

Moretonhampstead Parish Council Clerk Absence Contingency Plan

Version: 1 | Date: 01/04/2025

Purpose

To ensure continuity of the Parish Council's essential functions during temporary or unexpected absence of the Parish Clerk.

1. Cover Arrangements

| Task | Interim Responsible Person | Backup Responsible Person |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Point of Contact | Chair | Vice Chair |
| Governance (Meetings, Agendas, Minutes) | Cllr Hampton | Cllr Fileman-Wright |
| Finance (Payments, Bank Reconciliations) | Cllr Evans | Need a backup |
| Contractors & Projects | Cllr Keep | Cllr Fileman-Wright |
| Communications (Enquiries, Website) | Cllr Fileman-Wright | Cllr Hampton and Cllr Evans |
| Urgent Health & Safety Issues (Open Spaces, Play Park) | Cllr Keep | Cllr Austin |
| Burials | Cllr Evans | Cllr Hodges |

Training Status

Cllr Evans has completed training. The following councillors named in this plan still need to be trained:

- Cllr Hampton
- Cllr Fileman-Wright
- Cllr Keep
- Cllr Austin
- Cllr Hodges

2. Access to Systems & Files

| System | Access Information |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Laptop & Office Files | Securely held by Clerk |
| Microsoft 365 Cloud Storage | Login details held by Clerk |
| Parish Council Email | Monitored by Clerk |
| Online Banking | Authorised signatories: Cllrs Fileman-Wright, Evans, |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| | Hodges and Keep |
| Website & social media | Managed by Clerk |

3. Priority Actions

- Issue agendas and meeting papers on time.
- Ensure payments are processed (staff wages, contractors, essential services).
- Keep essential communications running.
- Liaise with contractors and deal with urgent maintenance.
- Respond to all interment applications immediately.
- Monitor project deadlines (grants, surveys, etc.).
- Respond to health and safety concerns immediately.

4. Locum Clerk Arrangement

In the event of an extended absence, the Council may appoint a Locum Clerk via:

- **Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC):**
enquiries@devonalc.org.uk

5. Communication

Notify:

- Councillors
- Regular contractors
- Key contacts at Teignbridge DC, Devon CC, Dartmoor National Park
- The public, if needed (via website and noticeboard)

6. Review

To be reviewed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting or when there is a change of Clerk.

Moretonhampstead Parish Council — Clerk Absence Quick Reference Card

| Task | Contact | Notes |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Point of Contact | Chair: Cllr Fileman-Wright | |
| Vice-Chair | Cllr Evans | Backup for Chair |
| Finance Queries | Cllr Evans | Payments & Bank Access |
| Meeting Papers | Cllr Hampton | Agenda & Minutes |
| Contractors | Cllr Keep | Project and routine works |
| Website Updates | Cllr Fileman-Wright | Login details held securely |
| Health & Safety | Cllr Keep | Urgent site issues |

Secure Password Locations:

- Laptop password, cloud logins, banking codes, and other sensitive data are securely held by: Cllr Fileman-Wright

Locum Clerk Contact:

- DALC
- Tel: 01392 241131
- Email: enquiries@devonalc.org.uk

Parish Clerk Key Tasks Checklist (For Use During Absence)

Governance & Meetings

- Prepare and issue agendas (with statutory notice periods).
- Circulate all meeting papers to councillors.
- Take or arrange minutes.
- Ensure decisions are lawful and correctly recorded.

Finance

- Process payments (staff salaries, invoices, regular commitments).
- Maintain basic financial records (cashbook, bank reconciliation).
- Ensure any grant claims/payments stay on schedule.
- Prepare simple budget monitoring if required.

Communication

- Respond to urgent emails and enquiries.
- Keep website, noticeboards, and social media (if applicable) updated.
- Notify councillors of important correspondence.

Projects & Contracts

- Liaise with contractors delivering routine work.
- Deal with project deadlines (e.g., surveys, grant milestones).
- Manage play park, open space, and memorial inspections (arrange substitutes if needed).

Burials

- Respond to interment and memorial applications.
- Arrange burials and liaise with the gravedigger.
- Maintain burial records.
- Return the green certificate to the register office.

Emergency & Safety

- Respond to urgent safety issues (e.g., faulty play equipment).
- Notify relevant bodies (Contractors, insurers) if action is needed.

Records & Admin

- Process post and emails regularly.
- Keep filing systems in order.
- Check insurance documentation is accessible if needed (renewal date 01/06/25).

