

ANNUAL MEETING OF MOULTON PARISH

Date: Tuesday 21st May 2024 **Time:** 7.00pm **Venue:** Moulton Community Centre

1. Record Attendance and Apologies

Attendance:

Chairman: Cllr Aarons,
Parish Councillors: Cllr Paul, Cllr Conway, Cllr Bennett, Cllr Hinkson, Cllr Marshall, Cllr Swallow, Cllr Fehnert, Cllr Morrow, Cllr White, Cllr Ronnie
West Northamptonshire Councillors: Cllr Warren
Parishioners: As named on a signed attendance list held by the EO
Executive Officer: Jane Austin

Apologies:

Cllr Moss, Cllr Swannell

2. Welcome and Chairman's Introduction

Cllr Aarons welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Cllr Aarons stated that the current council had been formed in 2018 and that has enabled the council to move forward in a period of stability.

3. Accept Minutes of Last Meeting held on 16th May 2023

It was **resolved** to accept the minutes of the last parish meeting held on 16th May 2023

4. Progress any Matters Arising from Minutes of 16th May 2023

No matters arising.

5. Receive Report from the Parish Council – Chairman Cllr D Aarons

Moulton Parish Council has had another busy year. The Community Centre, as well as hosting our community library, is also the base for our Health & Wellbeing team. Throughout the year they support school students, parents with young children and senior residents alongside the many clubs and societies we regularly welcome. Added to this is the multitude of school holiday activities dreamed up by the team. The Centre is also the base for the team of Moulton Larder volunteers each Wednesday giving up their time to support families in and around Moulton.

“EAT at MCC”, our Community Centre café, was taken in-house some time ago. Since then, we have extended the seating area and created a more relaxed and comfortable venue which has become an integral part of the Community Centre's day-to-day life.

Looking to the future, we have installed solar panels on the roof and are beginning to see the benefits as our electricity becomes less dependent on supply from grid. The next step is to consider whether investing in solar batteries could benefit us as we go forward. Also, as electric and hybrid vehicles become more common, we will evaluate the possible benefits of installing charging points at the Community Centre for visitors and residents.

Much of our work is involved in planning consultation and ensuring that developers are encouraged to deliver what they have promised! Although this works well most of the time both of these activities can prove challenging. As a Parish Council, we have no decision-making powers but strive to influence decision-making in the interest of Moulton residents as much as possible – most of the time, successfully.

Parish Council meeting take place on the first Tuesday of each month, usually preceded a few days earlier by Finance Committee meetings. Both are meetings where we welcome public participation.

There is always an opportunity at the start of each meeting for residents to ask questions and inform us of their concerns.

Next year (2025) will see the final year of this council and elections will be held in May of that year. We know that many of you feel passionately about how we make decisions affecting Moulton residents. Typically, parish councils struggle to fill vacancies (in our case for 14 councillors) and I would welcome anybody who believes they can make a difference (unpaid of course!) to approach our Executive Officer for details.

Cllr Aarons reported that the issues with Mulberry Homes remain unresolved.

6. Receive Report from Finance Committee Chair – Cllr G Paul

Good evening, everybody. I am pleased to present my Report of the Finance Committee for 2023-4. The Committee has met regularly and provided a very professional approach to looking after the Parish Council's financial health.

We started the year with the completion of our big capital project, to extend the size of the Community Centre Café. This was a big undertaking, but the finished article has been a great asset to the Community Centre, and the service we can offer to our residents. For the first few months of the new facility, expenditure exceeded income, but as trade has continued to grow, we are currently in a break-even situation, and expect to show a positive contribution to our finances in the 2024-5 financial year. We have benefited from the wonderful work of our Community Connectors (and helpers) who have continued to offer more and more activities for our residents, The footfall this has generated within the Centre has been a big contributor to the growth of the café income. The completion of this major project has enabled the reorganisation of the staff structure within the Parish, and early indications are that this is proving successful.

Another major project this year was the installation of Solar Panels on the roof of the Community Centre. A major capital expense, but one which will reduce our electricity bills, and make a modest contribution to our efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Other improvements to the Community Centre include extending the air-conditioning to give hirers and staff more pleasant conditions when in the Centre, fixing acoustic panels in the Main Hall, and equipping Wantage Room with audio-visual equipment.

