

Moulton Parish Council Business Plan 2023 -2028

Living Document - version updated July 2024



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is a Parish Council Business Plan?

The Business Plan sets out the Parish Council's vision for the parish, its **purpose, values, objectives** and **key priorities** for the next five years.

The aim of the Business Plan is to give Moulton's residents and businesses a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does and what it is trying to achieve. It details what the Parish Council intends to focus on over the next five years. The Business Plan is a live document that will be reviewed quarterly, used to drive the budget process, plan activities for the coming year and enable the Parish Council to monitor its progress against key priorities.

The Parish is a popular location in which to live, and it is a growing and changing community. Over the past 10 years we have seen substantial new housing developments and a change in the age demographic. These trends will continue. We work in partnership with a network of strong community groups to enable Moulton to remain a pleasant and attractive place to live and work.

1.2 Why has the Parish Council Decided to Produce a Business Plan?

Having an agreed strategy provides a framework for the Parish Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and coordinated way and to be proactive rather than reactive in its decision-making. We have based the plan on our understanding of our community's needs gathered from our day-to-day involvement with residents and other key organisations within Moulton.

At the same time, the Business Plan will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Parish Council does and also clarify what it doesn't do; in other words to explain what issues fall under the responsibility of other delivery bodies such as West Northamptonshire Council.

The Business Plan is a statement of intent, however, Moulton Parish Council may have to make decisions contrary to our stated commitments if events such as budget constraints, new legislation or changes in our policies make that necessary. Any changes will, however, be reflected in an updated plan.

It is a live document, which the Parish Council will update regularly, enabling it to track and monitor its progress against the key priorities. The Business Plan is publicly available enabling Moulton residents and businesses to monitor progress.

1.3 Community Involvement in the Plan

To ensure this Business Plan is consistent with our residents and businesses wishes, we will consult on its contents through as many channels as possible including our website, key contacts and organisations within Moulton.

The Business Plan is viewable on our website and was subject to a public consultation in May 2019.

1.4 Monitoring the Plan

Evaluating progress against the list of activities that make up our five-year plan (Section 4) will take place every quarter at Parish Council meetings after March, June, September and December. At each of those meetings, we will seek to review the progress made, decide where we need to make changes and ascertain if there are any blockages to progress. We will review and update the whole Business Plan annually to keep the document relevant and up-to-date.

The Business Plan will be available on the Parish Council website, with hard copies available to view on request from the Parish Office.

Our Business Plan will continue to be the main way of informing Moulton residents and businesses what its Parish Council are doing to meet the needs of the community. It is a two-way conversation. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments. If you require any further information that would help you understand our objectives, please let us know.

As already mentioned, it is our intention to review the Business Plan regularly, publish progress through our newsletter and web site, and make any changes considered necessary as a result. Please address any queries to:-

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Moulton Community Centre
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2 THE PARISH COUNCIL

2.1 Overview of the Council

There are two tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities.

Moulton Parish Council is the first and local tier, with an important role to play in promoting Moulton, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups within the community.

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is the second tier and is responsible for services including housing, environmental services and strategic planning policies for all development, including housing and employment sites.

From May 2021, Daventry District Council and Northamptonshire County Council no longer exist. Moulton is under the umbrella of a Unitary Authority, Northamptonshire West, formed from the current Northampton Borough Council, South Northamptonshire and Daventry District areas.

Residents elect Parish Councillors every four years. The Council elects a Chair and Vice Chair annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid. They commit their time to improving Moulton and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and do business.

