

Minutes of Morebath Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 20 July 2021 in Morebath Village Hall at 8pm.

Covid-19 Risk Assessments had been carried out.

Present: Councillors A Wilson (Chairman), T Conway, Mrs P Reed, Mrs S Shaw, J Wescott.

Also present: County Councillor R Chesterton
Two members of the public (for track & trace purposes) Mavis Cherill, David Cherill.
Mrs S Squire, Parish Clerk

2122-018 The Chairman welcomed newly elected County Councillor Chesterton

2122-019 Declaration of Acceptance of Office
The Chairman signed the Declaration, witnessed by a Parish Councillor

2122-020 Apologies
Councillors Mrs Veltink (on holiday) and Mrs S Shipperley (family commitments).
District Councillor R Stanley (attending a MDDC event)

2122-021 Declarations of Interest. None

2122-022 Dispensation to Councillors. None

2122-023 Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 3 May 2021 by Zoom
Proposed by Councillor Mrs Shaw, seconded by Councillor Mrs Reed and unanimously agreed.

2122-024 Actions Arising / Updates:

024.1 Picnic Bench and Seat.
Action: Councillor Wilson to obtain quotations from three contractors to supply and fit, and also check ownership details with the Land Registry.

024.2 New HGV Traffic Sign and post. This had been fixed.

024.3 Webpage on MDDC website.
Details had been sent to the Communications Officer at MDDC who had advised that MDDC are reviewing their terms and conditions and will not be able to agree to upload the latest documents throughout the year at this time.
A report from the MDDC officer updating the webpage received on the day of the meeting advised that the documents for 2018 and 2019 had been added and the Agendas and Minutes for 2020 were on, just the accounts documents to add. He was hopeful to complete the rest of 2020 and 2021 by the end of the week.

There was a discussion about a new website and communications in general.
Action: Councillor Mrs Shaw to investigate prices for a Parish Council or Parish based website, and other communications, providing a Report for Councillors to study ahead of the September meeting.

024.4 Grass Cutting. The Clerk has advised MDDC that no further grass cutting is required.
Councillor Conway advised that Mr Kelland had informed that he would not be able to continue the grass cutting contract due to other commitments.

It was also known that Mr Dart would be willing to hand over the area he cuts to another contractor.

Action: Councillor Conway to identify other contractors with a view to obtaining quotations.

2122-025

Open Forum. No items were raised.

**2122-026
026.1**

Reports

County Councillor Chesterton. Written Report circulated as follows:

Covid. As at 19 July there were 186 cases per 100,000 population in Mid Devon, the 3rd lowest district in Devon. In Devon there were 240.3 and in England 350.2, so we remain lower than average.

In terms of age ranges, the figures for Devon show the most frequency in the 20 – 39 age range.

0 – 19	342.1
20 – 39	530.3
40 – 59	162.6
60 – 79	47.9
80 +	35.7

Vaccinations in Devon – 85% in the age range 30 – 34, 70% in the age range 25 – 29 and 65% in the age range 18 – 24 have had first dose and 70% of people aged 45 – 49 have had both doses.

If people haven't heard about a second appointment please call 01752 398836 or contact d-ccg.devonvaccinationsupport@nhs.net

New funding available to help Devon's communities reconnect, rebuilt and recover

The Reconnect Rebuild Recover Community Fund will provide grant funding of up to £1,000 for smaller projects and between £1,000 and £3,000 for larger projects that help local people to reconnect, rebuild and recover their community-led facilities and/or social activities.

It will support community-led initiatives that:

- Encourage a range of people to participate in activities that improve their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- Provide safe community-led transportation links and services which encourage and help people to re-connect and re-socialise safely within their communities
- Encourage people to develop skills and learning through volunteering their time, knowledge and expertise to help and support the facilities and/or social activity and the people using them

You can find out more, including how to apply, on the DCC website.

