

Morton Parish Council

Working for our Community

**1 - WHAT IS THE PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN**?

It is a statement of the Parish Council’s vision for the village

- its purpose

- its objectives

- its values

and its key priorities.

It is a document that sets out what Morton Parish Council aims to achieve, either directly or by influencing the activities of other bodies such as the District or County Council. The purpose of having an agreed business plan for the Parish Council is to provide a consistent and coordinated framework from which any resident of the parish can see what the parish council is trying to achieve and what its spending priorities are.

It also helps the Parish Council to forecast its budgets and calculate its precept requirement for future years. The plan helps the local community to have a better understanding of what the Parish Council does and clarifies what it does not do.

It is an evolving document which is updated annually. The Council, through its regular meetings, will track and monitor its progress against the key priorities identified in the plan. In developing the plan, the parish councillors rely on their knowledge of local issues, their ongoing dialogue with residents and feedback received at monthly meetings to formulate the priorities.

However, every member of the community is invited to comment on the strategy so that, where possible, the parish council can make sure it remains relevant and alive to local community issues.

**2. BACKGROUND**

There are three tiers of local government that provide services and affect the lives of residents in Morton: -

1. **Derbyshire County Council** is main responsible body for transportation and highways maintenance, educational services, adult social care & public health, waste disposal, public rights of way and libraries.

2. **North East Derbyshire District Council** is the second tier and is responsible for services including new development planning, housing provision, waste collection, street cleaning and some leisure services.

3. **Morton Parish Council** is the tier of local government closest to the community. It has an important role to play in developing and promoting parish facilities such as local sports grounds, facilities and pitches, children’s play facilities and the village hall. We also provide a more bespoke handyman service in the parish and are responsible for all waste bins, grit bins and dog waste bins. The parish council also provides an advocacy role on behalf of residents in making representations to the district and county councils.

Morton parish has a population of approximately 1200 inhabitants and has 9 elected councillors who act together as a corporate body and make decisions on behalf of the community.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council are elected annually at the Annual Council Meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid and commit their time to improving the Parish and maintaining it as an attractive place in which to live and to do business. Elections were last held in May 2019 (although this was not contested in Morton) and are scheduled to take place again in May 2023. Details of the Councillors currently serving the Council can be found on the parish web site.

The Council meets every month during the year on the third Wednesday of the month either in the Rectory rooms or Village Hall. During the COVID pandemic meeting have been held virtually. All meetings are open to the public with a defined period set aside at the beginning of each meeting for members of the public to ask questions of the Council. Agendas for the meetings are published in the three notice boards around the village and on the council’s website. The council will also accept representations from groups or organisations for items to be discussed at Council meetings provided an approach is made to the clerk at least seven working days prior to the meeting date. Minutes of all meetings and details of all spending undertaken by the council are published monthly on the council website. Occasionally, working groups of councillors are formed to deal with specific issues which may need more detailed consideration outside of formal council meetings. These working groups are usually time limited and may include non-councillors. The outcome of any of the meetings of such working groups are reported to the full council meetings and published in relevant minutes.

**3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND MANAGEMENT**

The Parish Council operates under a set of written Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which are reviewed and updated annually. These two documents outline the way in which the parish council conducts its business and manages its finances. Copies of these documents are, again, available for public viewing on the council’s website so that all residents can find out how the council manages its affairs and allocates their council tax precept.

At every council meeting a review of the previous month’s transactions is reported and how these reconcile to the bank account balances. As of January 2020, the council employs one full time clerk who works part time. The Parish Clerk prepares all agenda papers for the council meetings and drafts all minutes and correspondence and implements all the administrative affairs of the council. S/he also acts as the Responsible Finance Officer in managing the council’s day to day financial affairs.

**4. CORE VALUES**

These values describe the behaviours which councillors believe to be an important part of local democratic representation and which everyone working on behalf of the council will promote and uphold: -

*Leadership* - councillors are elected to represent their communities and are expected to take a lead on local issues that affect the lives of residents.

*Integrity* – anyone representing the council will be ethical, trustworthy, and reliable and will treat others with respect.

*Persistence* – the council will work proactively to implement decisions made by the Council, even if this takes a long time and requires a great deal of effort.

*Communication* – the council will work openly with residents and give the public the opportunity to ask questions and engage with the Council.

*Financial management* – the council will ensure that the Council’s assets and resources are managed effectively and efficiently.

*Emulate best practice* – the council will seek out and replicate best practice by other local councils and will support training opportunities for Councillors and staff.

*Collective responsibility* – the council will work as a corporate body and respect decisions made democratically.

*Diversity and Inclusion* – the council fully supports equality and diversity in the community and opposes all forms of discrimination. Morton Parish Council recognises the importance of local biodiversity and the benefits of a greener, more eco-friendly, environment on the whole community

**5. THE COUNCIL’S VISION**

The Parish Council aims to improve the local environment and the quality of life for the residents of the Parish by ensuring that it is a desirable, clean, and sustainable place in which to live.

It does this in several ways: -

 It provides a democratic and representational voice for the community.

 Where the parish provides services directly, it aims to do so to a good standard, in an effective and responsive way and at an affordable cost.

 Where services are provided by others, the Parish Council endeavours to influence how effectively these are delivered in accordance with the wishes of the community.

 It works with the aim of strengthening local partnerships, promoting communication, and maintaining a safe, healthy, prosperous, and sustainable community.

**6. OUR LONG-TERM KEY OBJECTIVES**

 To ensure we have an attractive village which is desirable to live in.

 Ensure the assets of the parish council are maintained / improved to high quality standards.

 To ensure we have a voice with other tiers of local government.

 To respond to changing community demands & choices.

**7. KEY ACTIVITIES PROPOSED APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021**

ACTIVITY NARRATIVE, PRIORITY & TIMESCALES

1. Village Hall - To continue to support the Village Hall Management Committee in its management and operation of the village hall.
2. New Street Playing Fields - To continue to support activities using the New Street playing field including the playground and sports field.
3. Land & Asset ownership registration - To continue to pursue ownership registration of all council assets and land holdings and ensure that a strategy is in place to make the best use of them.
4. Make progress during the year on village housekeeping including hanging baskets and planted areas.
5. To keep under review the range of facilities, services and events targeted towards younger people and ensure these remain relevant to current demands.
6. Facilities for older people - to keep under review the range of facilities, services and events targeted towards older people and ensure these remain relevant to current demands.
7. Support to clubs, societies & community events - Continue to support existing and new events & groups in the parish including the Bonfire Night and pensioners party.
8. To assess demand and opportunities for the development of further community events during the year where this is appropriate.
9. Planning & Development - To review and offer comment regarding development and planning applications within the village.
10. Finances - Ensure that the precept requested by the parish council is set at a level which provides sufficient resources to deliver the annual business plan whilst being conscious of the need to deliver good value for money.
11. To keep the council’s finances under review and make the most of all available resources.

**6 BUDGET POSITION & PROPOSALS 2020-21**

The budget and precept for 2020/2021 was agreed and approved by the parish Council see attached table for details