



MORETONHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

ACTION PLAN 2026/2027

Document prepared by: The Clerk, January 2026

Approved by Council: [To be inserted]

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Moretonhampstead Parish Council. This is our Action Plan – it sets out what we intend to achieve between April 2026 and March 2027.

The Plan:

- Considers the issues facing our community
- Reflects our ability to respond with the resources available
- Makes clear there will be choices about what to prioritise
- Helps residents understand what we're doing on their behalf

The Plan has been prepared and approved by your 12 elected parish councillors. It is a planning tool to assist us with the practical decisions we take when we meet monthly, supported by a review process that helps us, and you, look back on our performance.

By publishing our Action Plan, we help those that live, work, or visit the Parish see what we are doing on their behalf.

2. CONTEXT

This Action Plan has been prepared at a time when all organisations providing services to the community – public, private, or voluntary – are facing cost pressures and resource restrictions. The emphasis is on value for money, efficiency, and collaboration while protecting the environment.

We accept that some things will not get done where funding resources are not available. Through this planning process, though, we can have a shared vision and direction, protect what is important, and consider new ways of getting things done.

Encouraging community participation and self-help remains as important as ever. Moretonhampstead Parish Council, as the first tier of local government, is uniquely situated to:

- Provide a forum for understanding and supporting community needs
- Advocate on behalf of residents
- Use links to other organisations to bring in services
- Directly procure services where appropriate

We liaise with Teignbridge District Council (TDC) and Devon County Council (DCC) at all levels and maintain linkages to health and social care services. Day-to-day, the Council seeks solutions for the community, looking for skills and volunteers to make improvements to our surroundings and bringing neighbourhood issues to local attention to promote a better quality of life for all.

The Council consults the community through events such as the Annual Parish Meeting held in April and regular parish consultation opportunities.

Above all, your Parish Council is here to help, support, and encourage. This Plan tells you how.

3. OUR PLANNING CYCLE

Planning and performance management is a continuous process of gathering and assessing information, formulating actions, implementing them, and then reviewing performance.

Key Dates in Our Planning Cycle

Month	Activity
April	New financial year begins; Action Plan implementation commences
May	Annual Council meeting, initial progress review
July	Look back at achievements; identify early course corrections
November	Mid-year review: assess progress and reprioritise if needed
January	Set precept for 2027/2028; approve updated Action Plan
March	Year-end; assess completion and achievements; Annual Parish Meeting

Linkages to Budget

This Plan is closely linked to our financial resources, derived primarily from the Council Tax precept. Our precept for 2026/2027 is £70,102. Our financial year runs from April to March. The Plan will be formally reviewed in May and November to assess achievements and progress.

4. WHAT IS A PARISH COUNCIL?

About Civil Parishes

A civil parish is an independent local democratic unit. Each parish has a Parish Meeting and most have a Parish Council. Over 13 million people in England live in such parishes, with approximately 1,800 in Moretonhampstead.

Our Council

Moretonhampstead Parish Council is a small local authority. We have:

- 12 elected councillors serving four-year terms
- Next elections: May 2027
- Staffing: One part-time Clerk who acts as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
- Coverage: The town of Moretonhampstead and the hamlet of Doccombe

Each May, councillors choose a Chair from amongst their number.

5. WHAT CAN WE DO?

Powers and Duties

Parish councils have a number of formal powers set out in legislation. A duty is something a council must do; a power is something it may do, if it so decides.

A parish council cannot do anything that is not permitted in law.

Our key legislative framework includes:

- Local Government Act 1972 – General powers and functions, including:
 - Section 124 – Power to acquire land
 - Section 137 – Power to incur expenditure for community benefit
- Parish Councils Act 1957 – Powers for lighting and other services
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 62C) – Statutory consultee on planning applications
- Localism Act 2011 – Framework for neighbourhood planning

Planning Powers

Parish Councils are statutory consultees on planning applications submitted to Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA), which is the Planning Authority for our area. Councillors consider planning applications at their meetings and inform DNPA of their views.

Recent moves toward greater 'localism' have increased the role of Parish Councils in development control and planning. There is now the power to create a Neighbourhood Plan which allows local people to get the right development for their community.