Apart from these major activities, the Finance Committee has continued to deal with more mundane matters, making judgements whether to spend money to improve the look of the village, and to replace/repair infrastructure which has seen better days – the village sign has been repaired and repainted, and we are currently assessing the need to replace the wooden posts on Stocks Hill. We have also had to authorise necessary expenditure on repairs to street furniture, and some of our drystone walls, as well as completing improvements to the Cemetery.

All in all another busy and successful year! My thanks to fellow members of the Committee who have worked very hard and conscientiously – David, Stephen, Yvonne, and Gary.

7. Receive Report from Executive Officer

As with every year, I am pleased to report a busy and varied year for the parish council. We are always faced with many demands and pressures on council resources and finances and each new year brings different challenges.

Looking to the future, we carried out a staff structure during 2023 and appointed a Library, Health and Wellbeing Manager and Centre Operations Manager to provide a firm foundation to carry the Community Centre and Library, Health and Wellbeing elements of our business forward into the future.

Although in a much-reduced capacity, Covid is still with us and during the winter we experienced several 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 getting back to pre pandemic levels. We've moved a few groups round to create more spaces to hire and 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 Caroline interrogates each contract continually to ensure we are obtaining the best possible service and value from each one. Since being appointed as Centre Operations Manager, Caroline has introduced many new initiatives and menus in the café to ensure we are providing the very best service to our customers.

The past year has seen many advances on parish projects, and I must record my thanks to Ruth, our Parish Administrator who has relentlessly overseen, tree works, new safety surfaces in play areas, installation of new bins and benches, refurb of the village sign and stocks etc. Ruth's tenacity with contractors means that we can keep our village looking super all year round. Our Health and Wellbeing Hub continues to grow and visitors to the library number approx. 11,500 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 and the ever increasing need for support, we have increased our staffing levels and now employ 143 hrs per week in the Library/Health and Wellbeing Hub. Rachael and Dionne, our Library, Health and Wellbeing Managers carry out the mammoth task of managing the staff and enabling us to deliver so many events and provide more services to all ages of our population, as well as managing the library. Our Library Manager works very closely with the Centre Operations Manager to ensure we are supporting our community and providing a warm welcome to all visitors.

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.

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. Thank you, David and Geoff.

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. Huge thanks must go to Claire Watt, our Finance and HR Manager, 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! All our staff are undertaking a comprehensive training programme, both in general and role specific subjects.

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. This was confirmed to us last December when MPC was awarded the Local Council Award Quality Gold award – the first and only council to be awarded this level of LCAS Award in Northamptonshire.

Cllr Aarons thanked council staff for their efforts and commented that the EO was building a strong team to continue to take the council forward.

8. Receive Report from Library, Health and Wellbeing Manager

MOULTON LIBRARY HEALTH & WELLBEING HUB 2023-2024

137k

Between April 2023 and March 2024 over 117 thousand visits were recorded to the hub. An incredible 37% increase from last year

6

Members of staff Rachael & Dionne our Health & Wellbeing managers lead the team arranging a programme of activities to cater for all ages. Claire, Hannah, Susy & Zaynab man the library 6 days a week, hosting and organising a range of activities and initiatives.



Our Community Managed Library

568

New members continue to join and support the library, with 538 new members joining this year - up 38%!

17%

16,994 loans were issued throughout the year - a 17% increase on 22/23

14,550

Opportunities Galore: A staggering 14,550 spaces booked throughout the year! Each space represents an opportunity seized, a moment of learning, connection, and growth within our vibrant community.

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.

3

BABY & CHILDREN SUPPLIES

Nappies, wipes and spare clothes are available in all of the baby changing facilities.

Following the success of last years warm welcome campaign, our library has developed into an ongoing Welcoming Space. Self care boxes have been created by the team - including sanitary care and personal health for those in need to discreetly help themselves to. Refreshment trolleys are available each day, with warm drinks and snacks available.



Who have we connected with...

Dementia UK
Just Karen
Sarah Martindale Entertainment
Everyone Active
Music Bugs
Animal Encounters
University of Northampton
Warm Welcome UK
Overstone House Care Home
Musical Memories
Breathing Space
Northants Health Watch
NDAS
Dinosaurs & Dragons
Professor Diamond
West Northants Customer Service Team
Mega Bus
Age UK
Squires Mews Care Home
Little Acorns
Lily Pots Pottery
Fitness without Boundaries

1

FAMILY & CHILDRENS TIMETABLE

Activities for children and families and grown, with something for all age groups available on a daily basis. Following the success of introducing one off story times Themed Storytime's are now held twice a week and are well attended.

