

MORETON MORRELL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 19th MAY 2025

PRESENT: **Councillors:** G Slora (Chair)
 J Gordon, D Butler, B Keavy
 A Parry, E Edwards
 District Councillor: A Parry
 County Councillor:
 Clerk : S Routly (P Routly ill)

6 members of the public

1. Apologies for absences

Cllr James, Cllr Parry, Cllr Cowcher.

2. Approval of minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 20th May 2024 were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Gordon, seconded by Cllr Edwards and carried unanimously as a true record of proceedings.

3. Chairman's report

The Chair Cllr Slora made the following report :-

First of all I would like to thank all of the Councillors here this evening. You have all put in work to help our community become a better place. Without you things would not get done and we would all be the poorer for it. So again I say thank you all.

Having looked back over the past year I have been amazed by how much we have achieved. If you will allow I would like to recall some of them.

The paying field has again been a hive of activity and it is warming to see the children of the village using the facilities whenever I walk my dogs. Again thank you to Steve for keeping everything up to date and safe and Eileen for leading that team.

It has been another busy year in the planning department. Some highs have been the opening of the new school room. I'm sure the children will be thankful to not boil in the Summer and freeze in the Winter. On a disappointing note we failed to prevent the solar farm called Deers Leap getting permission and I'm sure the building of this project will cause us all disruption.

We have managed to persuade Orbit to put new bollards in and around the green in Oak Tree Close. Unfortunately we now seem to have an issue with people parking on the pavements.

The new Parish Plan was a major piece of work and our thanks goes to Councillor Parry and Edward's for getting this done and approved. It will be the basis and blue print for us to work off for the years to come.

A thank you Councillor Butler and his 20 is plenty scheme. We have also improved the signage to request horse boxes not to be driven through the village. I'm not sure they are paying much attention.

The village has had its signs cleaned and the destroyed one repaired. We also repaired the fountain brickwork outside the school. A thanks to Jane Cleeton for contouring to keep the flower boxes full and watered throughout the year.

In September thanks to the efforts of David Edward's we assembled a considerable working party to build the Pocket Park at the end of the graveyard. It is great to see everything now coming out and we will no doubt have more work to cut things back and mould it into the space that we all desire.

The footpaths have started to become overgrown and woodwork has deteriorated. The bridge into the park was rebuilt in July. There were also a number of broken styles repaired at the bottom of Middle Town on others on the way to Little Morrell. We are also about to rebuild the rotting steps the run along the school fence.

We have had a number of working parties to clear Farm Drive and to clear around the speed sign coming into the village. I hope you agree that this has given space back to these areas and made visibility better.

We had another well attended and moving remembrance at the church gates. Many villagers attended and once again we were blessed with the weather. The Room at the church is a new meeting place for many. There is a full events program including quiz's tasty Tuesday and clubs such as the Gardening club who meet monthly.

The Village Hall remains closed. All attempts to find a solution to it being closed have so far failed. I hope we will have more success this coming year to get a community asset back into the community.

The College has a new principal Sara-Jane Watkins. She has changed her management team and we look forward to having communication with them once they are settled in. Triangle field has been on the agenda a number of times throughout the year and we await further developments.

We have had a number of parish sponsored events. These include the Christmas Tree and lights. The number of events at the Black Horse designed for all ages over the festive period. The buffet and carols with brass band were all well attended.

We also had VE Day celebrations on Bank Holiday Monday. There were over 100 people in the pub and garden all enjoying their spam sandwiches and belting out a few old favourites from the end of WW11.

If I have forgotten anything then I apologise but I think you will agree we have been busy. I'm sure the coming year will be equally filled with many more projects.

4. Finance

i. Report of the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025

The Clerk and RFO made the following report:-

I am presenting the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The balance carried forward from last year was £45500

Total receipts for the year amounted to £34728 including refund of £3721 from MMPCC for the Wildlife pocket park.

