion of Ukraine. Many of our recurring contracts have an inflationary clause, which means our costs have risen much more than we had anticipated. (We are of course not alone in this).

Our community centre café (Eat at Moulton CC) has continued to grow, and now provides us with a significant income stream, and is developing an excellent reputation. We are currently extending the café area – a high capital cost, but one we are confident will pay for itself over the short to medium term, by increasing the availability of space to hire out to residents.

We achieved a close to break-even financial result in the year to March 2023, and have budgeted for the same in the new financial year. Unfortunately, the result of the inflation in costs we have experienced over the past year (many of which we are continuing to face) has meant we have felt obliged to increase our precept for this year. We are too close to the memory of what happened to the old Northants County Council to take the risk of leaving precept income at an inadequate level.

The Finance Committee has continued to meet regularly, and has conscientiously examined all proposed spending – only recommending those items which we are confident will provide a future benefit. In this regard, I wish to place on record my sincere thanks for the members of the Finance Committee, who have worked hard to ensure the Parish Council remains in a sound financial position.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee of the Parish Council currently consists of five councillors. The Committee acts on behalf of the Parish Council and considers planning applications and infrastructure matters. All planning applications are considered by the Committee with input from site visits, neighbours and other stakeholders when making recommendations to West Northamptonshire Council who are the local planning authority. Moulton Parish Council continues to work closely with both our West Northamptonshire Councillors and their respective officers to ensure that the views of the residents of Moulton are taken into account when determining planning-related matters.

The Parish Council engages with West Northamptonshire Highways in respect of infrastructure. Issues such as problem parking and speeding are regularly raised by residents and the Parish Council contributes in the resolution of such matters.

Community Engagement

In addition to the Parish Council website, which holds a huge amount of information including Agendas and Minutes, there are five Council noticeboards in the village. They are updated regularly and are located at Moulton Community Centre, Fuller Road, Overstone Road, Boughton Road and Barlow Lane.

The Moulton Scene, our parish magazine is delivered twice yearly to all households in March and September. A Summer newsletter is delivered in July and a Christmas newsletter in late November. Newsletters are also delivered when needed throughout the year.

Moulton Library, Health and Wellbeing Hub - Rachael Warr Community Connector Lead

See end of the report.

2022/23 Activities

Moulton Community Centre

- Main kitchen extraction upgrade.
- 5-year Fixed Wire Testing carried out
- Café received 5* grading from Environmental Health Officer
- Planning permission granted for café extension.
- Progress solar panels defer EV charging points.
- Agreement to place Air Conditioning Units to the library and small hall
- Library became a Warm Space throughout the winter
- Provision of Community larder
- Library visits 150% increase on visitor numbers approx. 10K per month

Parish

- Decision to submit a planning application for an extension to the football club
- Planting of 250 trees in Crowfields and underplanting with primroses and foxgloves.
- Nest boxes have been constructed and installed.
- Wildflower seed planting in Busby's Meadow
- New noticeboards throughout the parish have been installed.
- New Signage has been installed at the junction of Sandy Hill Lane and Overstone Road.
- Parish Website has been updated

Gig in the Gardens September 2022

Our outdoor event held in September proved to be the most popular yet. The weather was glorious and the bands entertained us for 8 hours. The Public Gardens is the perfect venue for our outdoor music events.



MOULTON LIBRARY HEALTH & WELLBEING HUB

2022-2023



117k

Between May 2022 and April 2023 over 117 thousand visits were recorded to the hub.

2

Community Connectors!
Rachael & Dionne each work 4 days a week, manning the welcome desk, liaising with residents and arranging a programme of activities to cater for all ages!

1

EXPANDED CHILDRENS LIBRARY

With three additional sofas our children's library has expanded to create more space for all of the activities we have on offer!