- CONSTRUCTION CLUB(X2)
- STAY & PLAY(X2)
- BABY PLAY
- RHYME TIME
- BOUNCE & RHYME
- BABY WEIGHING
- LIBRARY LEARNERS
- TINY HANDS, BIG SIGNS
- MARVELLOUS MAKERS
- STORYTIMES (X2)
- GAME ON
- FAMILY FILM CLUB

Throughout each school holiday a full programme of activities was arranged with accessible and affordable activities being our priority. Additional SEND sessions are now being added to each holiday. A quiet sensory zone has been introduced along with dedicated quiet times for those still wanting to visit us but avoid the crowds.



- Moulton 77 Brass Band
- Weston Favel Food Bank
- Morrisons
- Best Parties
- Moulton Guides
- Moulton College
- Wild Tribe
- White Cobra Events
- Moulton Natural Dog Treats
- Safe Bounce
- Moulton Scouts
- The Hope Centre
- Daventry Policing
- Moulton Fire Service
- Dogtastic Bandanas
- Moulton Theatre
- Q Space
- Strong Start
- Supporting Independence
- Volunteero
- Pawsitive Pals
- Silver Light Legal
- Vespaccino
- Northants Family History
- Moulton Surgery
- Age Well Team
- Northants Carers

Book Clubs Blossom!

From one to four! Our book club scene has flourished this year, catering to a variety of interests and needs. Each club is buzzing with enthusiastic readers, fostering a vibrant literary community. Proudly pioneering silent and baby-friendly book clubs, we're the heart of literary innovation in our county!

Regular Book Club - Our classic book club continues to thrive, drawing in avid readers seeking lively discussions.

Silent Book Club - A unique sanctuary for introverts and bookworms alike.

Enjoy the quiet companionship of fellow readers immersed in their own worlds.

Bookworms unite - Nurturing the next generation of book lovers! Kids dive into captivating stories and imaginative adventures.

Bring Your Baby Book Club - Breaking barriers for parents and caregivers! Explore literature while caring for your little ones in a supportive, inclusive environment.

SILVER LIVING PROJECT

Embracing Silver Living: Enriching Lives, Building Community!

Recognizing the vibrant spirit of our older community members, we proudly introduced the Silver Living Project, curating a treasure trove of activities and services tailored to their interests and needs.

Breakfast Clubs: Fuelling connections over a hearty meal! Our twice-monthly Men's and Women's Breakfast Clubs provide a warm, welcoming space for lively conversation and camaraderie.

Community Lunch Club: A cornerstone of togetherness! Due to overwhelming demand, we upgraded our Community Lunch Club to a weekly affair, bringing joy and nourishment to even more members of our community.

Volunteer Assistance: Going the extra mile! Our dedicated volunteers now offer weekly support with bus pass applications, ensuring smooth and hassle-free travel for our seniors.

Exploring Heritage: Delving into the past with the Northants Family History Society. Our monthly drop-in sessions provide an invaluable opportunity to connect with ancestry and community roots.

Community Transport Scheme

For many years, a successful Volunteer Car Scheme has operated in Moulton transporting residents to and from GP appointments.

As our population has grown in recent years, we have not been able to keep up with demand for transport to and from medical appointments.

DECEMBER DELIGHTS: A FESTIVE EXTRAVAGANZA!

December was ablaze with joy and togetherness, marking yet another year of heartwarming festivities at your community library!

1

CHRISTMAS CRACKER

Kicking off the merry season with a bang! Our Christmas Fair was a hit, boasting 40+ stalls of homemade delights, kids' fun galore, and melodic performances by the local Moulton church choir and brass band.

2

PANTOMINE MAGIC

Double the laughter, double the cheer! We debuted not one, but two pantomimes, making sure everyone could enjoy the magic of the season with affordable ticket prices.

90

COMMUNITY FEAST

Breaking bread and spreading joy! Our Christmas edition of the Community Lunch Club welcomed a whopping 90 attendees, creating cherished memories and strengthening community bonds.

125

ELF SCHOOL EXTRAVANGANZA

Unleashing our inner elves! Young and old alike joined in the festive fun at Elf School, where laughter and holiday spirit filled the air as everyone embraced their inner elf.

CRAFTING CONNECTIONS: A YEAR OF CREATIVE EXPLORATION!

From delicate blooms to aromatic oils, our workshop lineup has been a canvas of creativity! Throughout the year, our community has indulged in the art of flower arranging, discovered the magic of essential oils, delved into the intricate world of batik, and crafted festive wreaths to adorn their homes.