Total payments for the year amounted to £33819 resulting in an excess of receipts over payments of £909

The end of year reserves amount to a total of £46409 with £31445 allocated to the general fund, £10000 to the playing field, £1000 to the local parish plan / planning fund, £2000 to village appearance, street lights and footpaths, £1200 to the election fund, £514 to the Transparency Act IT fund and £250 in WCC grants

The accounts, cash book and bank records etc have already had their internal audit by Jim Thornton of Ashorne with no issues and will be subject to external audit in the coming months.

5. County Councillor's report

Cllr Crowcher was not present but arrived in time to make a short report in the main Council Meeting.

6. District Councillor's report

Cllr Parry was not present but arrived in time to make her report in the main council meeting.

7. Community representative's report

i. Warwickshire College

The following report was sent :--

Strategic

WCG remains under a Financial Notice to Improve (NtI) from the Department for Education (DfE), with a comprehensive Single Improvement Plan (SiP) driving financial recovery and operational enhancements. Significant progress has been made since December 2024, including the completion of the Malvern campus sale and securing refinancing agreements to bolster financial stability. The stocktake visit by the Further Education Commissioner (FEC), led by Deputy Commissioner Frances Wadsworth, on 21 March 2025 at Pershore Campus assessed the college's progress in financial health, governance, and curriculum strategy.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) show positive trends in learner recruitment and staff retention, although cash flow and apprenticeship achievement rates remain areas of focus. Governance oversight has been strengthened through regular board updates, financial monitoring, and strategic alignment with the SiP. The senior leadership team, including newly appointed campus principals, is largely established, with a focus on reducing any potential disruption during the ongoing staff restructuring process.

The FEC team reported that significant progress had been made in addressing the recommendations from the previous intervention visit in October 2024. The college has developed a clear and targeted SIP, monitored by the board and scrutinised through regular case conferences. Governance has improved, with board members actively engaging in decision-making processes and contributing positively to the college's progress. The recruitment of a permanent governance professional and the strengthening of the senior leadership team have been significant achievements.

Overall, the college is on track to meet financial and operational targets, and there is clear momentum toward the potential lifting of the NtI. The FEC stocktake visit confirmed that, despite ongoing challenges, WCG is making steady progress in its financial recovery and operational improvements.

Farm

Lambing is now completed and has been successful from a farm and student perspective, the flock has produced 398 lambs. The students were actively involved throughout the day and night of lambing, all agriculture students were placed on to a lambing rota and in groups of 4 were on shift with students on sight from 05.00 to 23.00hrs for the 2 weeks of lambing, this gave them hands on experience of the lambing process and experience of working unsocial hours to prepare them for work in the industry. All the ewes and lambs are now out on grass and the students have been fly treating and worming the lambs this week.

The new equipment secured through T Level funding continues to arrive on farm with a new Pratley sheep handling system that has already been put to good use out in the field and in the shed when shearing our ewe lambs and rams. A new tedder is due to be delivered this week which will provide us with a full set of forage equipment allowing our students to take part in haylage production.

The beef Approved Finishing Unit continues to maintain high husbandry and welfare standards. With cows achieving very good weight gain targets. The farm is in the process of looking into the viability of launching a calf rearing unit onsite as part of our Approved Finishing Unit giving students an extra insight in the production cycle of our beef cattle.

Students will be out in the fields in the coming weeks drilling our AB09 plots, these plots are part of an agri environmental scheme and contain winter bird food to encourage and support wildlife at Moreton Morrell.

Our arable enterprise is performing well, with the spring crops that were drilled earlier this year establishing well and giving a valuable resource to students from an agronomic perspective.

Plans are still progressing for a poultry and a small pig enterprise to be established on the farm to add to the overall student experience and give them as much opportunity to experience what agriculture can offer them as a career.

Estates

The new DfE T Level funded Animal housing building project is in full swing and is on target to be completed by 2025. We are also now considering how we renovate the Tausky Yard to expand our construction offer due to significant demand.

Events

Our final open event of this academic year (specifically for our HE university-level courses) takes place on Saturday 14th June, from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm, where we look forward to seeing the first crop of potential applicants for our degree courses starting in September 2026. We'll shortly be releasing dates for our 2025/26 Open Days, and anyone interested can complete a short contact form at wcg.ac.uk/openevents to be notified as soon as booking opens for those events.