- CONSTRUCTION CLUB
- STAY & PLAY(X2)
- RHYME TIME
- BOUNCE & RHYME
- BABY WEIGHING
- HOMEWORK CLUB



In October we welcomed Katy, and introduced an additional Rhyme Time session for babies. With weekly members exceeding our capacity for both groups we quickly had to resort to utilising a booking system! To date we have held 24 sessions with Katy totalling to a whopping 2112 available spaces for Under fives and their carers to enjoy the sessions



2k+

960 BIG BOUNCE

336 PARTIES

70 ZOO LABS

70 SCIENCE SHOW

75 STORYTIMES

195 EASTER CRAFTS

140 THEATRE

50 BANKING WORKSHOPS

Throughout each school holiday a full programme of activities was arranged with accessible and affordable activities being our priority. The figures to the left show the number of available booking spaces available for children at each activity - all of which were fully booked! Big Bounce has now been expanded to include preschool sessions and soft play. Additional resources have been purchased to improve all activities and the children's library in general.



169

Throughout the winter months 169 refreshment trolleys were made available, with warm drinks and snacks during our extended hours. Fresh fruit and pastries are available throughout the day on the welcome desk.

1 KINDNESS RAIL

Free warm clothes are available, including jackets, jumpers, scarves, hats and gloves.



1 SNACK BASKET

Fresh fruit is available at all times. Giving visitors access to healthy food.

7 SANITARY CARE BOXES

Towels, liners and tampons can be found in all seven toilets throughout the building. Free for all who need them, including packs to take away.

2 BABY & CHILDREN SUPPLIES

Two large drawers of nappies, wipes and spare clothes are available in both of the baby changing facilities.

A Staff room essentials box was created for staff to utilise. With dental hygiene products, skincare and toiletries.



1 CHRISTMAS CRACKER

With over 45 stalls selling handmade goods, Moulton Church with Christingle crafts, Moulton Scouts and Brownies with fun games, Moulton 77 Brass band serenading us whilst we shopped, and the Children's library full of crafts, reindeer food and letters to Santa there really was something for everyone.

175 We replied to 175 letters that children wrote to Santa.

5 INDOOR CAR BOOTS

Proving popular each winter we hosted 5 car boots this year with all proceeds going back into resources for the library.

1 SECONDHAND BOOK TROLLEY

Books are unpriced and sold for a donation only - ensuring they are accessible for all.

• GAMES MORNING

Having ensured the continuation of Games morning on Fridays we have seen it grow from strength to strength. New members are referred on a regular basis and what used to be a regular group of 20 has grown to a minimum of 30 each week. We have ensured to reinvest funds by buying additional resources and now have an established group of Rummikub players as well as the usual Scrabble, dominoes and cards. We were thrilled to welcome Kevin Whately as part of the Warm welcome campaign!



• CRAFTERNOON

Crafternoon has continued to prove popular with attendees increasing to an average of ten each week. Cards are made and sold in the library shop, with takings being donated to a nominated charity each couple of months.

• COMMUNITY LUNCH CLUB

To date we have now hosted 28 Lunches! With themed specials commemorating the Queens Jubilee, Remembrance Day and Christmas it has become a community staple, with 50 joining us for Christmas lunch.



• BOOK CLUB

We are about to celebrate Book clubs first anniversary! Meeting monthly we are an inclusive book club with no pressure to read a chosen book. We hosted our first Author event which was a huge success and we are looking forward to planning more.



Who have we connected with...

- Under the Bed Theatre
- Zoo Labs
- Just Karen
- Sarah Martindale Entertainment
- Everyone Active
- Atomic Science
- Music Bugs
- Judith Allnatt
- Daisy First Aid
- Warm Welcome UK
- Overstone House Care Home
- Sleep solutions with Sam
- Lullababy
- Musical Memories
- Breathing Space
- Northants Health Watch
- NDAS
- West Northants Customer Service Team
- Age UK
- Squires Mews Care Home
- Farm Foods
- Aldi
- Little Acorns
- Fitness without Boundaries
- Moulton 77 Brass Band
- Weston Favel Food Bank
- British Red Cross
- Morrisons
- Moulton Guides
- Moulton College
- White Cobra Events
- Safe Bounce
- Moulton Scouts
- The Hope Centre
- Daentry Policing
- Moulton Fire Service
- Moulton Theatre
- HSBC Financial Education
- Barclays Bank - Fraud
- Gigaclear
- Q Space
- Strong Start
- Supporting Independence
- Volunteero
- Silver Light Legal
- Vespaccino
- Monday Night Team
- Walking for Health

MOULTON CAR SCHEME

Our car scheme continues to assist residents in reaching their medical appointments. One new driver has been recruited and another is ready to start pending their DBS checks.