

North Molton Parish Council

Update March 2024

www.northmoltonvillage.co.uk

Your Parish Council

As a Parish Council we sit under District Council, who then have County above them. Most local powers are held by District and County (see *Who Does What*), so at the Parish level our job is to help the local community engage with those activities, as well as manage our assets, such as Laurels Playground. The funds that we receive are spent on activities that are of local benefit, and all Councillors are volunteers.

Our Parish

The rural Parish of North Molton stretches from Brayford Parish across to Twitchen Parish, and from the Somerset border down to the A361 (including the Borner's Bridge roundabout). Most people live in North Molton, but there are many outlying farms and homes, and the lovely hamlet of Heasley Mill. Agriculture remains one of the main activities. The number of residents is around 1200, with 870+ on the electoral role.

What did we achieve in 2023?

Planning We responded to 34 planning applications and attended one appeal.

Out and about The Highways Team monitors our roads, reports potholes (you can do this too - see the website), and arranges preventative drainage work to be carried out where flooding is known to take place, as well as local road gully clearing and verge trimming. Our Snow Warden works with the County team to ensure that the most appropriate routes are kept free, and that grit bins are full. The Footpath Warden annually walks routes and recommends repairs to District. The Council also has 8 benches, and is in the process of repairing/repainting these.

Keeping you safe We maintain the defibrillator at The Poltimore Inn and have linked our website to videos of how a defibrillator works and what to expect if you need to use one (Heasley Mill Phonebox and the NM Sports Club also have defibs). We worked with the Police to carry out three speed checks within the village, and pushed County to repair the 30 MPH sign on the way into the village. We have an Emergency Plan, available on the website, which includes a First Responder, location and provision of sandbags, emergency accommodation, and emergency helicopter landing.

Having fun North Molton Parish Council runs Laurels Playground (see *Spotlight*). We provided a grant to the Coronation Committee to help fund the celebrations, and gave children in the village commemorative mugs. The old phone box is a mini library for North Molton, with a regular turnover of books, DVDs and CDs.

Spending a penny Your Parish Council provides grants for the upkeep of the public toilets, The Victory Hall, Heasley Mill Village Hall and to the Parochial Parish Council for maintenance of the burial grounds. Small but vital grants also go to the Citizens Advice Bureau, Exmoor Young Voices and the Records Office, as these all directly or indirectly benefit the local community, and we fund a wreath on Remembrance Sunday.

Bread and butter After the sad news that Bulled's was closing, Council arranged a session to discuss the way forwards. While legally unable to run a shop itself, Council undertook initial research on options and facilitated the formation of the Community Shop Group, including providing a grant to cover some of the expenses. Several Council members are on this Group, which is doing an amazing job of setting up a new village resource and social hub.

The boring stuff Council has to fulfil various statutory obligations, such as having insurance, providing public access to information, agendas, minutes, finances, grant application, and internal and external audit.

Spotlight on Laurels Playground

Laurels Playground lies behind The Old School on the Village Square, and right next to the proposed new Community Shop. Over the past few years, Council has done significant work in repairing the walls, providing new equipment and keeping the site clean and tidy. Several Councillors and volunteers have spent a lot of time painting cheerful and fun murals, and there have been various grants and generous donations that have allowed all of this to happen. Once work is complete, there will be a plaque erected acknowledging the vital support we have received. There is a Facebook group, Friends of the North Molton Laurels Playground where you can sign up for regular information.

What is planned for 2024?

Important highways work will continue, and we will make a start on fixing the East Street pavement wall since no other agency is prepared to do it. The final touches will be made to Laurels Playground, the village benches will be repaired and painted where necessary, the defibrillator will be checked regularly and maintained in working order, and planning applications scrutinised. Important grants will help keep the burial grounds tidy, the village halls running and our public toilets open. Council will also monitor the new housing development to the west of the Primary School.

Who does what?

Parish

- Planning Application local consultation
- Laurels Playground
- Book Box Library
- burial grounds maintenance
- grants to local organisations
- local highways work

District

- planning decisions
- benefits
- waste
- recycling

County

- highways and transport, inc potholes and footpaths
- education, social care
- public safety
- libraries
- trading standards

Getting in touch

You can get in contact with your Parish Council via the Parish Clerk, Ian Fisher. He can be contacted on 07784 177666 or (preferably) by email nmpclerk@gmail.com

There is lots of useful information on the village website, including links to services, important news, clubs, societies and businesses, and copies of all Parish documents. Council now has a Facebook account and will publish relevant information there too. You are always welcome to attend Council meetings.

What is the Precept?

On your Council Tax bill there is a small component of the overall bill that comes to the Parish Council (called the precept). This covers the activities that the Council does on your behalf and the Clerk's salary. All of this is spent locally and on services that support our residents. For the past 5 years this has been going down as Council does not want to hold your funds unnecessarily. However, in order to cover some activities that we feel are vital that are not being prioritised at other levels, such as repair of the East Street pavement, this year there is an increase. However, an average household is still paying around £1 a week, which we believe is good value for the services provided.

Your Councillors

Our Parish has 11 Councillors, and their contact details can be found on the website/noticeboard.

Sir Richard Peek (Chairman)

Mr Jeremy Dunn (Vice Chairman)

Ms Claire Barron

Mrs Liz Bulled

Mrs Mandy English

Mr Bill Geen

Mr Hugh Jennings

Mrs Anne Johnson

Mrs Innes Milne

Mr Ron Procter

Mr Andy Radley

District Councillor Mrs Liz Bulled.

County Councillor Mr Jeremy Yabsley