

Maids Moreton Parish Council Newsletter



Spring 2021

Website: maids-moreton.co.uk

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1. Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council holds meetings every month (apart from August and January) on the first Wednesday of the month. The meetings commence at 7:30pm and are normally held in the Village Hall. However, due to COVID restrictions we now have virtual 'Zoom' meetings. All residents are invited to access these meeting and the access details are emailed (for those on the MMPC contact list) and posted on the Maids Moreton Facebook group. The next meeting on 19 May 2021 will be the first post-election on. It is currently unclear whether 'Zoom' meetings will still be accepted as legal on that date.

All village residents are very welcome to attend the meetings and bring up any village issues that they would like the council to discuss. If you cannot attend a meeting, then you can contact our Parish Clerk. Also, if you would like to be included in the MMPC contact list, then please email the clerk:

MMPC Parish Clerk

Jacky Dale-Evans

Tel 01280 814483

Email maidsmoretonclerk@gmail.com

Parish Councillors

Mark Byrne (Chairman)

Ausra Mohandas (Vice Chair)

Carolyn Cumming

Patrick Hardcastle

Graham Maw

Fiona Powell

Kenneth McClintock

2. Parish Council Actions

In addition to the management of the Village resources, such as grass cutting, litter collection, street lighting, and the maintenance of Village assets, *e.g.* Playing Fields, Playpark, Scout Hut and Cricket Pavilion, the Council has achieved these actions since our Winter Newsletter was issued:

1. Play Around the Parishes is booked for 30th July.
2. A number of planning reviews relating to the parish have been completed.
3. New Flooring in the Cricket pavilion has been completed.
4. We have agreed in principle to rent the Cricket Pavilion to a childcare company.
5. Fencing on Church Street/Church Close – Work has been completed on the new fence.
6. We have agreed to clear the area full of brambles near the Play Area in the Playing Field and will be planting trees. We have a grant agreed to fund the site clearance.

We are aware there has been a great deal of well-meaning comment on social media about the bramble clearance. In response to this, please note that there were no ground-nesting birds or other wildlife in the areas that were cleared. The heavy clearance was essential to stop the brambles re-establishing themselves.

Cleared areas will be transformed into ecologically richer spaces with grass, wildflower and tree elements that will provide and support enhanced biodiversity while also eliminating the negative effects of brambles intruding into recreational space. Both brambles and blackthorn are aggressive colonising species that can rapidly expand. Their rapid expansion is mainly through vegetative means such as aggressive rooting, suckering and stolons - stems that root whenever they touch the ground. Whilst they have a place in the overall ecosystem, these aggressive colonising species have to be kept under close control to maintain wider biodiversity and protect recreational space. Both these species are thorny and can be very unpleasant in the wrong place.

Now that trees and shrubs are growing actively, please remember to cut back branches from your property overhanging highways, pavements and footpaths.

3. Planning and Development

Walnut Drive Planning Application for 170 Houses (Application ref. 16/00151/AOP)

Following the Strategic Sites Committee (SSC) meeting on 19 November 2020, which resulted in a tied vote but with the application approved by the chairman's casting vote, there was strongly expressed concern that Buckinghamshire Council had misrepresented the status of this site by arguing that its inclusion in the draft VALP meant it should be approved. As a result of the pressure, Buckinghamshire Council engaged a QC to review the SSC hearing process and the planning inspector leading the review of the VALP, Mr Paul Clark, made clear that no part of the VALP was decided until all of it was decided by him. The position is now that the application has to be sent back for a third determination before it can be approved.

On the 15 and 16 April, Mr Clark held a special hearing session on the Walnut Drive site. Although scheduled for one and half to two hours, it went on for over four hours on the first day and two hours on the second, after which it also figured in the following session on the Buckingham Transport Strategy. Pat Hardcastle and Carolyn Cumming spoke for MMPC together with three Maids Moreton residents, plus Foscote and the Action Group. Mr Clark was generous with his time and stated that his intention was to obtain an understanding of the community of Maids Moreton and their views and opinions. The respondents together gave him a very detailed and comprehensive view of the village and its community. Buckinghamshire Council stated they now had an "oven ready" Section 106 Agreement for this site although this has not been made available for public scrutiny.