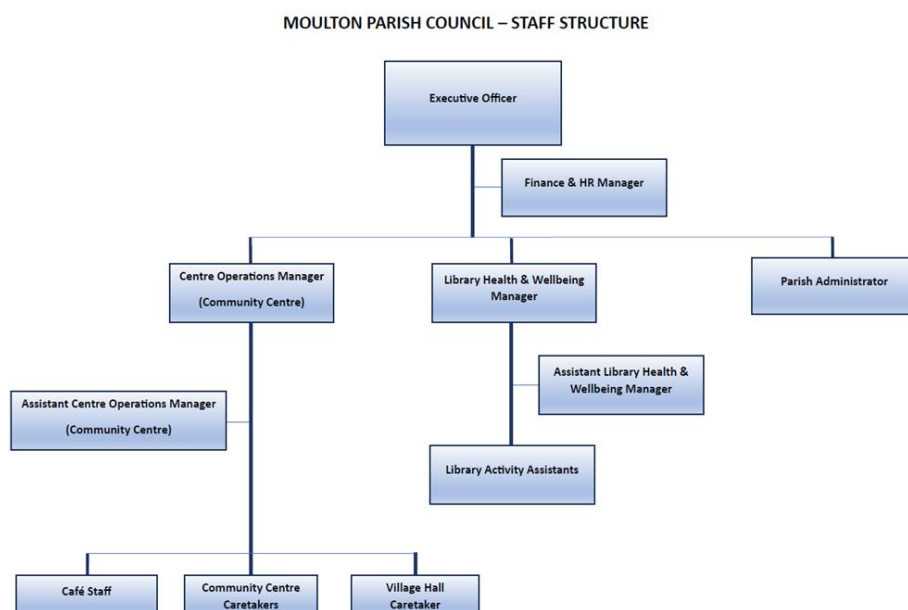
The next election for Moulton Parish Council will be held in May 2025.

The full Council meets monthly on the first Tuesdays of each month at Moulton Community Centre. All meetings are open to the public with a period set aside at the beginning of each meeting for members of the public to address Council.

The Council works to its Standing Order and Financial Regulations. These Governing Instruments provide a framework by which we operate and conduct our business. We have based our Standing Orders and Financial Regulations on models prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Committees and advisory groups work within Terms of Reference agreed in Council or by executive committees.

The Parish of Moulton had 3454 parishioners as at the 2011 census. The population in 2024 is nearer to 7000. The electorate at December 1st 2023 was 4093.

2.2 The Council Staff & Employees



Our Staff & Councillor Aim:

The Council will support and enable staff to work effectively as a team together with Councillors, to maximise the service to the Community.

Objectives:

1. Budget to provide the financial resources to enable us to implement the Business Plan.
2. Where appropriate, deliver larger projects through external support to enable staff to maintain existing operations.
3. Endeavour to ensure decisions made by the Council consider the workload of staff.
4. Invest in continuous professional development for the Executive Officer and the Parish Team.
5. Encourage development for Councillors and committees in line with the "Good Councillors Guide".

2.3 The Council's Vision & Objectives

The Parish Council's vision for Moulton is for it to be a successful, vibrant and attractive place, where people want to live, work and visit.

A Parish for all Aim:

To ensure the needs of all sections of the community are considered when the Parish Council allocates financial resources.

Objectives:

1. To provide services and facilities to ensure every child gets the best start.
2. Continue to engage with the youth of our Parish regarding the provision of services for younger residents.
3. Research the needs of older residents ensuring the services we provide assist in making our community more inclusive, promoting independence and quality of life for older adults.
4. Ensure all residents with any disability can access our services and facilities.
5. Creating an environment for all people to flourish

The Council's Mission Statement

Vision for Moulton, Moulton Neighbourhood Development Plan

Moulton: A sustainable, vibrant, lively community which retains and improves what is good, whilst embracing positive changes that appropriate development can bring. At the same time, ensuring protection for residents' quality of life and that these improvements are shared by all.

The Parish Council aims to improve the quality of life for the residents and businesses of Moulton by ensuring that it is a desirable, thriving and sustainable place in which to live, work and visit. We do this in a number of ways:

- We provide a democratic and representative voice for the community.

- Where we provide services, we manage them to a good quality standard, in an efficient, effective and responsive way, at an affordable cost.
- Where others provide services, the Parish Council endeavours to ensure that they are dealt with effectively and in accordance with the wishes of the community.
- We work with parishioners, local authorities and other service providers, businesses and voluntary organisations with the aim of achieving a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable community.
- Actively encourage measures to reduce traffic congestion and pollution within our community.
- Improve and enhance the local street scenes and protect the environment of the local countryside.
- Climate change was declared a Climate Emergency at the 2nd November, 2021 Parish Council Meeting.