DCC Finances

- The outturn for last year is an underspend of £35,000
- This is after we have made the planned contribution to reserves of £4.5 million and also additional contributions of:
 - £4.8 million to the Budget Management Reserve
 - £2.4 million to the Business Rates Risk Reserve for the Pooling Gain
 - £1.0 million to the Emergency Reserve for Bellwin type emergencies; and very importantly
 - £1.5 million to the Climate Change Emergency Reserve
- As part of the Budget setting earlier in the year we agreed to use £5 million of Reserves to aid economic recovery across the County – I am pleased to say that we have taken the opportunity as part of the Outturn to transfer £5.3 million from the Business Rates Risk Reserve to create a new Regeneration and Recovery Reserve for this purpose
- We end the year with Earmarked Reserves standing at just over £137 million and the General Fund Balance at just under £15 million
- As we know the Dedicated School's Grant Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) service continue to be under significant pressure. The year end position is a deficit or overspend of £29 million which when combined with the deficit from 2019/20 gives a cumulative deficit of just under £50 million. This is now being held on the DSG Adjustment Account in line with Government requirements
- The Capital Programme for last year stood at just over £200 million with spend of £134 million being achieved, an underspend of £67 million. Although less than our usual level of delivery in

the context of a year in which we had a pandemic I'm sure you will agree it is an excellent achievement

- Of the £67 million underspend, £2 million has been released from the Programme as savings with the remainder being carried forward to this year and next
- The Capital Receipts Reserve ends the year on £7.8 million

Highways

Additional support from our consultant WSP is helping to tackle the increasing Ash Dieback issues across the County. An ongoing programme has been developed to remove the highest risk trees first. These works are often in very challenging locations with multiple responsible landowners and complex logistics that involve lengthy road closures. This of course comes with the associated disruption to the travelling public and our communities. Some locations are so pressing that they will have to be carried out during the summer period.

The continued wet weather through the late Spring and early Summer has been very hard on the road network with the number of defects currently being reported and repaired very high for the time of year. Additional resources are helping the team to stay on top of the numbers.

The June Cabinet papers reported that the most recent Road Condition Index scores indicate that our lower category roads have been a 4% reduction in the 'red' category with a corresponding increase in 'amber' and 'green'. These lower category roads account for more than 4,500 miles of road so will have an impact on all our communities.

At the most recent HATOC committee, County Councillors agreed to look into further measures that might be used to protect Bickleigh Bridge, in particular members discussed the possible use of traffic lights and asked for these to be looked into.

Ofsted Report

Five Ofsted Inspectors conducted a two-day, virtual inspection of children's social care in Devon in May and their report has just been published. This letter can be read at <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50166337>

Councillor Conway commended the work done by DCC contractors on the old railway bridge at the entrance to Morebath. Good feedback had been given by the public and littering has stopped.

Vegetation around the Round House at Exebridge is high again.

Action: The Clerk to write to the occupiers asking them to address the problem.

Action: County Councillor Chesterton to obtain more details about the Reconnect Rebuild and Recovery Grant.

- 026.2** District Councillors. Not present.
- 2122-027** **Planning.** There were no Planning Applications to consider.
- 027.1** In connection with an item raised at the last meeting, it had been ascertained that buildings in a field are on skids and moveable and was not a concern.
- 027.2** **Planning Correspondence:** To note the following MDDC Decision Notices:
- **21/00895/FULL** – Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 14/01567/FULL – Conversion & extension of existing barn to form dwelling & replacement garage to allow substitution of plans – Veltham Barn, Morebath. Approved.
The Parish Council responded under the Scheme of Delegation with no objections.
 - **21/00784/FULL** – Erection of a Distribution Network Operator building ancillary to Solar Farm land East of Bowdens Lane, Shillingford.
The Parish Council responded under the Scheme of Delegation with no

objections.