Mr Clark summarised his position towards the end of the hearing sessions. He was clear that he was concerned with whether the local plan and its contents were sound and not with individual planning applications but he also reiterated that nothing in the plan was definitive until the whole plan was adjudged by him to be sound. During the hearing, he was very generous with the time he gave to all the representors from Maids Moreton and Foscote speaking about this site. The impression was that he was very interested and really wanted to understand the situation fully.

The situation remains complex but it would appear that were the application to return to committee for redetermination before the local plan has been declared sound, then the Council would not be able to accord any weight to the site's inclusion in the local plan as a means of persuading the committee to approve it. In essence, watch this space!

Neighbourhood Plan

There has been slow progress with the Plan after the diversion of effort onto the Community Right to Bid for the Scotts Lane fields, which was regrettably refused by Buckinghamshire Council. Unfortunately, preparation for and engagement with the Strategic Sites Committee meeting on the Walnut Drive application and then the VALP hearing on the inclusion of this site in the Local Plan have both somewhat restricted the effort that could be focused on the Plan.

Despite these diversions, following discussion with our professional adviser, a revised version 5 of the draft plan was submitted to him recently for comment. Unfortunately, because the Neighbourhood Plan grant expired at the end of March, we have to return the unspent funds and reapply for a grant for the new financial year. This is in process of being done and we are optimistic that we shall be successful. Covid restrictions have not helped progress as they required all meetings to be conducted virtually.

We are aiming to have a draft plan ready for submission next month. After this, it will have to be reviewed by an independent planning inspector, who may require changes. Thereafter, it can be publicised and put to the electors in the parish for a referendum.

The Plan is being guided by the information collected at the previous public event in September 2016 as well as by earlier information such as the 2004 Parish Plan. As soon as we are able to do so, we shall make an outline of the plan available for information and comment.

An issue related to planning but less so to the Neighbourhood Plan, is the question of on-street parking. Even since the more recent, post 1960s, developments were built, the number of cars per household has increased and so has the size of most vehicles. Few garages are still used for parking cars and most have either become storage or have been converted to extra living space.

We would ask residents to please park with consideration for your neighbours and avoid blocking pavements, footpaths or driveways. There is currently an ongoing government consultation on whether parking on pavements should be prohibited throughout England, as it is already in London.

4. Play Around the Parishes

Aylesbury Vale District Council together with local Parish Councils also participate in Play Around the Parishes, a roadshow of fun and games for children during the school holidays. These are advertised on AVDC website and locally within parishes - they're great for active youngsters, plus its FREE. This has been booked for Friday 30th July. We will provide more details to residents once received.