Accountability

- Parish Council elections take place every four years (next in May 2027)
- The public are entitled to attend the Annual Parish Meeting (April) and have their say
- Anyone can attend every meeting of the Parish Council and participate during the public participation time
- Accounts are strictly audited every year and published
- You can find out more about what we do on our website: www.moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk

6. WHAT DO WE DO?

Services We Provide

The Parish Council provides a number of direct services to the community and acts as custodian of assets held in the public name. The Council finances its activities through the precept and income from the Churchyard and Allotments.

Assets We Manage

The Council is responsible for maintenance, repairs, and insurance for:

Land & Open Spaces:

- Allotments
- Burial Ground
- The Sentry (recreation ground)
- Pound Street triangle
- Lease of the Sentry

Office Equipment:

- HP Laptop
- HP Printer/cables
- Dell screen
- Laminator

Community Facilities:

- Play area and equipment including:
 - Multi Play unit
 - Climbing Frame
 - Rocking Horse
 - Somersault Bars

- Playhouse
- 2 bay swing
- Sweeping seesaw
- Monkey bars
- Swinging Steps
- Spring Motorbike

- Safety surfacing

Street Furniture & Memorials:

- War Memorial
- George Bidder Memorial
- Memorial benches

- Square seating area
- Notice boards
- Penny Farthing bike stands
- 3 litter bins
- De-commissioned BT telephone kiosk
- Christmas lights

How We Work

At each meeting of the Council, reports are received and Councillors provide support where necessary or requested to ensure local groups can continue to thrive. The Council acts as:

- An advocate for residents
- A conduit for communicating information
- A liaison point with TDC, DCC and other public authorities

The Clerk's Role: The Clerk ensures that the Council conducts its business properly and provides independent, objective, and professional advice and support.

7. WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2024 - 2026

Between April 2024 and March 2026, we achieved the following:

Governance & Policy

- **Comprehensive policy review programme** – Reviewed and updated key policies including:
 - Data Protection and Privacy Notice
 - Biodiversity Policy
 - Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
 - Risk Assessment and Statement of Internal Control
 - Grant Awarding Policy and Fixed Asset Register Policy
 - Complaints Policy and Scheme of Delegation
 - Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
 - Reserves Policy and Equalities Policy
 - Model Publication Scheme and Publication Scheme
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Retention and Disposal Policy (including Appendix A)
 - Code of Conduct
 - Sickness Absence Policy
 - Training and Development Policy
 - IT and Email Policy
 - Employers' Discretion Policy

Community Facilities

- Completed regular play equipment inspections and carried out necessary maintenance
- Purchased and installed a new notice board to display agendas and public information (replacing water-damaged board)

Grants & Community Support

- Awarded £4,760 in grants to 8 local groups and organisations
- Distributed £9,245 in shop front grants funded through TDC's UKSPF Prosperity Funding
- Actively participated in stakeholder group discussions regarding the future of the Hospital

Environment & Open Spaces

- Contracted lengthsman services for 1 year to maintain local amenity spaces
- Replaced car park boundary fence
- **Churchyard improvements:**
 - Purchased and installed welcome sign
 - Conducted biodiversity survey of the churchyard
 - Organised volunteer day to cut grass and trim hedges following contractor departure mid-contract
 - Planted a 'landmark tree' as part of environmental enhancement
- Organised volunteer bench painting day in the Sentry
- Undertook memorial inspections
- Reviewed and updated cemetery rules

Planning

- Considered 32 planning applications, including significant application for 24 dwellings at land at Forder Farm
 - Supported: 29 applications
 - Objected: 2 applications
 - Commented: 31 applications

Traffic & Safety

- Successfully installed '20's Plenty' signage
- Lobbied Devon County Council for 20mph speed limit implementation
- Commissioned traffic study for the town centre to improve safety and create better space for community events
- Requested Dartmoor National Park Authority support for blanket 20mph speed limits for towns within the National Park

Community Events

- Organised Christmas Lights Switch On events
- Held community consultation events
- Commemorated VE Day and VJ Day 80th anniversaries
- Reinstated the traditional Beating the Bounds custom, successfully completing its third leg

Digital Transformation

- Launched new council website with improved accessibility and functionality
- Implemented new email addresses for improved professional communication

Note: This represents substantial progress across all areas of council responsibility, demonstrating effective use of resources and strong community engagement throughout the two years.

8. OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2026/2027

Based on community feedback, identified needs, and available resources, our priorities for the coming year are:

1. **Community Facilities** – Maintain and improve play areas and open spaces
2. **Environmental Stewardship** – Protect and enhance our environment through responsible management
3. **Traffic & Road Safety** – Work with DCC to address traffic concerns
4. **Planning & Development** – Ensure appropriate development that meets local needs
5. **Community Engagement** – Strengthen communication and involvement with residents
6. **Financial Sustainability** – Ensure value for money and prudent financial management
7. Public Toilets - Carefully assess the future of public toilets, including potential asset transfer, through community consultation and financial evaluation.

9. ACTION PLAN

Priority 1: Community Facilities							
Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Partners	Resources	Success Measures	Timescale
1.1	Maintain play area safety and functionality	- Annual safety inspection (ROSPA) - Weekly visual inspection by the Clerk - Address urgent repairs within 48 hrs - Plan equipment replacement programme	Council	Play Inspection Contractor, Insurance provider	£120 inspection budget £5,000 Reserves for major repairs	- 100% safety compliance - Zero injury accidents	Annual Inspection Weekly visual inspections Ongoing monitoring
1.2	Maintain recreational areas and open spaces	- Regular grounds maintenance - Maintain seating and street furniture	Council	Contractors and volunteers	£12,000	- Positive feedback on appearance - Furniture in good repair	Ongoing
1.3	Manage allotments effectively	- Address maintenance issues - Annual inspection	Clerk	Allotment Association	Income from rent	- Feedback from Allotment Association	Ongoing Annual review: Q4
1.4	Maintain burial ground to high standard	- Continue grounds maintenance - Review Cemetery rules and fees - Ensure records are up to date - Continue memorial inspections	Clerk	Contractor	Income from fees £10,800 budget	- Grounds well maintained - Fees received - Records 100% accurate	Ongoing Fee review: Q3
Priority 2: Environmental Stewardship							
Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Partners	Resources	Success Measures	Timescale

2.1	Ensure council activities protect and improve the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider environmental impact in all decisions - Manage open spaces to enhance biodiversity - Incorporate environmental considerations in contracts - Comment on environmental aspects of planning applications 	Council	DNPA, environmental groups	Within existing budgets Staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental considerations in 100% of decisions where applicable - Biodiversity enhancements implemented 	Ongoing
2.2	Continue Churchyard enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biodiversity enhancements - Engage volunteers for maintenance 	Council	Volunteers	Churchyard reserves Volunteer time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer group established 	Ongoing
2.3	Monitor and report dog fouling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage residents to report incidents to TDC - Monitor known hotspots - Publicise reporting procedures 	Council	TDC, residents	Staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reporting procedures publicised quarterly - Reduction in incidents 	Ongoing
Priority 3: Traffic & Road Safety							
Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Partners	Resources	Success Measures	Timescale
3.1	Address traffic safety concerns in Moretonhamstead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue liaison with DCC - Monitor effectiveness of 20's Plenty signage - Identify additional problem areas 	Council	DCC and Police	Staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular meetings with DCC - Action plan for improvements 	Ongoing Review Q2 & Q4
3.2	Improve traffic flow in the Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete community consultation on traffic study - Review findings with DCC - Advocate for preferred solution - Secure funding for implementation 	Council	DCC and community	Staff time Future capital TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation completed - Preferred option identified - Funding applications submitted 	Consultation Q1, Q2 Review Q3 Applications Q4
Priority 4: Planning & Development							
Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Partners	Resources	Success Measures	Timescale
4.1	Ensure council receives and responds to all planning applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain registration with DNPA for planning notifications - Review all applications at monthly meetings - Respond with 21 day consultation period - Ensure responses reflect 	Council	DNPA and residents	Staff time Training budget £500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% of applications reviewed - 95% responses within deadline - Clear rationale recorded for all decisions 	Ongoing Monthly