The Lambing and Animals Event on Saturday 5th April was a spectacular success, drawing over 3,000 visitors to enjoy a perfect day of sunshine, family fun, and countryside experiences. Beyond lambing, the event featured an exciting range of animal encounters at the college's Animal Centre, home to donkeys, guinea pigs, rabbits, invertebrates, and even exotic species like meerkats, marmosets and porcupines. Another crowd favourite was the Canine Therapy Centre, where our current BSc (Hons) Canine Therapy and Rehabilitation degree students showcased the hydrotherapy pool's capabilities in allowing our four-legged friends to exercise safely in a non-weight-bearing environment. Local traders also enjoyed a busy day, with the marketplace featuring a selection of local food, drink, crafts, and artwork. It was a great opportunity for visitors to explore and purchase unique items, all while supporting the region's small businesses and local talent.

During this term the Animal department will be going to South Africa with a group of level 3 students on a conservation tour. The animal centre has had the landscaping for the new build started which will improve the entrance to the building.

The annual Training day for Approved Training Farriers was held at Moreton Morrell Farrier centre on Friday 25th April. 30 Employers attended the informative CPD event giving guidance to maintaining standards in Farriery training.

The current cohort of Farrier Apprentices are completing their End Point Assessment over three days in May

Level 2 and L3 Equine Apprentices were successful in achieving their End point assessment this term, a Level 2 Animal Care and Welfare Apprentice has achieved their EPA with Distinction.

Facilities regular hire - Weekdays - Term Time

Mondays & Fridays - Vaulting training

Tuesdays - Stoneleigh RC Jump & Flatwork Training

Wednesdays - Warwickshire Hunt Pony Club

Thursdays - North Warwickshire Hunt PC Mounted Games Training Fridays - Warwickshire Hunt Pony Club MG Training

Supported Learning

The Gatherum Centre at Moreton Morrell has hosted an easter egg hunt during the one day lambing event on the 5th of April. Alongside this, beautiful homegrown flowers and vegetables were sold, grown by our wonderful students for their employability units and Maths and English project. In addition to this, we have collaborated with our local community charity Shipston Home nursing, to sell our produce and double the money they have given to us to pass on to their brilliant and devoted charity to help others in need. Because our relationship with the Animal Care department is growing even stronger, we also had a pet supplies stall onsite selling a variety of gifts and foods for pets made by our students - from tortoise food to cat nip. It was a lovely countryside event supported by all. We are also in the process of looking for an outdoor horticulture or animal-related Supported Internship employer who will partner with us for the 25-26 academic year to have 3 learners and a job coach join them as part of our internship programme. If anyone has any connections, we are happy to discuss and can be reached at supportedinternships@wcg.ac.uk

WCG Sport

WCG Sport was successfully launched in March 2025. The mission is to develop a structured programme that nurtures elite athletes through high-quality training, academic support, career pathways, and community engagement, creating a lasting impact on both our students and the wider community. Our vision is to establish WCG as a centre of excellence in elite sports, providing student-athletes with unparalleled support, training, and opportunities to excel both academically and athletically. We have recruited most of the coaches required for September and will start to invite students for some preseason training.

Staff and Students

There will be a strong team of bricklayers and carpenters representing Moreton Morrell College at this years regional Skillbuild competition being held at Moulton College on 29th May. We have fared extremely well in this competition over the last few years and we have had learners progress to the national finals on several occasions. It is fantastic that Moreton Morrell is producing learners of this calibre in the construction trades and taking forward our next generation of bricklayers and carpenters.

WCG and TruTrade, a Leamington-based online project management platform for builders, are working together to lead the way in bridging the skills gap and preparing the next generation of construction professionals. On Thursday 6th March, this partnership was recognised as WCG's John Billings, Head of Work-Based Learning (Construction) attended the Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire Skills Partnership Awards event alongside TruTrade's CEO, Tony Ellard, and Head of Marketing, Edward Wolstenholme. The event showcased the significant strides made in fostering collaboration between regional skills providers and the business community. TruTrade took home one of the coveted Skills Partnership Awards after being nominated by WCG in recognition of the

company's exceptional contribution to curriculum development and industry engagement, ensuring that students receive training aligned with real-world demands.

ii. The Villager

Jane Cleeton made the following report:-

First & foremost I would like to thank the PC for taking over the financial side of producing the Villager, Thanks to Salvo design&print Ltd for producing a splendid booklet with special thanks to Mark for delivering to me. Huge thanks to Pete Gibbins who puts it all together in his spare time & to Emily & Charlie for delivering to the village, Emily has been busy with exams so Charlie stepped up to help, he hopes to take over when Emily retires.