To achieve our Mission Statement, we need to:

- Serve those who live, work and study in Moulton and those who visit the Parish.
- Put in place policies and initiatives, which will help to improve Moulton, encourage a greater sense of involvement and pride in the community and promote sustainable and vibrant economic activity in the Parish.
- Promote and represent the community's views and aspirations at local, borough, county and national level.
- Seek a fair share of investment in the parish by local, county and regional authorities.
- Encourage the devolution of services to the Parish Council where we can deliver them more effectively and efficiently and ideally with no additional cost to the taxpayer.
- Work in partnership with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses and individuals, to ensure an improved standard of services and facilities to meet the needs and expectations of the Parish.
- Enhance and promote the historic and cultural heritage of Moulton and safeguard its village identity.
- Encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the Parish and support small businesses in the Parish.
- Promote and support local voluntary groups and clubs that seek to assist residents.
- Strive for a pleasant, clean and safe environment throughout the parish.
- Be a professional, competent and caring Parish Council.
- Help create a socially inclusive and caring community that embraces all, irrespective of age, culture, income, race, sexual orientation or religion and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual co-operation.
- Providing community infrastructure to ensure all residents needs are met.

2.4 Financial information

Income

The residents of Moulton (mainly through the 'precept') fund the Parish Council. The precept is the local tax levied by the Parish Council that West Northamptonshire Council collects on our behalf as part of the Council Tax bill.

On average, £215.70 per year (band D property) of Moulton's residents total Council Tax (i.e. £4.14 per week) contributes to the Parish Council precept. In this document we tell you what you get for your money and you can decide whether or not it represents good value.

The budgeted expenditure for the Council in 2024/25 is £933,494.00. We receive this money from the following:

Moulton council taxpayers:	£457,483.00
Income:	£476,011.00

The main items of expenditure are:

- Community Centre
- Library, Health and Wellbeing Hub
- Loan Repayments
- Cemetery and green open spaces maintenance
- Office administration, Parish staff salaries, contractors and on-going expenditure

Budget Proposals for 2024/25 are as follows:

Moulton Council Taxpayers:	£457,483.00
Income:	£476,011.00
Use of Reserves:	£0.00
Total Budget	£933,494.00

Financial Forecast

	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026
Income	£459,365	+ 5%	£482,333	+ 5%	£506,450
Precept	£431,000	+ 5%	£452,550	+ 5%	£475,178
Expenditure	£890,365	+ 5%	£934,883	+ 5%	£981,628
Capital Plans		One additional staff member (Library - Health & Wellbeing)	£11,000 (supported via grant/funding)	One additional staff member (Library - Health & Wellbeing)	£11,000 (supported via grant/funding)
		Improve accessibility to public open spaces and play equipment.	£7,500.00 (Ear Marked Reserves)	Completion of accessibility to public open spaces and play equipment.	£7,500.00
		Completion of Safety Surfacing Play Areas	£6200.,00 (Ear Marked Reserves)		

Moulton Parish Council has undergone a significant amount of change in the last few years. The short-term projects are completed or underway. The main aim of the medium-term, ie – 2-5 years is to continue to build the business at the Community Centre, including the café, and enhance our service delivery through Moulton Library Health & Wellbeing Hub.

Another priority is to enhance the accessibility of our open spaces and play areas.

Review

As well as a monthly review of income and expenditure at each finance committee meeting spending on the above projects will be reviewed as follows:

- Quarterly review of Business Plan at full council meetings.
- Weekly, Quarterly and Annually Safety Inspections.
- Annual library review with community managed library co-coordinators.
- Quarterly meetings with Moulton GP surgery.
- Adherence to Heath & Wellbeing Strategy and Library Vision Document.

Allowances

Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties.

Councillors have previously voted not to accept the Councillors' annual allowance and are consequently unpaid volunteers.