		community views					
4.2	Engage effectively with the planning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillor to attend planning training if needed - Monitor planning policy changes - Consider developing a Neighbourhood Plan - Comment on DNPA Local Plan consultations 	Council	DNPA, DCC, NALC and DALC	Training £500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillors to attend training - Responses to policy consultations submitted 	Training: Q2 Consultations as arise
4.3	Preserve and protect heritage assets and conservation areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comment on applications affecting listed buildings - Engage with conservation area issues - Maintain awareness of heritage at risk - Support community heritage projects 	Council	DNPA, Historic England, Local heritage groups	Staff time Grant budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% of heritage applications considered - Conservation area guidance reviewed - Support provided to heritage initiatives 	Ongoing
Priority 5: Community Engagement							
Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Partners	Resources	Success Measures	Timescale
5.1	Maintain effective communication channels with residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep website up to date with news, agendas and minutes - Maintain notice boards in good condition - Use social media appropriately - Ensure accessibility of information 	Clerk	Website provider	£462 website hosting/support budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website updated within 5 days of meetings - Notice boards checked monthly - Contact details clearly available 	Ongoing Monthly checks
5.2	Host successful Annual Parish Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan engaging format for 2026 - Publicise wisely (4 weeks advance notice) - Provide clear report on years achievements - Allow time for resident questions and input - Invite partner organisations to attend 	Council Clerk	Community groups, DCC, TDC, DNPA	£50 venue / refreshments Staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting held - 30+ residents attend - Positive feedback received - Issues raised actioned 	Planning & Event Q4
5.3	Conduct regular community consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold parish consultation sessions (minimum 2 per year) - Consult on significant decisions (e.g., Square improvements, toilets) - Use variety of methods (online, in- 	Council	Community groups Residents	£500 consultation Staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 consultation events held - Results published - Demonstratable impact on decisions 	Sessions: Q2& Q4 Project specific: as needed

		person, surveys) - Feed results into decision making				- 100+residents engaged	
5.4	Support and enable community events	- Continue to host Christmas Lights Switch On - Support community led events through grants - Maintain and enhance Christmas Lights - Consider additional community celebration opportunities	Council	Event organisers, volunteers	£1,000 Christmas budget Additional events budget	- Christmas event held successfully - Grants awarded to event organisers - Lights maintained to high standard - Community feedback positive	Christmas: Q3 Grants: Ongoing Events: throughout the year
5.5	Continue transparency and accessibility of council business	- Publish clear agendas and minutes promptly - Explain decisions in plain language - Publicise how residents can get involved - Promote public participation opportunities at meetings	Clerk	All councillors	Staff time	- 100% agendas publicised 3 clear days before meetings - Minutes published within 2 weeks - Public participation guidelines on website	Ongoing
5.6	Build relationships with organisations and groups	- Maintain regular contact with community groups - Attend local partnership meetings - Support volunteer initiatives - Enable information sharing	Council Clerk	All local groups and voluntary sector	Staff time	- Contact maintained with 5+ groups - Partnership meetings attended - Collaborative projects delivered	Ongoing
Priority 6: Financial Sustainability							
Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Partners	Resources	Success Measures	Timescale
6.1	Maintain robust financial management and controls	- Ensure compliance with Financial Regulations - Regular budget monitoring (quarterly minimum) - Internal Controls checklist completed - External and internal audits passed	Clerk (RFO)	Internal controls councillor Internal auditor External auditor	£500 audit fees Staff time	- 100% compliance - Budget variance within 5% - Controls checklist reviewed quarterly minimum	Ongoing Quarterly reviews Audit: Q1
6.2	Review and maintain appropriate reserves	- Review reserves policy annually - Ensure general reserve at minimum of 4 months running costs - Earmarked reserves for specific projects - Monitor reserve levels quarterly	Council Clerk (RFO)	Finance committee	Staff time	- Reserves policy reviewed - General Reserve 4 months running costs - Earmarked reserves clearly documented	Policy review: Q3 Monitoring quarterly