Since the Mid Fosse parish news is not being printed due to changes in the Diocese, John Moverley & members have been contributing more news to the villager which is very welcome, unfortunately WCG have not been in contact with me since December 24, my contact email bounced back saying email address was closed.

I had to help with the delivery of March issue & realised that we have approximately 40 editions to many, I have emailed Mark @ salvo to see what difference would be, £10-15, I told him I would let the clerk know for next issue.

Contributions to the Villager are increasing with Friends of Moreton Morrell school sending copy, I have asked Mrs Eadon if the school would like to contribute also Mrs Slora at the black horse with opening times & dates for the diary.

iii. Wildlife Pocket Park

On behalf of the wider community, I'd like to thank you for your support for the new Wildlife Pocket Park. It's widely recognised as a successful project that has transformed an underused, overgrown area of the village into a valuable community space where nature can also hopefully thrive.

To recap, the Parish Council and the Church kindly agreed to equally share funding up to a total of £10,000, with Pam generously offering to administer the fund. To date, £7,596.24 has been spent on professional design, a new gate ,an impressive archway entrance , pathing materials, and non-volunteer labour.

Phase 1, was completed in September, involved over 40 local volunteers and parishioners working alongside contractors to establish the park. Phases 2 and 3 followed in January 2025, with the planting of hundreds of bulbs, new hedging, and wildflower seeds to support birds, insects, and other pollinators. Bird, bat, and hedgehog boxes—made by students at the college—were also installed.

I'm delighted to report that the park is now regularly used by the school, local families and wildlife. This spring, two of the nesting boxes have already been occupied, and there is a noticeable increase in plant and wildlife activity. In May, a bird bath and other water sources were added, along with a related project to install new swift boxes, handcrafted by Ron Cleaton and installed free of charge on the church tower by Richards

Construction and Development. Swifts numbers like so much of our UK wildlife are in serious decline so need help.

Looking ahead, and with your continued support, we hope to use the remaining funds in 2025 for maintenance (such as tree work, if required), further planting, and a possible extension of our area—subject to discussions with the college, who own the neighbouring land.

I believe this has been a genuinely worthwhile initiative, bringing together the school, church, college, and wider community. It has created a peaceful and beautiful space where endangered wildlife can not just coexist with us but thrive.

Thank you again and to all those people who have helped make this happen

iv. Moreton Morrell Parochial Church Council

John Moverley read the following report:-

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a brief report on your church and to thank the Parish Council for its continued support most recently in terms of provision of better lighting along the church path leading to the Room. We also welcome the opportunity to include church information in the Villager.

Following the departure of the Revd Lynda Lilley, we went back into what is called an inter regnum, basically a period when lay members of the church take responsibility for arranging services, liaising on issues such as weddings and funeral etc. and dealing with administrative issues, normally dealt with by the priest. At Moreton Morrell we are fortunate in having to hand, both to advice and take services, the Venerable Brian Russell. Whilst retired and living in Stratford, we see him now very much a villager! When Lynda stepped down the diocese took a decision to re-organise responsibilities and late last year our church was joined with the Edgehill Group, overseen by the Reverend Barry Jackson and his team based at Kineton. This is now working well. Barry has been impressed with the amount of activity in and around our church and is getting actively involved. He has already forged even stronger links with our school and most Friday mornings he visits the parish, aiming to arrive early enough if he can for coffee at the pub, then joining the school for assembly before leading prayers in the church at 9.45am. It is a pleasure working with him and his team and I know he is keen to get involved with as many village activities as he can.