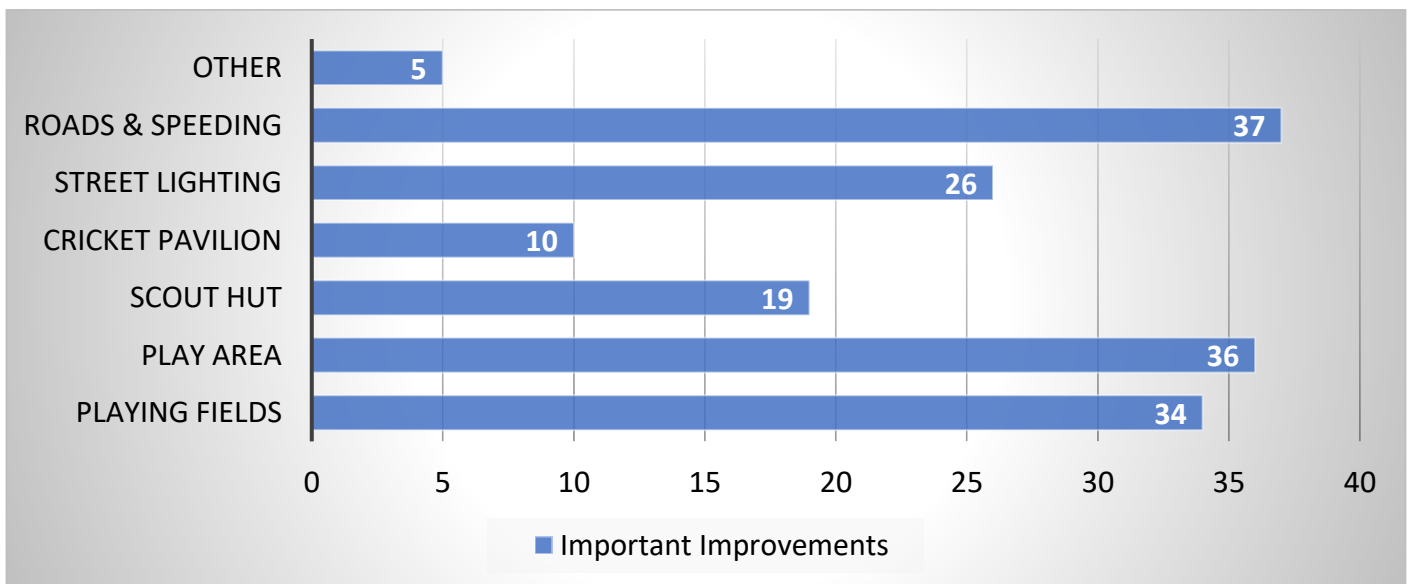


5. Parish Consultations

MMPC 5 Year Plan

The Parish Council has put together a business plan for the five-year period from 2021 to 2026. It is a statement of our vision for the parish and sets out the council's purpose, objectives and key priorities for maintaining and developing the village and gives a clear understanding of how the council works and the aims the council wishes to achieve during the five-year period. The main purpose of the plan is for the village residents to comment and raise questions with regard to the council's plans and intentions.

We have requested the residents' views on the plan via an online survey on the Maids Moreton website. There are many responses that the parish council will be working on. Below is an example: A summary of the improvements in the village that residents desire:



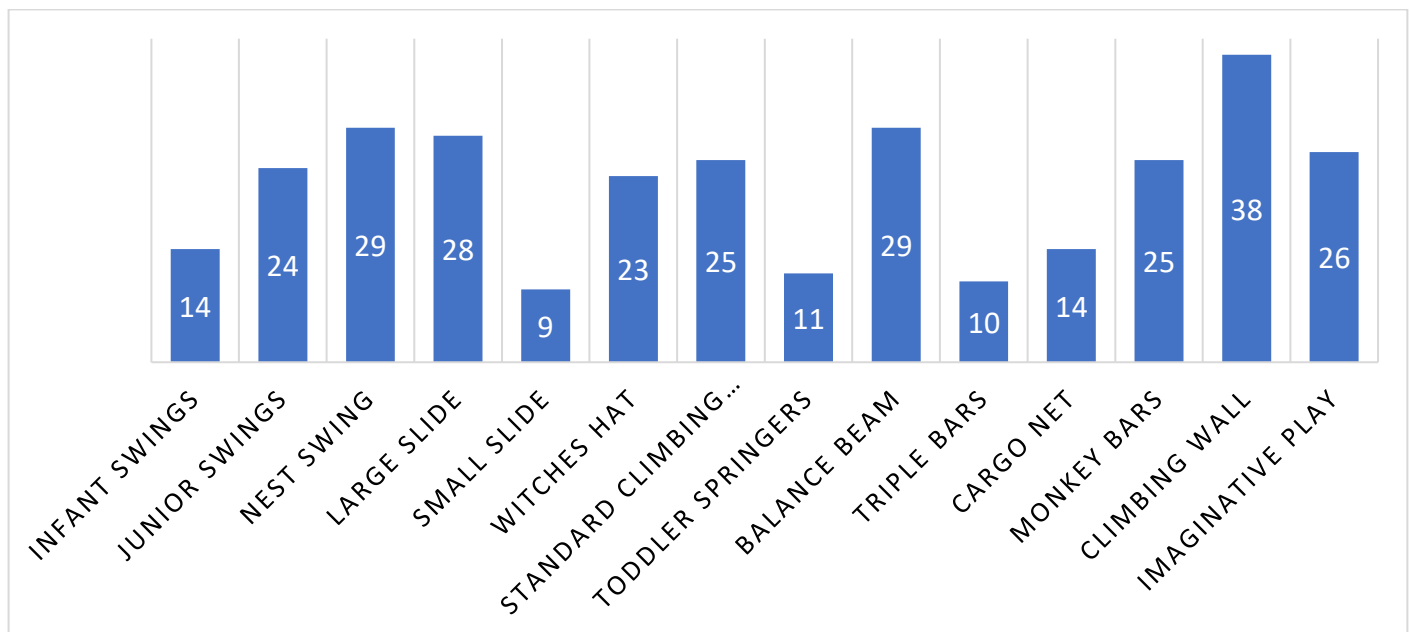
This is a rolling plan, that we will review every year based on the feedback from the village residents. If anyone would like to read the plan and all the results of the survey, then please visit the Maids Moreton website, or contact our clerk for a copy.