Governance and Meetings

1. Types of Meetings

- **Full Council Meetings** — usually held at the **Community Club**.
- **Committee Meetings** — usually held at the **Parish Council Office**.

2. Preparing the Agenda

- Past agendas can be found in the folder: Meetings, Agendas & TOR on the office computer.
- Open the previous month's agenda and adapt it for the upcoming meeting.
- Items 1–13 are standard on every agenda.

3. Public Notice Requirements

At least **three clear days** before the meeting:

- A **public notice** stating the date, time, and venue of the meeting must be:
 - Displayed in the **Parish Noticeboard** (The Square).
 - Uploaded to the **Parish Council Website**:
[Routine business – Moretonhampstead Parish Council](#)

4. Summons to Councillors

- Each councillor must receive the formal summons, agenda and papers via email.
- The summons:
 - Must be signed by the Clerk or Locum Clerk.
 - Must include all business to be transacted.
 - Should be acknowledged by councillors on receipt.

5. Extraordinary Meetings

An **extraordinary meeting** can be called at any time by:

- The Chairman.
- Any two councillors.

6. Quorum

- **Minimum for Moretonhampstead Parish Council: 4 councillors** present.
- No decisions can be made without a quorum.

7. Meeting Procedure

- **Voting:**
 - By show of hands.
 - The majority carries the vote.
 - The Chair has a **casting vote** if votes are tied.
- **Councillors' Duties:**
 - Actively participate in discussions.
 - Consider relevant information.
 - Vote in the interests of the whole community.

8. Minutes

- Minutes are a **record of decisions** not a verbatim account.
- Drafted by the Clerk and approved at the next meeting.
- Minutes must be:
 - Signed by the presiding chairman.
 - Approved for accuracy only — **past decisions cannot be reopened** once approved.

9. Agenda Rules

- Only business listed on the agenda may be discussed and decided.
- **'Any Other Business'** is discouraged, and no decisions may be made under it.

How-To Guide: Processing Payments

1. Staff Wages

DM Payroll Services Ltd provides payroll reports mid-month. The following steps must be completed:

Step 1: Download Payroll Reports

- Log in to the **DM Payroll Employer Portal**.
- Download the following reports:
 - **Employee Payslip**
 - **Pension Report**
 - **Payroll Summary Report**
 - **P30 (if end of quarter)**

Step 2: Process Payments

- Log in to the **Lloyds Banking App**.
- Set up payments for staff wages.
- Payments must be scheduled for the **last working day of the month**.

Step 3: Authorisation

- Email payroll reports to the **authorised signatories** for approval.
- Request confirmation once payments are authorised and completed.

Step 4: Submit Reports

- **Complete EAS5 form** and return it:
www.peninsulapensions.org.uk/employers/forms/eas5-form/
- **Complete Monthly Pension Interface** and submit to: pensionsinterfaces-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

2. Contractors & Other Payments

Invoices for contractor and supplier payments must be processed as follows:

Step 1: Invoice Review

- Check emails for **incoming invoices**.
- Ensure that **work has been completed** before processing payment.

Step 2: Council Approval

- Add invoices to the **monthly finance report** for approval at the **Full Council Meeting**.

Step 3: Payment Processing

- After approval, log in to **Lloyds Banking**.
- Set up payments for each contractor or supplier.
- Email the **authorised signatories** for approval.
- Request confirmation once payments are authorised and completed.

Key Reminders

Payroll payments **must be scheduled for the last working day of the month**.

All invoices must be approved by Full Council before payment.

Confirm payment authorisation from signatories before proceeding.

Ensure pension reports are submitted to **Devon County Council** on time.

Financial Procedures in Clerk's Absence

1. Cashbook & Bank Reconciliation

Location: Accounts folder > Corresponding Financial Year (FY)

Update monthly when bank statements are received.

Steps:

- Compare **cashbook payments** with the **bank statement**.
- Complete **bank reconciliation** to ensure all transactions match.
- If the Clerk is off short-term, **this task can be left until their return**.

2. Grant Claims & Payments

Ensure scheduled grant claims/payments stay on track.

Check any deadlines and **submit claims/payments as required**.

If unsure, refer to the **grant agreement** for specific conditions.

3. Budget Monitoring (if required)

Location: Accounts folder > Corresponding Financial Year (FY) > Bank Rec and Budget Monitoring

Prepare simple budget monitoring reports if requested.
Not urgent – can be postponed until the Clerk's return unless needed for a meeting.

