



Moulton Parish Council

<https://moultonpc.org.uk>

Minutes from Parish Meeting (15 Nov 2019)

Introduction

Moulton Parish Council acknowledge the signed petition by six or more parishioners for a "Parish Meeting" presented at the Moulton parish council on Monday 14th October 2019.

The Parish Council further acknowledges the request a petition for "Allotments on Regent Street backs" signed by 6 or more parishioners under the "Small Holding and Allotment Act 1908" presented at the Moulton Parish Council on Monday 14th October 2019.

The meeting shall last two hours until 21:00.

The chairman of Moulton Parish Council is entitled to attend and if present he must preside over the meeting, in their absence the Vice Chairman if present must preside. If both are absent the meeting will appoint a person to Chair the meeting.

Parish councillors are entitled to attend the meeting as parishioners and may speak at the meeting at the discretion of the chair.

All persons speaking at the meeting to have their names and addresses recorded for completeness and the meeting is conducted under the 1972 Local Government Act

All items that electors wish to have added to the agenda should be e-mailed to clerk@moultonpc.org.uk

Order of Business

To appoint a chairman for the meeting

Cllr Mark Boyle, the Chairman of Moulton Parish Council, was appointed chairman, by virtue of his office.

To appoint a person to take the minutes of the meeting in the absence of the Parish Clerk.

Cllr John Harding was appointed clerk, as he has been fulfilling this role in the absence of the parish clerk

To read out the items on the agenda

1. To discuss the proposal from Moulton Parish Council to redevelop the rear of Regent Street
2. To discuss the recent vandalism of the new play facilities

No items were added to the agenda

Parish Meeting

Chairman

- The meeting opened at 19:00.

Diane Vernon, 53 Regent Street

- Asked if Moulton Parish Council had “fixed” their e-mail system after comments made in the previous council meeting, of parishioners not receiving replies from the council that she did not believe was acceptable.
- *The Clerk explained that there were no reported faults, and e-mails were being received. At the parish council meeting, it was explained that there was an out-of-office autoresponder and complainants confirmed they had not received this. The Parish Council could not be held accountable for people sending e-mails to the wrong address. Parishioners were asked to resend e-mails to the correct address and was asked if she had done this.*
- Diane Vernon confirmed that she had never sent an e-mail to the Parish Council.

Suzanne Turner, 10 Regent Street

- Confirmed that she did e-mail and receive responses.
- Also raised the concerns that the land rent was approximately £65/year and this was under the market rate. Added that her parents paid £40/month, thirty years ago for a similar garage in Hertfordshire and this showed a lack of business acumen dating several years from the council.
- *The chair added that the parish council does not and did not seek to make a profit from their land rentals.*

Kevin Hudson, 52 Regent Street

- Asked why there was a need or a desire to redevelop the land to the rear of Regent Street.
- *The chair responded that this came from the consultations with the residents of Regent Street, the village surveys and is now Neighbourhood Plan policy*
- Kevin claimed that this was for people to “tick boxes” to get “any people in.” He was concerned of “the sort of people” that the development would attract.
- *The chair replied that the intent is for the development to primarily benefit local residents, but the village cannot choose who moves into Bovis or Miller houses.*
- Kevin was asked if he voted in the Neighbourhood Plan referendum and he stated he had not.

Jamie Vernon, 53 Regent Street

- Asked why properties were being built.
- *The chair replied that the properties would fund the car park, and the bungalows meets the Housing Needs requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan.*
- Believes builders will do what they want. They will amend the plans once approved and the community will have no control over them.
- *The chair disagreed with that assessment.*

Andy Robinson, Chapel Lane

- Would you sell individual plots?

- *The chair replied that this would devalue the land if it was divided into chunks. If the council was to sell the land, it would likely be as a whole.*
- What control would you have if you sold the land?

Andrew Woodward, 31 Regent Street

- Believed that in previous years, each house to the rear of Regent Street was responsible for their own strip of land behind their house and that Moulton Parish Council purchased the land from ICI without the residents being given an opportunity to purchase it. He called this “sneaky” and “underhand.”
[The Parish Council have since spoken to other long-term residents of the community and previous parish councillors who disagree with this summary]
- Andrew Woodward claimed that the parish council have allowed the land to become unkempt and that this is a deliberate attempt to make the land suitable for sale or redevelopment only.
[The Parish Council have do not hold and have no record of ever holding such a policy]
- Andrew Woodward wants the land to be offered for sale to the residents for a “nominal sum.”

Debbie Bennett, 8 Park Lane

- Any parishioner should be able to purchase land – at the market rate.