Children's Play Area

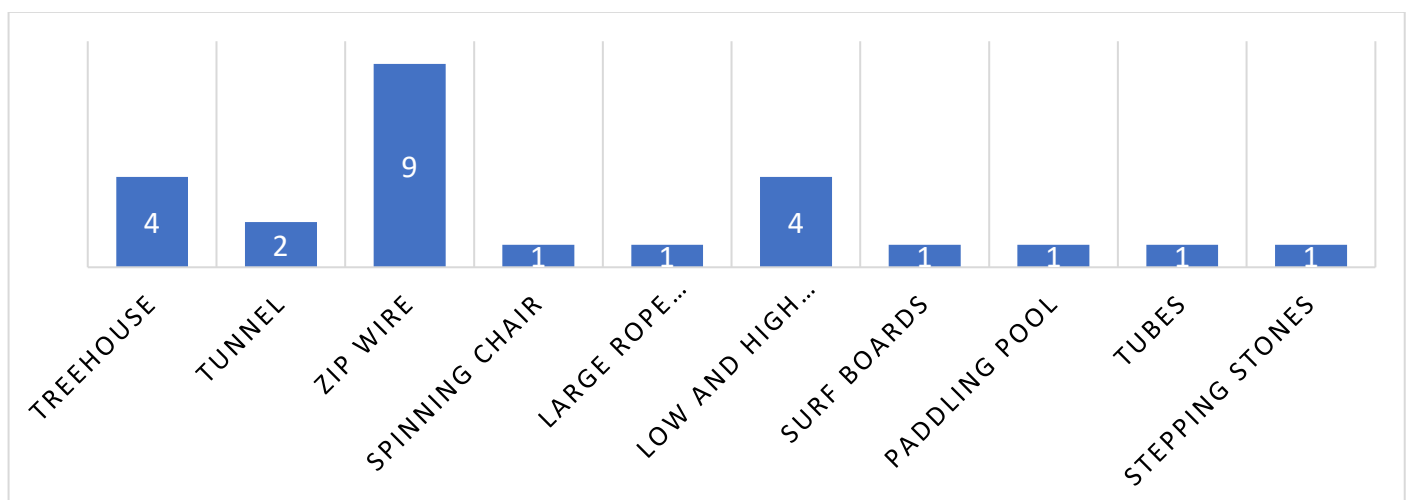
The council is looking to renovate the play area in the playing fields and will be replacing and adding new play equipment. We have requested the residents' views on what equipment they would like for their children via an online survey on the Maids Moreton website. We now have the results of the survey. If you would like to see all the results of the survey, then please visit the Maids Moreton website, or contact our clerk.