- **21/01057/PNFG** – Prior notification for alterations to existing access track for forestry use at Court Wood, Shillingford. No further approval required. *The Parish Council was not consulted on this application due to the reason above.*

2122-028
028.1

Finance

Balances: NatWest Current Account as at 1/7/21: £23,615.99
NatWest Business Reserve Account as at 1/7/21: £6,229.86

Reserves as at May 2021 to be circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

Action: Clerk

Councillor Mrs Shaw expressed concern about the high reserves, pointing out that Councillors were stewards of the Parish and she felt that parishioners should be given the opportunity to say what they would like to see in the Parish.

Action: A discussion on resurfacing of the car park to be on the September Agenda, as this had been mentioned on the previous two Returns and discussed some years ago.

Councillor Wescott suggested that funds could be taken from other headings in the reserves if necessary.

There was a discussion on the Precept amount. Councillor Wescott informed that with more houses being built in the Parish, this effectively reduced the amount of Council Tax received, since some parishioners are paying a reduced rate or no Council Tax at all.

028.2

**The following payments were approved and authorised:
Proposed by Councillor Conway, seconded by Councillor Mrs Shaw and unanimously agreed.**

	Ch.No.	
• Mrs S Squire Salary and Expenses	596	£224.38
• HMRC	597	£47.80
• Community First. Insurance renewal premium	598	£319.59
• Mrs J Snooks – internal audit fee	599	£100.00
• Mr T Ellicott – fixing new road sign	600	£84.00
• MDDC – updating webpage	----	£23.46 *
- *Invoice not received. New cheque book required and Councillors agreed that this amount could be paid with the first cheque.		

028.3

2020/21 Audit

The internal audit had been completed and the Certificate of Exemption submitted to the external auditors.

Items highlighted by the internal auditor were:

High balances x 4 Precept. There were some earmarked expenses and the situation to be monitored by Councillors.

The Asset Register totalled £11,514.30 whereas the Annual Return noted £9,559, the same as the year before.

Action: The Clerk to provide details to Councillors for checking and the details recorded at the September meeting to ensure it is correct for the 2021/22 audit.

The Clerk to enquire from the auditor regarding depreciation of items and if it is possible to delete an item which is no longer an asset.

Part II Minutes to be provided when there is an increase in the Clerk's salary.

VAT – unclear what period the reclaim relates to. This is clearly shown on the VAT reclaim form and the Clerk will point this out when sending the cheque for the audit.

PKF Littlejohn external auditors preferred treatment of 'out of date' cheques is to reduce expenditure, not increase the income. The figures in the accounts and on the AGAR were adjusted for this.

She noted the details about the **webpage**, which the AGAR reflected.

The 2020 Public Rights Notice, although provided for the notice board, was not available as a copy in the file. The Notice for the current and previous year is required and this year's is already in next year's file to ensure that this item will not be raised at the 2021/22 audit.

028.4 Bank Account

The Mandate had been sent to NatWest bank for the arrangements to be made for internet banking to be set up and future payments made in this way.

2122-029 Correspondence

029.1 MDDC. Buildings at Risk Survey and Register. Councillors were invited to give their thoughts as to what historic buildings (pre 1948) in the Parish they are concerned about in terms of their condition. The information should include the address, photographs, if the building is vacant, under-used and occupancy. The details are required so that MDDC Conservation Team can update the 'Buildings at Risk' Register.

The privately owned Pack Horse Bridge was mentioned.

Action: The Clerk to ask MDDC if a bridge is classified as a building and would the onus be on the owner if repairs were required.

2122-030 Items raised by Councillors / Clerk:

030.1 Clerk's Annual Leave. 13 – 30 August inclusive & 25 September to 3 October 2021 inclusive.

2122.031 Next meeting: Tuesday 21 September 2021 at 8pm in Morebath Cricket Club Pavilion.

The meeting ended at 8.59pm.

Summary of Decisions:

- **Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 3/5/21 by Zoom**
- **Payments**

Chairman

Date