But it doesn't stop there! We've also launched "Made by Me," a monthly gathering where crafting becomes a joyful social affair. This inclusive space welcomes all skill levels, making arts and crafts not just a hobby, but a cherished opportunity for connection and self-expression.

We are excited that we can now extend that service and provide transport to all sorts of activities thanks to developer funds being secured by MPC.

We have developed a new Community Transport to best utilise these funds and ensure that the scheme remains sustainable for the future.

COMMUNITY LARDER: NOURISHING HEARTS, REDUCING WASTE!

Our Community Larder, running weekly, offers a lifeline to those facing hardship, providing access to discounted groceries and essential items. Powered by compassion, a dedicated team of volunteers ensures smooth operations, embodying the spirit of community and solidarity.

We are now pleased to be introducing a second weekly larder! With a daytime option now available, we're breaking down barriers and ensuring that no one misses out on the support they need.

Cllr Aarons thanked Rachael and her team for all their hard work.

9. Receive Report from Centre Operations Manager

With the completion of the cafe extension it has been hard to believe how we ran without it. It is the ideal space for the groups that regularly use it, has the perfect corner to relax in a

comfy chair with a book, work stations and meeting of friends. The space has allowed for bigger tables to accommodate the mums and tots, the cyclists, men's breakfast, meet greet. Earlier in the year an afternoon tea event of 30 utilised the space and loved their experience.

Thank you to Rachael, Dionne and their team for all their hard work.

We are always trying to work as closely alongside one another to collaborate and bring the best ideas for both businesses. It is always fun trying to link in their themes with the cupcakes we offer or biscuit decorating kits. Trying to work alongside to accommodate Eat's own ideas and to fulfil all visitors arriving to the building. We started selling snack bags at bounce, party events during the school holidays.

We introduced a kid's lunch bag which became very popular very quickly, biscuit decorating, pizza making and recently a children's afternoon tea with an Easter theme. We have on offer various event, children and corporate menus for bookings.

An amazing Christmas lunch was served to 90 people and everyone pulled together and helped each other to produce a memorable event. Community lunch became weekly in the new year and although this was thought would cause a reduction in numbers it is proving to be ever popular.

Along with an increase in our customers at Eat our cafe staff also provide Meet greet and move your feet with a Homemade soup, warm hub meals, men's breakfast receive a full English breakfast and a recent introduction of women's breakfast. They also regularly prepare refreshments trollies for our corporate groups and buffets.

We currently have 10 members of staff who work in the cafe with 3 of our weekend staff leaving to go off to university soon, however we will be looking to replace them shortly. All the cafe staff work really hard and are versatile and can sometimes be seen running the bars at parties.

We have one chef currently taking a level three child nutrition diploma with the view to roll this out to our other two chef's. Looking forward we are looking into pizza making parties, children afternoon teas, a revised menu and a children's cookery class. We are also trying to keep a daily posting on social media and with the arrival of the new crockery it has made a great difference to the appearance of the food.

Being able to see what has been popular with the square accounts system we use in the café and comparing last year to this year is great to see which items are popular.

Cakes always are our biggest sellers, and our in-house cake maker does a fantastic job. We have just introduced a cake rota so our customers have the stability of knowing we will be stocking their favourites. We have trialled a soup and special rota and this has helped our chefs prepare for the week ahead and meet greet move your feet know what soup they have coming up for the weeks ahead.

A massive thank you to our assistant centre operations manager, Louise who not only sorts out all the booking enquiries but is my IT guru. Together we help with the day to day running of the building with many room set ups, phone enquiries, dealing with contractors and even the occasional blocked toilet.

The community centre continues to accommodate lots of various groups. Ranging from the cute little kickers to the adorable guide dog for the blind puppy classes, to the essential blood donors and the NHS regular meetings. Moulton community centre is an amazing space and we are very lucky to be able to have this and offer it out for hire. There are some days we could fill the building three times over and enquiries for parties are ever increasing. We get a lot of enquiries from people who have attended previous events and everyone is always so complimentary of this amazing building and staff.

Moving forward we are trying to up our social media game and we have been looking through the diary to see free availability of rooms to advertise and get the amazing spaces booked. We have allocated space for the library staff to use up until Easter 2025 so we can accommodate children's activities for the school holidays which will also help Eat to plan what to put on.

We have a team of three caretakers who are working very hard to keep our building running efficiently. From meeting and greeting, party set ups and general maintenance we have a great team.