Elizabeth le Breuilly, Chapel Lane

- Asked why should she, and other parishioners, miss out on an opportunity to purchase this land at the market rate?

Andrew Woodward, 31 Regent Street

- Stated that in his opinion, it must only go to Regent Street residents.

Andy Robinson, Chapel Lane

- ICI owned the land. They sold it to Moulton Parish Council. They legally own it.

Andrew Woodward, 31 Regent Street

- Disagreed with the above statement.
[Moulton Parish Council do own the land]

Kevin Hudson, 52 Regent Street

- Why is there a council building?
- Who is going to pay for maintenance?
- Who is going to use the building?
- *The chair replied that the administration building would be used by the parish council and other community groups. There are plans to have locum and mobile services such as, blood donation, citizens advice, PCSO surgeries, and others as well as essential training such as CFR HeartStart. The building will be funded by less expenditure on Regent Street Backs and the flat on the upper floor.*
- There are already too many meeting places in the village.
- *The chair replied that the church hall is owned by the church and there is no guarantee that the two church halls, or the social clubs, will continue to exist in years to come. The council want to have a community hub and their own space. It should be noted that parish meetings cannot be held anywhere with an alcohol license.*

- Why not the school?

David Wakefield, 17 Whitlow Lane

- Where are the allotments that were requested?
- *The chair responded that the allotments, as requested in October 2019, are still under consideration.*
- What about storage? Some people use their garages for storage.
- *The chair responded that the garages were let for housing motor vehicles only.*

Andrew Woodward, 31 Regent Street

- Andrew Woodward stated that he didn't want any more houses

Irene Nixon, 23 Meadow Lane

- Irene has lived on Meadow Lane for 47 years
- They had no objection to allotments, but that land has never been used as allotments. It has been a shanty town. We have had builders yard and greyhound breeding. One tenant had electricity connected. She stated that it had been a dumping ground for years.

[The original version of these minutes attributed that comment to 21 Meadow Lane]

Suzanne Turner, 10 Regent Street

- One person allegedly got their space for free from the council. *[The Parish Council do not give any individual their plots of land without charge.]*

Nicholas Pinkney, 85 Regent Street

- Are there some alternatives to these plans?
- There is a gable end right outside the back of my property 5.5m away and this will cast a shadow over my property. Can we change this?

Kevin Hudson, 52 Regent Street

- What are we getting for giving away this land?
- *The chair stated that the most recent valuation placed the value of the land was stated at between £50,000, without planning permission, to £750,000, with planning permission. The community receives a car park and that this is maintained for 50 years, as well the community assets.*
- Asked was there a tender? He wants to see other plans.
- *The chair replied that the other major provider labelled their plans as confidential.*
- *The clerk added that of the three companies that expressed an interest, one only wanted to build two-storey houses, and the other wanted to build a mixture of one and two storey houses. They were reticent about letting their plans leave the room due to the confidential nature.*
- *The chair confirmed that he would share the other concepts with the community if the council was able but Jigsaw were the only company which met the Neighbourhood Plan requirement.*
- Is there anything coming back into public ownership?
- *The chair repeated his previous comment*

Robin Smith, 47 Main Road

- Interested in process.

- It is noted that the parish council is relying on the Neighbourhood Plan but this referendum was in the Summer and wants to know how far along were things when the village went to the polls.
- *The chair stated that consultants had been involved regarding the value of the land and to ensure that redevelopment was a deliverable policy for the Neighbourhood Plan, but no commitments or design work had been undertaken until after the referendum.*
- Jigsaw is a housing association made from Adactus and New Charter. How far have you looked into them? They “don’t have a good record” and their “glossy brochures don’t tell you about Crack Cocaine and drugs dens.” They also subcontract to other Housing Associations and the Parish Council should have told us that they were planning to bring in this housing association.

Angela Capstick, 10 Barnside Way

- Spent sixteen years working for Cheshire Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council supporting people and Adactus were a key supplier.
- Adactus were perfect in Cheshire, and no such complaints received.
- *The chair confirmed that some due diligence had occurred and that the councillors had visited sites which Jigsaw had run and managed.*

David Wakefield, 17 Whitlow Lane

- I want a poll on the following question: “Do you want a development only to have open space, community parking and community allotments on the parish council owned land to the rear of Regent Street.”
- *The chair reminded David Wakefield that the question had to be unambiguous, correct and answerable as a Yes/No binary question. He also stated that this would be contrary to the neighbourhood plan*
- The Neighbourhood Plan is not fit for purpose and can be changed.