Key Reminders

If unsure about a financial task, **consult past records** in the Accounts folder.
Grant deadlines should not be missed – check for any upcoming due dates.
Bank reconciliation and Budget Monitoring can **wait until the Clerk returns** if absence is short-term.

How-To Guide: Essential Communications & Contractor Liaison

1. Email Management

- **Check emails** at least **once a week** (preferably more frequently).
- **Prioritise urgent enquiries** and respond promptly.
- **Flag non-urgent emails** for action at a later date.

2. Contractor Responsibilities

| Contractor | Areas of Responsibility |
|---------------------------|---|
| AR Rural Solutions | Churchyard, Sentry, Pound, Henge, and Verges - Approved for urgent maintenance under £500 |
| M P Plumbing | Grave Digging |

3. Liaising with Contractors

- Ensure all contractors follow their signed contracts and work schedules.
- Monitor work completion and **address any issues promptly**.
- For urgent maintenance (under £500), **contact AR Rural Solutions** directly.
- If additional work is required, seek **Council approval** before authorising expenditure.

Playpark Inspection Guide – The Sentry

Checklist Location: Churchyard and Open Spaces folder > Sentry > Play Equipment Weekly Inspections

1. Conducting the Inspection - Use the checklist (pages 2 and 3) as a guide.
Carry out a visual inspection, checking for:

- Broken or damaged equipment
- Loose or missing parts
- Trip hazards
- Surface wear or damage

- Signs of vandalism or excessive wear
- **Ensure all equipment is safe for use.**

2. If an Issue is Found - If anything is unsafe:

- **Tape off the area** immediately to prevent use.
- **Arrange for repairs** as soon as possible.
- **Log the issue** in the inspection records.

3. Log completed inspections in the file.

Report any issues to the Open Spaces committee for action.

How to Guide for Burials

Introduction

The Parish Council is the Burial Authority for St Andrew's Churchyard. The Council is responsible for managing burial plots, records, and legal obligations relating to interments and ashes interments.

1. Registers and Records

- Registers are kept in the **office cupboard**.
- Digital versions (where applicable) are saved on the **office computer**.
- Physical records include:
 - Register of Burials (Blue Register)
 - Exclusive Right of Burial certificates
 - Grave Digging Authority Letters
 - Cemetery Plan
 - Cemetery Rules & Fees

2. New or Reopening Burial / Ashes Plot Request

When an enquiry is received (new burial, reopening of a grave, or ashes interment):

Step 1: Application

- Ensure the **Interment Application Form** is completed.
- Forms are available in the **Churchyard and Open Spaces folder > Interment letters, current charges, rules etc. folder > current year** on the **computer**.
- Confirm with the gravedigger that he is available.
- Create a folder for the deceased to save all records.

Step 2: Plot Allocation

- Use the **cemetery plan** to identify an appropriate plot.
- Each plot has a **unique plot number** — this must be used consistently on:
 - Application Forms

- Grave Digger Instructions
- Register of Burials
- Correspondence.

Step 3: Fees and Exclusive Right of Burial

- Issue an invoice to include the purchase of the plot and interment.
- Once payment is received, issue an **Exclusive Right of Burial certificate**.

Step 4: Authorising Grave Digging

- Issue a **Grave Digging Authority Letter** to the grave digger once the plot and interment date are confirmed.
- Ensure the grave digger is fully informed of the plot number and location.

3. Burial Day Procedure

- The **funeral director** will supply a **Green Certificate for Burial**.
- **Within 3 days** of the burial:
 - Detach and complete the lower section of the green certificate.
 - Return it to the **Registrar**.
 - File the upper section in the deceased's records.

If it is an **ashes interment**:

- A **Crematorium Certificate** will be received.
- This should be filed with the person's records in the **burial file**.

4. Reservations

- Specific plots may not be reserved; however, residents can pre-purchase a plot to be allocated at the time of use.
- All fees, rules, and reservation procedures are outlined in the **Burials Folder** and saved on the **office computer**.

5. Key Notes

Always record the **plot number** on all documentation.

Update the **Register of Burials** promptly after each interment.

Refer to the **cemetery rules**, fees, and procedures regularly to ensure compliance.

Location of Key Documents

| Document | Where to Find |
|---|------------------------|
| Burial Applications | Computer |
| Cemetery Plan | Burial File & Computer |
| Cemetery Rules & Fees | Burial File & Computer |
| Grave Digging Authority Template | Computer |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Register of Burials | Blue Register (Office Cupboard) |
| Reserved Plots (pre 2023) | Marked on Cemetery Plan & in Register |