Below are summaries of the types of equipment requested and other requests:

Types of equipment



Other Requests



6. Grass cutting and wildflower verges



As your Parish Council, we have decided to put in place designated biodiversity corridors, which will form an important part of our Neighbourhood Plan proposal.

Over 700 species of wildflowers grow on our road verges. That's nearly 45% of our total flora. Road verges are home to many familiar wildflowers that are now becoming threatened, such as harebell, field scabious and ragged-Robin.

Some 87 of these are threatened with extinction, or are heading that way, including the largest British populations of rarities such as Deptford pink, tower mustard and spiked rampion.

With over 97% of wildflower meadows destroyed since the 1930s, road verges are a vital refuge for bees, butterflies, birds, bats, and bugs. A good verge will supply a diverse source of nectar and pollen from the first celandines in February to the last Devil's-bit scabious in September. Bird's-foot trefoil alone is a food plant for over 130 species of invertebrate.

Over the last few years, it has been found by many Councils across the country that adopting a different approach to managing verges has enabled wildlife to thrive and wild flowers to return, all of which are needed to assist the survival of many of our indigenous wildlife species.

During the summer months some verges will only have a mower's-width strip on the roadside and any adjoining footpaths cut for visibility. The remaining area will be allowed to seed naturally for the benefit of invertebrates and insects.

If on moving around the village you see areas that remain uncut, they have been left intentionally and not ignored.

Should you require any further information please feel free to either attend one of our Parish Council meetings or email the Parish Clerk.

7. Playing Fields Picnic Benches



Two durable picnic benches have been set up on the Maids Moreton Playing Fields. These will be nice to use from March 29th when up to six people can meet outdoors.

It is vital that these picnic benches are kept clean and tidy, so we would insist that all users keep them and the area around them clear of rubbish and nice for the next user.

8. BART - Buckingham Area Rural Transport

The BART Bus (Buckingham Community Bus) is a rural transport scheme for North Buckinghamshire set up in 2018. For more information visit: www.mybart.org.uk

You can hire a bus or make a booking enquiry on the website.

There is now a shopping Trip to Buckingham town centre, Tesco and Lidl or the library.

Booking is essential, exact pick-up times confirmed the day before, and subject to access, pick up from the end of your street. Tickets are £4 return.

Call: 0844 588 1034

Email: bookings@mybart.org.uk

If you have any ideas or suggestions or want to get involved, you can contact the BART chairman Warren Whyte (bus@mybart.org.uk) or the project manager Ashley Waite (bookings@mybart.org.uk) 07977 401548.

9. Cricket Pavilion Issues

We have had feedback from Thames Valley Police regarding anti-social behaviour at the cricket pavilion. They have put this area as a priority on their patrol plan.

We have discussed possible preventative measures, and they have suggested the following:

- This area is now a high priority for TVP and they will continue to patrol there on a very regular basis.
- They have a dog unit and an undercover patrol who are aware of the issues and will be making regular checks on the area.
- Local residents must not challenge anyone.
- Reports of any issues should be reported on their website to keep this site a live target on their patrol. However, non-criminal issues (someone just sitting in the porch for example) should not be reported as this dilutes the seriousness of other reports.
- Floodlighting has been seen to encourage groups of youths rather than deter them.
- CCTV is an option, but only if it covers the area they are meeting in, rather than the gable ends. There are issues around the use of CCTV in a public place that need to be taken into consideration.

10. News from Maids Moreton CE School

March 8th marked the full return to school for all pupils. On this date we were delighted to welcome back all of our children, to join the children of key workers who had been attending during the lockdown. It has been lovely seeing and hearing the buzz of children learning and playing together and returning to some sort of normality. Our children engaged wonderfully with the home learning during lockdown, but we were all very pleased to return to face-to-face teaching with the many social and academic benefits this brings.

