

# Maids Moreton Parish Council Newsletter

Autumn 2020



*Website: [maids-moreton.co.uk](http://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 is on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October.

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](mailto:maidsmoretonclerk@gmail.com)**

## **2. Parish Council Actions**

*In addition to the management of the village resources, such as grass cutting, refuse collection, street lighting, and the maintenance of village assets, e.g. Scout Hut and Cricket Pavilion, the council has achieved these actions:*

1. The exterior wooden walls of the Scout Hut have been replaced and painted.
2. The paths off the Bridleway on the playing fields have been rebuilt.
3. Resurfacing the car park at the playing fields has been planned.
4. New signs have been placed on Playing Fields in relation to the dangers of dog walking on the rugby and cricket pitches.
5. The children's Play Area has been reopened and includes signs relating to COVID 19 recommendations/restrictions.
6. Two picnic benches have been purchased to go on the playing fields.
7. Numerous planning reviews relating the parish have been completed.
8. A response has been made to Aylesbury Vale District Council regarding Section 106 of the Planning Approval of 170 houses in Maids Moreton.
9. A new website has been set up with more council information and with constant news and updates.

### ***Allotment Winners!***

Maids Moreton has a thriving Allotments Association. In a friendly spirit of encouragement and competitiveness, parish councillors were invited to inspect all 38 plots, some of which are divided into half plots (a total of 46 individually managed allotments), and to judge the 2020 best kept plots in each category. The parish council was delighted to purchase a new trophy dish for the winner of the Half Plot, which will complement the existing handsome salver going to the winner of the Full Plot.



The winners were announced at a socially distanced get together at the allotments on 26<sup>th</sup> September: Neil Stuchbury (full plot) and Hilary Lawson (half plot).

### **3. Planning and developments**

#### ***Walnut Drive Planning Application***

The draft Section 106 Agreement (developer contribution to infrastructure and public facilities) for the Walnut Drive proposal finally appeared on the Buckinghamshire Council planning website, the web address has not yet changed from when it was AVDC. MMPC submitted a detailed response, which is available on the website. Whether our comments will be taken into account, time will tell!

#### ***Neighbourhood Plan Update***

During COVID-19 lockdown, MMPC submitted an initial draft of the Plan and the Evidence Base to our professional adviser. He reviewed the material and provided feedback and we are working on a revised version. An opportunity to apply for further funding was located and we have been awarded a substantial additional grant, which will enable us to pay for more professional advice and guidance.

The process will now be moved forward as quickly as possible with the aim of having the draft Plan and Evidence Base completed before the end of the calendar year. The completed Plan will then have to be validated by Buckinghamshire Council and submitted to an External Reviewer. Assuming there are no major hitches or delays, it should then be possible to finalise plan before the end of the financial year, 31 March 2021, at which date the new grant expires.

COVID-19 restrictions mean that we are presently unable to hold public meetings. Depending on when and how central government advice on this matter changes, MMPC remains optimistic that a public event on the Plan may be possible before Christmas. In order to ensure that there is good understanding of views across the whole community of Maids Moreton, we may need to deliver one or more opinion surveys and request households to give us their views in the next couple of months.

The final stage in the Neighbourhood Plan is a community referendum. It will not be possible to hold this before 6 May 2021 due to COVID-19 regulations. Our aim is to have the whole process completed so that the referendum can be held on or shortly after that date.

## **4. Dog Walking**

### ***Recommendations for dog owners using public rights of way and access land.***

Walking keeps you and your dog happy and healthy. Did you know that walking only 30 minutes every day makes you feel good, gives you more energy, helps to reduce stress, can lower blood pressure, and helps keep your heart in good working order.

When you are out with your dog please be aware of the following issues:

### ***Dog fouling***

Please be responsible and don't let your dog foul a public right of way or open access land. It is easy to train your pet to go in your garden before taking it out for its walk. Dog mess can spread some very nasty infections and diseases and a pile of dog poo can contain one million microscopic *Toxocara* Eggs. *Toxocara* is highly infectious, especially to children. Typical *Toxocara* symptoms include dizziness and nausea, asthma, and epileptic seizures. More seriously, it can lead to serious eye damage, even permanent blindness. That is why the council insists that you keep your dogs off the playing fields.

### ***Walkers and dogs in the same field as livestock***

If you meet farm animals while out walking keep your dog on its lead and under close control and leave as much space between your dog and the animals as possible (don't worry too much about keeping to the line of the path). If cattle do start acting aggressively (most common when calves are with them), it's best to let go of your dog and let it run away but most importantly you should leave the field as quickly as you can.

### ***Dogs and other people (especially small children)***

It can be frightening, especially for small children, if dogs, apparently out of control, come bounding towards them – and even for adults who may not appreciate muddy paws and inquisitive noses as much as dog owners might. You may think your dog is just being friendly, but please consider other people and show mutual respect for each other by putting your dog on its lead as soon as you see people approaching.

## **5. Trees and shrubs overhanging pavements and footpaths**

The recent combination of rain and warmth has caused most plants to start growing strongly. Please remember that it is the responsibility of property owners to trim back branches that overhang pavements, footpaths and highways.