						- Reserves adequate for identified risks	
6.3	Ensure value for money in all expenditure	- Obtain competitive quotes for significant purchases (per Financial Regulations)	Council Clerk (RFO)	Finance committee Internal Controls Councillor	Staff time	- Compliance with procurement requirements - Evidence of competitive tendering for qualifying purchases - Annual contract reviews completed - Value for money assessments documented - Budget efficiency maintained	Ongoing
Priority 7: Public Toilets							
Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Partners	Resources	Success Measures	Timescale
7.1	Assess viability of public toilet transfer	- Engage in discussions with TDC regarding potential asset transfer Understand legal, financial and maintenance responsibilities -Clarify timelines and conditions of any proposed transfer	Council	TDC	Staff time	-Clear understanding of transfer terms - Risks and obligations identified	Ongoing
7.2	Understand financial implications	- Obtain full costings for running maintenance, utilities, cleaning and repairs - Benchmark costs with neighbouring parish and town councils that own toilets - Identify potential funding sources	Clerk	Neighbouring councils	Staff time	- Detailed cost breakdown produced - Comparative data gathered	Q2 – Q3
7.3	Engage community on future of public toilets	- Undertake public consultation on whether the PC should accept responsibility - Clearly present options, risks and implications - Publish consultation outcomes	Council	Residents	£500 consultation budget	- Consultation completed - Results published - Community feedback informs decision	Q2 – Q3
7.4	Make informed decision on	- Consider consultation results, financial analysis and risk assessment	Council	TDC	Staff time	- Formal council decision recorded - Decision communicated	Q4

	asset transfer	- Decide whether to accept, decline or seek alternative arrangements - Communicate decision clearly to residents and TDC				publicly	
7.5	Plan for transition if transfer accepted	- Develop transition and operational plan - Identify staffing / contract arrangements - Establish budgets and reserves if required	Council	TDC	To be confirmed	Transition plan approved (if applicable)	Q4

10. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring Framework

This Action Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure objectives are being met and remain relevant to the needs of our community.

How We Will Monitor Progress:

- **Quarterly Reviews:** The Council will review progress against the Action Plan priorities at least once per quarter
- **Annual Review:** A comprehensive annual review will be conducted to assess overall achievements, challenges, and relevance of priorities
- **Committee Oversight:** The Finance and Policy will oversee implementation and receive regular progress reports
- **Success Measures:** Each priority includes specific, measurable success criteria that will be tracked and reported
- **Community Feedback:** Regular engagement with residents to gather feedback on council performance and emerging priorities

Reporting and Accountability:

- Progress reports will be presented to Full Council meetings for discussion and decision-making
- Annual updates will be published on the council website and in newsletters
- Key achievements and challenges will be communicated to residents through regular updates
- Performance data will inform budget planning and resource allocation decisions

Review and Update Process:

- The Action Plan will be formally reviewed annually, typically in January
- Reviews will consider:
 - Progress towards stated objectives
 - Changing community needs and priorities
 - Financial sustainability and resource availability
 - External factors including legislation, policy changes, and local circumstances
 - Feedback from residents, councillors, and staff
- The Action Plan may be amended during the year if significant changes in circumstances require adjustment to priorities

11. CONTACT INFORMATION

Moretonhampstead Parish Council

Address:

Office 5
Green Hill
Moretonhampstead
Devon
TQ13 8LL

Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Telephone:

01647 440041

Email:

clerk@moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk

Website:

www.moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk

How to Contact Us

We welcome feedback, suggestions, and enquiries from residents. You can contact us by:

- **Attending Council Meetings:** Full Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm (excluding August)
- **Visiting the Office:** During office hours (appointment recommended)
- **Writing to Us:** At the address above
- **Email:** clerk@moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk
- **Telephone:** 01647 440041
- **Website:** Visit our website for latest news, minutes, agendas, and contact forms

All council meetings are open to the public, and agendas are published in advance on our website and on the council noticeboard opposite the Hairdressers.

Feedback on This Action Plan

We value your input on our Action Plan and welcome suggestions for priorities and improvements. Please contact the Clerk with your feedback or attend a council meeting to raise your views during the public participation period.