2.5 Parish Council's Main Areas of Responsibility

The Parish Council has the following responsibilities:

- Budget management.
- The ownership, management and maintenance of Moulton Community Centre.
- The management and maintenance of Moulton Village Hall.
- Management of Moulton Library.
- Maintenance and day to day running of Moulton Cemetery.
- Organising Health and Wellbeing events and initiatives to support the West Northants Integrated Care 'Live Your Best Life' Strategy.
- Submitting comments on all planning applications as a statutory consultee.
- The ownership, management and maintenance of the Public Gardens, Crowfields Common, Busby's Meadow and other green open spaces and play areas within the parish.
- Dealing with resident queries.
- Maintaining the noticeboards and ensuring all information is relevant and up to date.
- Ownership, repair and replacement of street furniture.
- Ownership and maintenance of Barlow Lane car park.
- The funding and delivery of parish events.
- Management of Eat at MCC Café.
- Creating and distributing the Moulton Scene village magazine and other village newsletters.

The Council also represents the Parish on several external organisations, including:

- West Northamptonshire Council – Parish and Town Councils Forum.

The Council is a member of Northants Association of Local Councils.

It is difficult to assess the amount of time spent on each activity, however Moulton Community Centre and Parish green works and maintenance have the largest budgets.

We also spend a lot of time on planning matters, dealing with enquiries from members of the public, often resulting in liaising with other tiers of local government.

As with all public bodies, there is a lot of paperwork, consultations and finance to take care of and the need to keep parishioners informed of decisions and proposals that may affect them.

2.6 Other Organisations with Service Delivery Responsibilities

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is responsible for environmental services (litter, refuse and recycling, including dog fouling) and the provision of housing services. WNC is the local planning authority with responsibility for all planning approval including that in our conservation area. Parishioners can get extensive information on their property, planning, waste management, council tax, crimes in their area, etc. from the West Northamptonshire Council's website at: www.westnorthants.gov.uk

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is responsible for all highways issues including street furniture (lighting, pavements, bollards, etc.), coordinating and funding some bus routes, health and social care, library services and schools. Parishioners can report all maintenance issues such as potholes, streetlights, etc. to WNC via their website at: www.westnorthants.gov.uk

Northants Police (www.northants.police.uk) is responsible for addressing crime and anti-social behaviour in Moulton. The Daventry Rural Policing Team covers Moulton.

Where others provide services, the Parish Council endeavours to ensure they deliver them effectively and in accordance with the wishes of the community.

New Moulton Healthcare Centre – There is one acre of land opposite the Moulton Community Centre, owned by Moulton Parish Council allocated for this build. Moulton PC are currently assisting the GP Surgery in their pursuit for new Surgery approval.

2.7 Parish Council Governance & Communications

Good Governance Objectives

Moulton Parish Council aims to be professional, competent and caring and be open and accountable in all it does to ensure the sound financial management of Parish Council resources.

The Parish Council aims to:

- Continuously promote public participation in all Parish Council meetings and initiatives.
- Be well informed about the needs and options of the Parish's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues.
- Review and improve our methods of distribution for Council's news.
- Deal with enquiries and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently.
- Be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the parish's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues.
- Improve services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills by undertaking appropriate training.
- Ensure we give Councillors the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policy.
- Be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for its staff.
- Continuously promote public participation in all Parish Council meetings and initiatives.
- Deal with enquiries and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently.
- Be an effective custodian of the Council's property and documents.

Moulton Parish Council recognises the role of good communication in building positive relationships with the public and with organisations that provide services in the Parish. We will continue to seek to improve established channels of communication and find new ones.

Governance Activities

To achieve the objectives detailed above, the Council will:

- Continue to maintain the Parish Council website providing information about the Council and directing people to other service providers.
- Post regular news of the Council's initiatives on the website.
- Review and improve other methods of distribution for Council news including the Moulton Scene.
- Continue to provide an opportunity at each Parish Council meeting for public speaking and comments.
- Make updated versions of the Parish Council Business Plan available on the Council website.
- Share a report covering Council activities during the previous twelve months at the Annual Parish meeting.
- Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of

interest (at Parish Council meetings but also at round table discussions with the Council).