There does not seem to be any defined height standard but as a guide this should be 2.3m clear height along pavements and footpaths and 3.6 m clear height over the carriageway. On major roads or bus routes, the height should be 5.2 m where branches grow over the carriageway plus 0.45 m each side of the carriageway to allow vehicles to pass unimpeded.

Landowners must also cut back any vegetation coming from their property which is obstructing street lamps. If the trees are in the Conservation Area and have a diameter of 7.5 cm or greater 1.5 m above the ground, you must inform the Tree Officer at AVDC 6-weeks prior to carrying out the work; if they do not raise an objection you can proceed with the work. If the tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order, then you must apply for permission – this application is free of charge. There are no restrictions on trimming your overhanging shrubs.

If you are unable to do this work, please contact the Parish Clerk who may be able to provide assistance for you with small trimming and cutting back tasks.



## 6. Car Speeding Issues

During lockdown, Maids Moreton was transformed by the massive reduction in traffic. Many people took the opportunity to walk and cycle much more than they would normally and commented very favourably on the change. It was great to see family groups with children all feeling sufficiently comfortable to be able to enjoy cycling on the roads in the village. In recent weeks, traffic levels have risen substantially and, unfortunately, speeding has again become an issue affecting the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. A minority of drivers apparently thinks that 30mph is a target to be achieved rather than an upper limit not to be exceeded.

We are trying to persuade Buckinghamshire Council to stop supinely ignoring this issue and take notice of community views. Nearly all villages in the county have a similar problem with people driving too fast, it is one of the topics most frequently raised by parish councils. We shall try and coordinate our pressure on the county council with other parish and town councils. We requested a village-wide 20mph speed limit be included in the Walnut Drive S106 Agreement but were not supported by the then AVDC. We have also suggested that such a change could be part of the associated changes around the planned expansion of Maids Moreton CE School. Watch this space but don't hold your breath!





## **7. Rugby Club Coronavirus Testing**

I am writing on behalf of Buckingham Rugby Club to let you know that we have been approached by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and agreed for our car park to be used on a temporary basis for a Covid-19 mobile testing site since they are no longer able to use the Swan Pool site with the centre re-opening. We have agreed to this is on the basis it will be used as a local testing facility only, with circa 30-40 attendees anticipated at any one session, mostly by car but with some 'walk-ins'. We have been advised that there should be no more than three sessions in any week and sessions will most likely run on weekdays between 10am and 4pm. We will endeavour to confirm future dates in advance and would ask that you avoid entering the site whilst it's in use unless attending a pre-booked appointment.

Simon Smith

Buckingham RUFC – Chairman

## **8. Hogweed**

There are patches of Hogweed growing in the verges of Scott's Lane and alongside the footpath from Scott's Lane to Duck Lake. This native Hogweed is superficially similar to Cow Parsley but taller to about 2m. It is NOT the invasive Giant Hogweed, which is twice as tall and can cause severe skin rashes and blistering; this grows mainly along water courses and on damp ground.

Note that some people may be quite allergic to Hogweed and it can also cause a skin rash that is exacerbated by sunlight – phytophotodermatitis. You are strongly advised to avoid any contact with the plant and, particularly, to ensure that children keep well away. Hogweed is valuable for insect biodiversity as it produces large quantities of nectar.

If you have to work with Hogweed then all exposed skin should be covered and great care taken.



## **9. Elmer's Charity**

By virtue of his will, proved in May 1653, William Elmer left land and financial endowments to benefit people in need in five parishes in north Buckinghamshire, one of which is Maids Moreton. The fund is able to provide small grants, most are less than £200, for individuals and also to contribute to activities that benefit the community more widely. In his will, William Elmer also created a small, second fund specifically to support education. Small grants are available to support individuals in education at schools and at higher institutions, as well as assistance for those seeking to enter a trade or profession.

Both funds are divided into nine shares and as specified in the will, Maids Moreton receives one ninth of the overall benefit. If you wish to have further information for yourself, or on behalf of a vulnerable person you know, please contact the Secretary, Karen Phillips, by email to [elmerscharity@gmail.com](mailto:elmerscharity@gmail.com) or telephone 01908 563 350. Alternatively, contact Pat Hardcastle, who is a Trustee on behalf of Maids Moreton Parish Council, either directly or through the Parish Clerk.

## **10. Upcoming Events**

### **Scarecrow day**

**Saturday October 3rd 1pm – 5pm**

Maids Moreton's Scarecrows have been invited to a Masked Ball. Dress yours so that he or she will feel Outstanding in their field!

Let's make this a happy socially distanced day. There'll be take-away hot dogs, hot drinks, and route maps/judging sheets available in the church yard.

Entry forms are available from Georgie Christopher Telephone 01280 815317 or [georgie.christopher@btinternet.com](mailto:georgie.christopher@btinternet.com)

Many events have been cancelled due to Covid 19 restrictions. The fireworks on 5<sup>th</sup> November may have to be cancelled as well.