John Harding, 5 Harvest Close

- John joined the council in autumn 2017 and worked extensively on taking the Neighbourhood Plan draft through to planning policy.
- In November 2017, the parish council had an event at the British Legion, and feedback forms were given to every property with the publicity. The event and consultation was advertised on Facebook, the website and the noticeboard and physical copies were left around the village and the local area
- After passing our consultation, in October 2018, the unitary authority consulted upon it and this was publicised extensively in the village. In December 2018, the independent examiner opened his consultation and this was publicised throughout the parish. In July 2019, the Neighbourhood Plan passed with over 90% Yes vote.
- Throughout that process, the parish council faced opposition from developers wanting to build on the green fields of Moulton. They opposed us vociferously every step of the way, and our desire to protect the key views and green fields were dogged by letters and extensive consultation objections from legal firms and builders.
- The council were able to demonstrate that the community’s housing needs could be met by infill sites, including the brownfield site at Regent Street. If the community cannot do this, then there is no doubt that the builders will seek to build on the green fields and they could be successful. A planning officer at CWaC quoted that the scale of the developer opposition of a Neighbourhood Plan of a community of our size was “unprecedented.”

- Parish councillors gave up their Christmas 2018, and many weekends in January 2019, ensuring that the village's response was robust and successful, against the might and resources of big building firms. John does not believe the council could protect the green fields, as far the council has done, if the Neighbourhood Plan is amended to remove the policies on infill development and Regent Street.
- John stated that, as a parish councillor, he would not enter into any amendment or process that risks the Neighbourhood Plan.

Robert Booth, 3 Regent Street

- Confirmed that he did e-mail and receive responses.
- Respects the parish councillors are volunteers and notes that there are spaces on the parish council and not a single person has come forward to fill those spaces.
- Asks about the promotion of the referendum and whether the amount of promotion was appropriate.
- He notes that the Neighbourhood Plan referendum turnout is poor compared to Chelford and Cuddington, and analogous to Middlewich.
- He notes the biodiversity section of the plan which states "developments should avoid negatively impacting trees and hedgerows at the following locations which have been identified in the Village Design Guide. If unavoidable, replacements of the same or better quality will be expected." He notes that this includes "Main Road, rear of Regent Street."
- He notes that the council only listed seven "local green spaces" in the plan.
- *The clerk corrected the record that eight were identified by the Council but the Independent Examiner did not agree with one of them - the natural wetland between Weaver Grange and Honeyvale Gardens. Regent Street was not included as it did not meet the required definition. The clerk confirmed "Local Green Space" has a direct meaning in planning law and sites have to meet criteria. Regent Street did not, so could not be included, even if we wanted it to.*
- Robert challenged the council on the use of the term Brownfield site. He said land where allotments existed could not be brownfield under planning law. Robert produced a letter from Wright Marshall, that the Parish Council received in May 2016 that stated the land "contained garages and allotments."
- *The chair confirmed that there are no allotment agreements on that land. That comment is erroneous.*
- *The clerk stated that "brownfield land" had been used with the planning department at the unitary authority and the independent planning inspector who said it met the requirements of Brownfield Land. No issues had been raised with this term previously and the parish council maintained that it was appropriate for this parcel of land to be classified as brownfield land.*

Nicholas Pinkney, 85 Regent Street

- The backs do need tidying up. It's not acceptable.

Kevin Hudson, 52 Regent Street

- Acknowledge you are all volunteers, but if there had been previous consultation, you wouldn't have to have this meeting.
- If the development doesn't go ahead, what happens?
- *The chair referred to previous consultations and meetings. There was no direction given for what happens if the development does not occur.*

David Wakefield, 17 Whitlow Lane

- You would lose the Events Committee as they have a garage.
- If this isn't a "done deal," why is the site being cleared
- *The chair confirmed that the parish council did not want to offer tenancies for another year and that the letter last year confirmed that work was being planned for the site. Termination notices for the tenancies were sent in October 2019, after they were agreed at a parish council meeting.*

Interruption

- There was an interruption from a parishioner who refused to state their name. She claimed all the parish councillors are acting underhanded, were corrupt and receiving backhanders.
- *The clerk demanded that she withdraw the slanderous accusation*
- This was refused with the reply. "You can't make me."
- *The chair demanded order.*

Suzanne Turner, 10 Regent Street

- Was concerned about the use of the word "proposal" in the Parish Council's literature, which was duly noted. Was told in the exhibition evening that she could object at planning.
- Was concerned that the council said they needed a building to adhere to GDPR and data protection regulations. Does this mean that the council are not doing so now?
- *The clerk confirmed that, while the council believes that they are meeting their requirements under those regulations, this is done through the personal goodwill of successive clerks and councillors. Many parish councils have a permanent base, such as a room in a village hall or their own community hub and Moulton Parish Council would like to do the same.*

Kevin Hudson, 52 Regent Street

- Use a filing cabinet at the school. Digitise the documents.
- *The clerk confirmed that many documents had already been digitised but this is a time-consuming process and physical documents are still required, as well as a permanent address. He noted the number of volunteers to "assist" with this scanning process but that it was not a simple process.*

Nicholas Pinkney, 85 Regent Street

- Believed that there were 112 vehicles on Friday night and 117 vehicles on Saturday night. Is therefore concerned that the parking will not be sufficient.