- Set up working groups with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses, residents and other stakeholders and as appropriate external agencies and committees.
- Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees.
- Attend relevant conferences and meetings.
- Be involved with appropriate village organisations.
- Work to achieve the Local Council Award Gold Standard.
- Conduct a review of training needs of both Councillors and staff following any Governance changes and then review annually.
- Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest to Parish Council/committee meetings.
- Invite members of the public with specialist skills to participate in working parties.
- Set up working groups with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses, residents and other stakeholders as appropriate, in order to facilitate coordinated effort.
- Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees.
- Attend relevant conferences and meetings.
- Be involved with appropriate town organisations.

3 COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND OUR COMMITMENTS

In this section we explain what we do and where our responsibilities lie. We also tell you what we are ready to commit to on a continuing basis. In Section 5 we explain what we hope to do in the future.

3.1 Volunteers

Working through the Library, Health and Wellbeing Hub, we could not complete the work we have committed to without the help of many volunteers from the community, for which the Council is very grateful.

3.2 Leisure & Community

Moulton Community Centre

Our commitment: We will continue our efforts to increase the usage of Moulton Community Centre for the benefit of the whole of the community.

Moulton Community Centre is the community hub, providing the Parish Office, two large halls and three first floor rooms to hire.

Actions:

To find innovative ways to maximise the rental income and reduce losses.

To continue to maintain the building in the most cost-effective way.

Moulton Parish

Our commitment: We will continue to employ a dedicated contractor to ensure that Moulton remains free from litter.

Green Open Spaces

Our commitment: The Parish Council will continue to maintain open spaces for the public to enjoy and use.

Tree Survey & Tree Warden

The Council will commission a full tree survey and management plan (a five-year action and budgeting plan) of all its open spaces and has a tree warden who will monitor the condition of the trees and advise the Council when action needs to be taken.

Action:

To monitor the trees in all open spaces to ensure their safe condition.

Play Areas

The Council has six children's play areas:

- Public Gardens
- Sandy Hill Lane
- Spinney Close
- Moorbridge Road
- Morning Star Lane
- Forester Road

Green Space Signage

The Council has recently installed new signage and will ensure that the information boards remain up to date and meaningful.

Christmas Tree

Each year, our Greenworks contractor donates and erects a Christmas tree in Moulton Village Centre.

Floral Displays

The Parish Council currently owns and maintains the village hanging baskets and planters.

Our commitment: We will continue to maintain the provision of summer hanging baskets and planters and winter planting in the village centre.

Grants

Moulton Parish Council will actively seek and apply for new funding streams in line with this Business Plan.

Our commitment: We will continue to seek grants and match funding as projects arise.

Community Events/Community Groups

Community Events

- Open Air Theatre Performance July 2023
- Gig In The Gardens September 2023
- Health and Wellbeing Events Moulton Community Centre

Community Groups

Moulton is fortunate in having many diverse social and sporting groups and there is something for everyone.

Groups include, but are not limited to:

- After School Clubs
- Ballet
- Bingo
- Brass Band
- Brownies & Beavers
- Board Together
- Bowls
- Boys Bigrade
- Craft Clubs
- Construction Club
- Health Walks
- Health & Wellbeing Choir
- Indoor Car Boot Sales
- French
- Fit Steps
- Keep Fit
- Games Club
- Gentle Circuits for the over 50's
- Girls Football
- Girl Guides & Scouts
- Little Kickers
- Lunch Club
- Moulton Church Bell Ringers
- Moulton Football Club
- Moulton Joggers
- Moulton Minis Soccer Club
- Moulton Morris Men
- Moulton Tots
- Music Bugs
- Mums & Tots
- Pilates
- Rainbows
- Rhymetime
- Sports Injury Clinic
- Stay and Play
- Table Tennis
- Taekwondo
- Table Tennis
- Voice Choir
- Walking Football
- Women's Institute
- Zumba

3.3 Planning

As part of the statutory planning process, WNC consults the Parish Council on any planning applications within Moulton. The Executive Officer receives notifications from WNC regarding any planning applications within the boundaries of Moulton. Notifications of planning applications are forwarded to the Planning Committee Chair, who, together with other members of the Planning Committee, will review each application and submit a response to the EO before the end of the consultation period. The EO will submit the Planning Committee response to WNC. Larger or more contentious planning applications are still dealt with by full council.