At the end of the first week, we celebrated World Book Day, with children coming to school dressed as their favourite book characters. Throughout the day, they engaged in a number of exciting book themed activities planned by their teachers. At the end of the second week, we marked Red Nose Day, inviting the children to come to school dressed in red in support of this very worthwhile charity.

The class bubbles are currently rehearsing songs and poems ready for our Easter Service, and will also be entering our annual Easter egg decorating competition. The theme this year is Lockdown Heroes.

Since January, the appointed contractors have been on site, building our new classroom, extended school hall, library and staffroom. The children have been enthralled by the diggers and cranes, and we have all been astounded by the speed at which the work is progressing. We are delighted that going forwards, we will be able to offer full primary education to all our children until they reach secondary school age.

After Easter we look forward to our annual May Day celebrations and the children have already started learning their Maypole and Country dances ready for the big day.

We will be recording all events to share with parents and families.

For further details and photo galleries of what is happening at Maids Moreton CE School, please visit our school website: www.maidsmoreton.bucks.sch.uk

Best wishes

Keira Ainsworth

Head Teacher

11. Maids Moreton Help Portal

Maids Moreton has set up a help and support group portal:

Anyone needing help can contact the portal and it will provide help and advice by recommending support groups or neighbours who may be able to help.

Vision

Help and support vulnerable residents in Maids Moreton village.

Mission

There are many things we can help our community with; food parcels, personal shopping, click and collect, prescription collections, listening service, morale-boosting activities and much more. We will introduce people to help and support groups and agencies. We will be in constant contact with support groups across the district.

If you require and help and support, or know anyone who does, then please contact the portal straight away.

Maids Moreton Help Portal

Telephone or text: 07783 003305

Email: mmhelp@gmail.com

Elmer's Charity offers financial support for residents of Maids Moreton mainly for youngsters in education and for individuals or families that need short-term help to meet unexpected costs. Most grants are less than £200 but this is only a guide as there is no fixed limit. For more information, please contact elmerscharity@gmail.com or phardcastle@maids-moreton.co.uk who is a parish councillor and one of the charity's trustees.

12. Upcoming Events

St Edmunds Church

Church is still open for personal prayer.

We are running outside services at the moment, hoping to be back to normal inside services once Government guidelines permit.

Coffee mornings – 7th April Wednesdays (outside) 10-12pm, once the rule of 6 outside is permitted in line with Government guidelines.

Easter Sunday Service – 4th April 10:30am

BBQ – 16th July

Pet Service – 18th July (outside)

Church Fete – 30th August

For more information, we keep the website as up to date as possible

www.nbpchurches.org.uk

Allotments

'**Sausage Sizzle**'. A great barbeque day. Saturday 10 July at The Allotments. It includes two quality sausages with a choice of salads, plus a variety of mostly homemade desserts to choose from and a couple of pints or glasses of wine.

And most importantly, good company.

Maids Moreton Conservation Group

Our litter pick is not taking place this April but we would like to thank all those who pick up litter when out walking, thereby helping to keep Maids Moreton a great place to live.

Maids Moreton Cricket Club

We start our season on May 1st and all of our fixtures are available on the Fixtures section of our website <https://maidsmoreton.play-cricket.com/> with our Saturday matches starting at 1.30pm. We also have an inter-squad friendly on Sunday May 2nd where we are welcoming any new faces who would like to come down and play - just get in touch with any of the following: Andy Norman (andrew_norman@rocketmail.com), David Wise (davhwise@googlemail.com), Michael Heath (mheath0607@gmail.com).

13. Walking in Maids Moreton

Website: Public rights of way

<https://prow.buckscc.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx>

App: Outdoors GPS

This app tells you where you are in the countryside and list all the footpaths. It is very useful for walking in the countryside around the village.

John Harris's Walking in England

With hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

John said 'There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. Walking in Buckinghamshire (part of the Walking in England suite of websites – one for each county in England) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you'.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So, home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris

www.walkinginengland.co.uk