Robert Booth, 3 Regent Street

- Notes the 130 spaces (96 for residents and 34 for new development).
- Believes that this is a congested village and that kids are going to get run over
- Notes the five EV charging points but believes those people who live in Regent Street will not be able to afford electrical vehicles. He believes that people travelling on the bypass will see that the nearest charging point is in Moulton and drive to the car park to charge up.
- He notes Church Street probably won't have EV.
- He worries about the ten parking spaces near the administration block will be used only by the administration block users.

- He also notes that Neighbourhood Plan policy T2 states one bedroom properties have one car parking space and 2-3 bedroom properties will have two car parking spaces. He therefore disagrees that 34 spaces will be enough.
- Furthermore, he believes some people will move in and use more than their “share” and leave even less spaces for Regent Street residents.

Richard Mann, 9 Regent Street

- Has two large vehicles, one car, motorcycle, scooter and another van coming. He taxes and insures them all. He runs his own business.
- He will take up “200m of kerb space” and his vehicles will cause a problem on local roads if he doesn’t get off-street parking given to him.
- He believes as he is a “job creator” the council should accommodate his vehicles so they don’t cause a problem around the village.

Mike Thomas, Meadow Lane

- Why were the plans confidential?
- *The chair corrected the record to state that the other plans were labelled as commercially confidential.*

Suzanne Turner, 10 Regent Street

- Asked about parking permits and what do the residents need to show to demonstrate there is a demand for parking permits.
- *The clerk replied that the on-street resident parking permit scheme is run by Cheshire West and Chester Council and the parish council cannot comment. In October, Cllr John Harding proposed a motion that was passed that the council would facilitate and assist with any resident parking schemes that came forward from the residents. He promised to speak to Suzanne Turner after the meeting regarding this.*
- *The chair promised that the council would look at how parking permits in the new development car park could work.*

Kevin Hudson, 52 Regent Street

- The Neighbourhood Plan passed in June, but these plans were very quickly put together.
- *The chair confirmed that things did move quickly once the council decided to press ahead with the redevelopment.*
- Why is it not to scale?
- *The chair replied that it is. He noted that there was no scale marked on the map.*

Debbie Bennett, 8 Park Lane

- How much would a parish poll cost?
- *The clerk replied that the costs of holding the poll fall upon the parish council, which is funded by the parish precept of the council tax. If the council has unexpected costs, this will rise. At the last local election, the anticipated cost to the council for a contested election was £1,750 for Moulton. The cost of running a parish poll if Moulton Parish Council do it, would be around £300. It is the belief of the clerk that Cheshire West and Chester Council Democratic Services could demand that they run it. Therefore the cost is up to £1,750.*
- How are any allotments going to be policed?

Allan Aston, Barlow Road

- Allan Aston is the previous chairman of Moulton Parish Council
- He stated that the plots of land that were let were a “logistical nightmare to police.” He confirmed that it took hours and hours of the clerks time for 20-30 plots and the council had huge problems tracking tenancies when residents moved out of the area or promised plots to neighbours.

David Wakefield, 17 Whitlow Lane

- Amended his request for a Parish Poll of: “Do you want the land at the rear of Regent Street to remain as as community allotments and parking?”
- Amended his request for a Parish Poll to: “Do you want the land at the rear of Regent Street to remain as as community allotments and parking only?”
- *The clerk objected as there are no allotments on the land currently and therefore the question is misleading.*
- Amended his request for a Parish Poll of: “Do you want the land at the rear of Regent Street to remain as as community green space and parking only?”
- *The clerk objected as the land has not been designated as a Local Green Space and the question is ambiguous and misleading.*
- Parish Poll of: “Do you want the land at the rear of Regent Street to remain as as community open space and parking only?”

The motion was carried with 29 votes.

Debbie Bennett, 8 Park Lane

- Debbie Bennett requested to see other options before the poll?

Chairman

- The meeting closed at 21:00