Responses submitted to WNC are collated and distributed to all Councillors with the full

council agenda each month. An appendix of the planning applications and responses are attached as an appendix to the full council meeting minutes.

3.4 Finance

The Finance committee meets monthly prior to the full council meeting and discusses in detail council finances. The Finance Committee works with the Responsible Financial Officer (Executive Officer) to manage the Councils financial resources and to consider and recommend strategy and action on policy and operational matters concerned with council's finances, property and resources.

3.5 Working Parties

The following working parties have been set up to review aspects of council business:

- Climate Change
- Highways

3.6 Working with Northants Police

The Parish Council works closely with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) from the Safer Neighbourhood Team and our assigned Police Officer.

Moulton continues to have a relatively low crime level, but we do occasionally have incidents of anti- social behaviour and burglary.

Our commitment: We will continue to work with and develop a strong working relationship with the local Police Team to keep crime low in the Parish.

3.7 Health – Community Connectors and the Integrated Care Northamptonshire Strategy 2022-2032

The Moulton Parish Council Health & Wellbeing Strategy was established with Moulton Surgery to cover Moulton and the surrounding areas in 2015. Moulton Parish Council employ a Library, Health and Wellbeing Manager to co-ordinate the activities under this scheme. A Charitable Incorporated Organisation was formed in July 2021 which incorporates the Community Managed Library and development and enhancement of the offering of library-based services in conjunction with our Health and Wellbeing priorities.

An updated ten-year plan for Health and Wellbeing was created in 2022. Working in partnership with Moulton surgery. Local groups and organisations and the work of Moulton Community CIO, Moulton Library, Health and Wellbeing Hub and the Community Connectors, Moulton Parish Council will support the 'Live Your Best Life ' Strategy, where possible. The ten ambitions of the strategy are:

1. The best start in life
2. Access to the best available education and learning
3. Opportunity to be fit, well and independent.
4. Employment that keeps them and their families out of poverty
5. Good housing in places which are clean and green.
6. To feel safe in their homes and when out and about
7. Connected to their families and friends.
8. The chance for fresh start when things go wrong.
9. Access to health and social care when they need it.
10. To be accepted and valued simply for who they are

3.8 Climate Change

Moulton Parish Council declared a climate emergency on 2nd November, 2021. In response, a Climate Change working party has been established and will work according to the Climate Change Policy. This broad policy defines objectives which include:

- Achieving net zero by the year 2030
- Actively working to improve the natural environment within the Parish
- Ensuring residents and other interested parties are included in this transformative process

See Climate Change Policy for full details.

4 FIVE YEAR PLAN

Our five-year plan is:

4.1 Short-term Projects (1 Year)

- Moulton Neighbourhood Plan to be reviewed and updated. Review taking place 2024/5.
- **Crime/safety managed through normal police channels.**
- **Gold standard Local Council Award for MPC.**
- Eat at MCC Café to breakeven point
- **Complete café extension and brick-built storage shed**

4.2 Medium-term Projects (2 to 5 years)

- Community Centre runs at breakeven due to maximising usage/being creative with bookings.
- Approval to start building new doctor's surgery with defined finish and opening date.
- **Moulton Library, Health and Wellbeing Hub thriving with volunteer service.**
- Continue to develop the food and refreshment offering at Eat at MCC Café and Bar to hall hirers and residents.

4.3 Aspirations/Principles

- Continue to establish and develop relationships with local organisations/interest groups.
- Increase local employment opportunities, to go along with the additional housing.
- Youth club/Moulton Youth parish council – Councillor or externally led.
- Reduce the parish's impact on the environment and actively work toward making energy, environmental and ecological improvements.

5 APPROVAL OF THE PLAN 2nd July 2024