Our normal service pattern is for family communion on the first Sunday of each month with a Prime Time service led by lay members, and more informal, on the third Sunday. Both start at 10.30 and all are welcome. We are also looking at trialling a sung evensong as an occasional offering. As a church we are delighted to help co-ordinate the village Remembrance Day event and it was good to see so many people in attendance in 2024. We have had a packed church for the village carol service as well as for the school's one.

The Room continues to be a real hub for village activity, and we are delighted with that. The range of activities is extensive and whilst we would like to see more to help defray running costs, it has undoubtedly become an integral village asset, worth all that effort in

fund raising for its building! It has also been good to see the Pocket Park become established on part of the un-consecrated land of the churchyard and we seek to work closely with the Wildlife Group in its further development. There is so much more I could say on activities but perhaps worth a special mention is Tasty Tuesday, now very much a community event each fortnight for villagers to enjoy lunch and a chat. Also, the Craft Fair held in the churchyard and church, now attracting a wide audience to it and generating much needed funds.

This year sees what is called the Quinquennial Inspection of our building by the Diocese. We already know that it will highlight the need to address dampness in the walls and almost certainly roof repairs. The issue as ever will be funding, but we are already seeing if we can access any grant support and thinking of more fund-raising activity. Whilst we are currently just balancing the books in terms of annual income and expenditure, this leaves nothing for capital expenditure and sadly in recent years we have not been able to pay our full parish share to the Diocese. The Parish Share is our contribution to the costs of clergy to support our services and related activity. Currently our underpayment is recorded by the Diocese as a long-term debt!

However, these issues must not overshadow the great activity of our church and its link with the community.

Thank you again to the Parish Council and indeed all villagers for your continued support to your church in your community.

v. Gardening Club

Eileen Edwards made the following report:-

The gardening group goes from strength to strength and is popular with a range of people of all ages, although it mainly provides something to do and an opportunity to socialise for the elderly residents. This group (60 plus) were identified in the village survey as having very little social activities available and we're keen to support local clubs etc. So fulfils this need. It meets every second Monday of the month in The Room at the Church. For garden visits we either use the community minibus (for which there is a charge) or share cars which means members without transport to not get to miss out on the trips.

We have 24 signed up members who pay an annual fee of £25 and several people who turn up ad hoc and pay £5 on the door. At most meetings we have 15 to 20 villages who attend. Or annual income comes around £650 plus the annual grant received from the Parish Council. We have a Treasurer and can share accounts if required.

Over the last year we've had six excellent speakers and five visits to some lovely gardens plus a Christmas quiz and social. The average cost of the speakers £100 plus hire of the room at £25. We also provide refreshments at our meetings and Christmas social

Without an annual grant we would potentially have to increase the membership fees or reduce the number of speakers we engage with which would be a shame.

vi. Allotments

John Moverley made following report:-

As members are aware, the Parish Council let the allotment land from Warwickshire County Council. In turn the Parish Council sub let the management of the allotments to the Moreton Morrell Allotment Association. We are grateful to the Parish Council for the support they give as the allotments are undoubtedly a valuable asset to the community. There are a total of 30 full plots offered as either full plots or as half or quarter ones. When joining, the members are asked to sign a tenancy agreement with the allotment year running up to 30th September. We then hold an annual meeting of the association in November each year. Accounts are presented. As a non-profit organisation we seek to cover annual expenditure with rents received from occupiers.

I am pleased to report that in the 2025 year we have full occupation with two new members joining the association this year. Very sadly, one of our long-standing members has died this year and we are seeking a new person to take it over. This is slightly hampered by a major infestation of brambles in the plot and currently we are looking at ways to reclaim the area.

We received an inspection visit from Warwickshire County Council recently. I, together with the Parish Clerk and her husband, were in attendance. It is understood that a report will be produced for the Parish Council as first tenants of the land

vi. Village Hall

Mike Harwood was present and made the following verbal report:-

No progress had been made on the existing hall, still seeking an up to date builder quote. Trustees had no success in recruiting new trustees. Trying to raise new monies through grants, £17K in funds.

There was some debate about the hall , but it was agreed it had to be left to the Trustees.

8. Matters of Interest

None.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10 pm.