Would also like Thank you to Jane and the council team for always offering guidance and supporting our plans.

Cllr Aarons thanked Caroline and her team for all their hard work.

10. West Northants Councillor Report – Cllr M Warren

Spending your money and the Government's money wisely, is one of our philosophy's. How we spend this money, the budget, has a huge effect on much of our daily lives, bin collections, children's services, adult social care, leisure centres, parks, libraries, carparks and road maintenance, and dozens of other areas which are being constantly reviewed and updated.

The approach we're taking locally is paying dividends. We have one of the most financially stable councils in the country; we were supposed to have delivered £83m of savings at this point in our reorganisation programme, instead we've delivered **£90m** and we'll deliver more before the end of the term.

In common with many local authorities across the country, the authority has set a balanced revenue budget for 2024/2025 of £889.5m

The approved budget follows a strong commitment to making services as efficient as possible.

We have a well performing adult social care service and an improving children's service, elements of which are already rated good, and which many in this parish may have engaged with at some point. We also, support and enable many local community organisations and local groups and put in place additional support for rough sleepers and overhauled our homelessness support services.

We've prosecuted an increasing proportion of fly tippers and rogue landlords, whilst stabilising our staffing levels to reduce reliance on expensive agency staff. Further to this, we've reduced the number of highly paid senior officers and reduced the number of large and expensive council buildings.

One of the greatest challenges has been the fusing together of four professionally independent planning departments, and although the planning service is not yet operating as we would wish, it is very much heading in the right direction.

Our financial performance in amalgamating the various balances of the four predecessor authorities has exceeded our expectations, and recently, the WNC finance team was recognised nationally as being one of the best in the country.

The single largest challenge remains is the contribution to the Children's Trust, a body set up at the same time as WNC, to administer children's services across the county. The budget allocation is £83.3m, some 22% of the whole. The second challenge is funding adult social care, specifically identified on the council tax statements we all receive.

Various strategic meetings have taken place to future proof GP provision in the ward and there will be more news to come on this in the future.

Some highlights have been:

Active trading standards prosecution involving seizure of 200,000 cigarettes and 35kg hand rolled tobacco.

Public health prosecution of a restaurant resulting in a fine of £33k
£5m distributed in the form of household support, for 12,500 families.

Delivery of a 250-pupil special school for SEND pupils in Towcester

Opening of a new night shelter in Northampton

Commencement of work on the Northampton North Relief Road (NNRR)

In conclusion, West Northamptonshire Council is working really hard to achieve the goals and aims of the Corporate Plan, the Council's strategic plan, which reflects our 2021 Manifesto, and let me tell you, that this Conservative Administration is doing really well in this respect.

Much work goes on behind the scenes which is not seen or reported on by our local media, but I can assure you, you have a most diligent and hardworking professional group of councillors working on your behalf.

Cllr Aarons thanked Cllr Warren for all his efforts on behalf of Moulton Parish Council.

11. Northamptonshire Police Report – PCSO K Lumbis

Current team covering Moulton and surrounding area-

PS (Sgt) Lewis Judd

PC Lee Stevens

PC James Wetherall

PCSO Kev Lumbis

PCSO Carl Barton

Myself and the team continue to work the parish council and staff in the library and community centre

I hold a monthly surgery, as well as having story time sessions with for the younger members of the village.

We have good working relationships with the two schools and college, conducting patrols in the area and the times the students start and finish school.

The team are made aware by Moulton school of any student issues, and we occasionally do have to get involved

We have supported Moulton college on two separate occasions were knife arches and drugs dogs were deployed onto college grounds.

Speed enforcement being currently conducted on the A43-Moulton/Overstone bypass, by the NPT team.

This location has been adopted by the RoadJag (Road Joint Action Group)
There was a spate of vehicle crime across the area earlier this year, where Range Rovers and Mercedes vehicles were targeted.
All victims were visited
Very few reports of anti-social behaviour in Moulton.

Cllr Aarons thanked PCSO Lumbis and PC Wetherall for attending and for all their help and support during the year.

12. Open Forum – Parishioners Question Time

- One resident requested an update on the GP surgery build. The EO confirmed that plans are moving forward and a public announcement on progress is due in the summer months.

Cllr Aarons thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

13. Confirm Next Meeting

The date of the next Annual Parish Meeting is to be confirmed.

Meeting Closed at 7.25pm

Copies to:

Parish Councillors (13), West Northamptonshire Councillors (3)