



Moulton Parish Council

<https://moultonpc.org.uk>

## Moulton APM: Chairman Statement

Thank you for attending this delayed Moulton Annual Parish Meeting.

This has been a challenging time for communities and our parish is no different. We too have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic that has struck societies across the globe, it has damaged our businesses, our livelihoods, and unfortunately, it has cost lives and devastated families.

However, it has also been an occasion to showcase the best of our community. The village has come together to support each other. The Moulton Community Food Hub started supporting families before Easter and has continued to do so throughout the summer. Numerous street location WhatsApp groups across the village built a support network and continue to support those in need. Technology helped everything from our local pub quiz to St Stephens church, conducted services online. The resourcefulness and thoughtfulness of Moultoners has been and should continue to be an inspiration to us all.

In July 2019, the Moulton Neighbourhood Plan was passed in a parish referendum, with over 90% of the votes cast supporting the parish council's efforts to formally enshrine the wishes of the community in the local planning process. This document has defined our settlement boundary to protect our green fields and avoid coalescence, and designated a raft of planning policies that will shape our village over the next decade, as decided by you. This process of respecting the wishes of the community was further supported in December 2019, when hundreds of people turned out to support the council and the neighbourhood plan in a contested Parish Poll. I thank everyone who backed the parish council and can be confident that the council has given the parish the best possible protection against unwelcome mass housing development in our neighbourhood. This is our village, and it is only right that our voice about how it evolves it heard loud and clear.

The Weaver Road play area is now complete and open, it is a wonderful space for young children, and thanks to all the volunteers (and Councillors) that worked hard to bring the vision of the council to fruition. Likewise, the council would also like to note the vast improvements to Moulton Playing Fields, including bespoke play equipment as requested by the youth of the village. The current generation of children now have a wide range of village facilities.

As a parish council, I have overseen numerous improvements as we seek to professionalise and improve the parish council. For the first time, we have a HR subcommittee that has written proper employment policies that have been adopted by the council. Responding to the Climate Emergency, the council has created an environmental working group to undertake and coordinate projects across the parish. We have councillors working on preparing Moulton so it would be able to apply for Quality Council status. The parish council have passed policies on Dispute Resolution, Petitions and Co-option, as well as updating our standing orders and financial regulations. We have published more documents than ever before, and the council are committed to openness, transparency and good governance. These changes have provided clarity to our decision-making and allow for the council to be scrutinised. I pay tribute to the previous chairman, Cllr Mark Boyle, who started these efforts and I will look to continue them in the coming months and years, demanding a culture of continual improvement and innovation within our council.

The eVoting exercise in March was an excellent example of innovation from the council. As far as I know this was a completely unique way of allowing residents of the parish to choose how to spend a sum of money the parish council acquired for infrastructure improvements, and the experiment received positive press and attention. The winning entry, a path from School Lane to Honeyvale Gardens, has been scoped and the winning contractor will be appointed at the next council meeting, to commence work as soon as possible.

Looking forward, the first set of legal documents have been signed that underpins the Regent Street Backs redevelopment. It is no secret that the area has needed improvement for years, and this council is delighted that a large car park, community gardens, EV charging points as well as a small

number of affordable homes and bungalows will be built to satisfy the wishes and needs of the community as identified in numerous consultations since 2003. The council will keep all residents informed of each stage of the project.

The council is also negotiating to acquire the old school canteen, with a view to replacing the current unusable building with a new building that should benefit the community and the school. We are also in talks with local landowners regarding the provision of allotments and in the next few months, we will be starting a youth council to involve the youth in aspects of our parish.

I feel lucky to be chair of a Parish Council with councillors who will go the extra mile, give up their Christmas time with family to sort out parish matters and I have confidence that my team of dedicated councillors will continue to fight to improve our parish with the same vigour, energy and commitment that have done so far.

And in these troubling times, I'd like to leave on a quote from Coretta Scott King, the wife of Martin Luther King, who once said "the greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." Judging by the activities of the past few months, then Moulton truly is a great place indeed.

Thank you.