

ANNUAL REPORT

FISKERTON AND MORTON PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH MEETING 28 APRIL 2025

This is the report to the Annual Parish Meeting, of the Council's activity over the past civic year 2024/25.

We have had a full quota of Parish Councillors (7) for only part of the year as we currently have a mid-term vacancy. We are really keen to expand our council. If you are interested in joining the council and helping to make our parish a better place, please let us know.

We changed our meeting venue to the Fiskerton Revival Centre, Gravelly Lane and continue to meet on the third Monday of the month at 7pm, except in August and December. Meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome. All Agendas and minutes are available on the website and the most recent documents are displayed on the PC boards outside The Full Moon, Morton and The Village Shop in Fiskerton. We continue to be clerked by Brian Powell, who is also our Responsible Officer and he takes care of administration, accounts, communication, legal requirements and specific projects agreed by the parish.

To contact the council, please email clerk@fiskertoncummorton.co.uk.

What has happened over the last year?

UPDATING OUR POLICIES AND COUNCIL DOCUMENTS: the council has worked hard on our governance over the past year to make sure that we have the necessary policies and documents in place to run the council effectively and to be transparent to the public. Although we are a relatively small council, we still need to comply with legal and regulatory requirements and with recommended best practice. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils is a professional resource available to us and we are able to draw on their advice and guidance on matters of governance. Once approved, our policies are available on the website under the 'documents' tab.

PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE: Aiming to improve communication and allow residents to access local information and links to other organisations, we continue to work on the website as a vehicle to improve communications, compliance and transparency. We would like residents to be able to access the information they want about parish council decisions, policies and spending whenever they want to without going through the clerk. We encourage residents to sign up for our emails (only from the PC) which are sent every month and on other occasions as needed. Information on history, activities and action groups is updated regularly. Up to date flood, road closures and social events are sent out to those that have subscribed. We currently have 148 households signed up and have had 4,184 visits to our website in the last year (at the time of writing).

FRIENDS OF THE VILLAGE GREEN

The friends of the village green (FOG) was created in November 2022 following several residents raising their concerns of how overgrown and tired the green was becoming. The group now consists of 12 volunteers who actively support the parish

council to improve the green and make it a more accessible space for the community. The Parish Council very much appreciates FOG's hard work.

Several of the FOG volunteers are heavily involved in FiskoFest. In July, FOG held their second summer event, FiskoFest24. This was a very successful music and dance event with lots to do for all the family. 2025 will mark the 3rd year as the event has begun to grow, and they have had several offers from the community to help at this year's event, which is greatly appreciated. FOG are very much looking forward to everyone joining them on the afternoon and evening of 5th July.

Last Christmas the Friends of the Green were donated another christmas tree by B&Q, which has been planted near the Main Street gate. At Christmas time, FOG decorates the green with lovely lights and the light display continues to get better every year. FOG are hoping there will be some profits raised at this year's FiskoFest to purchase more Christmas lights as they are determined to put lights around the whole green!

This year they have worked hard to clear the large woodland area through 2 well-supported community tidy up days in February and March. They plan to continue with the other areas in the Autumn. Several local children have already started to build dens and develop their interest for outdoor play and learning.

Volunteers have also worked on repairing and maintaining the seats on the green, so visitors can relax and enjoy the area.

RAILWAY CROSSINGS

On a number of occasions this year, the railway crossing barriers have failed, leaving road users and pedestrians frustrated and delayed. There is a published phone number to ring if the barriers are down more than 5 minutes which is 03457 114141. Cllr Sue Saddington is our Notts CC ward councillor and she has asked if residents experience delays to let us know and we will pass this information onto her.

PLANNING: The council have studied and commented on 16 housing planning applications in the last year: 4 in Morton and 12 in Fiskerton. The PC considers the site, the proposals, previous applications on that site and the Neighbourhood Plan. The councillors undertake regular training and the overarching principle is that planning is supported unless there are material reasons for not doing so. By far the most common reasons for not agreeing is 'over-intensification' of the site and significant change of the outlook (ie: garage brick walls along the roadside or significant height/size changes of the property). The plans to be discussed are always published on the agenda, all residents are welcome at the meeting. Our comments are sent by the clerk to Newark and Sherwood who are the final decision maker and can agree or over-rule us.

FOOTPATHS: Nottinghamshire County Council have responsibility for the maintenance of the footpaths and the PC are constantly reminding them of their duties with regards to specific footpaths.

We would encourage residents to use the MYNOTTS app whenever possible to report footpath issues directly to the County Council.

One of our members has specific responsibility for monitoring the condition of our public footpaths (including stiles and gates) and for liaising with local landowners and the County Council when there is an issue. If you spot a problem with a public right

of way in our parish, be it a footpath or a bridle way, then please let Cllr Hilary Gibbins know (hgibbinsatfcmpec@gmail.com) or contact our clerk (clerk@fiskertoncummorton.co.uk).

The PC also distributes letters to remind residents to maintain plants and hedges if on the boundary of a footpath.

VILLAGE MAINTENANCE Our councillor Sue Saddington (Nottinghamshire County Council) regularly attends our meetings to update us on road maintenance issues and other initiatives available to us. We will continue to promote the use of MyNotts App to residents which allows residents to report highway maintenance issues. We currently use Ulyetts to maintain our grassed areas and have agreed to continue the contract for another year. An alternative contractor was used to cut the hedges this time.

As the body responsible for the play equipment at the Arthur Radford, we take advice from professional safety experts through annual safety checks. Unfortunately, the wooden climbing frame failed and was unsafe. It took a little while for us to arrange a cost-effective removal of this condemned equipment but this has now been done. We are now developing a plan to engage with local business to see if we can get some support to provide another piece of play equipment. It is still early days for this.

The rocking horse required renovations and this is in hand with a volunteer from the Arthur Radford and funded by a Parish Council grant.

The phone box in Morton has been repainted by a volunteer, and at Christmas was decked with seasonal lights.

A joint initiative with a neighbouring council saw some residents undertake litter picks.

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH GROUP – VOLUNTEERS. Following the 2023 Resident Survey, speeding through the villages was raised as a concern and at a village meeting it was decided the particular areas of concern should be taken up by the Parish Council with the appropriate bodies. At a meeting with Notts C.C and Via in November of that year, the Parish Council presented concerns regarding:
Main Street Fiskerton (to and from Bleasby)
Station Road (Rail Crossing into residential)
Main Street (entry into Fiskerton)

Via, as a result, offered temporary flashing signs, Rubber Band Analysis(3rd time) , drainage investigations and an analysis of the position of the road signs/30 limits coming into the Fiskerton.

The outcome of that analysis is the Rubber Band monitoring did not meet the criteria required for further action, the current speed limits and their positioning are appropriate and relocation of the signs further out would not be considered good practice and may lessen compliance even more. May we thank all those residents that put considerable effort to progress these matters to date.

We are therefore left with the enforcement of the existing restrictions and Via suggested the creation of a **Community Speed Watch Programme**. The Parish Council are happy to facilitate the creation of a Speed Watch Group should the residents back it sufficiently.

If you would like to register an interest in volunteering for the group, please contact the Parish Clerk on clerk@fiskertoncummorton.co.uk before **12th May 2025** please.

THE FLOOD GROUP. The Flood Group started the year with just Cllr Moakes and Cllr Powell, but shortly afterwards we started to grow and are now at 13 members with over half of the members now trained and fully insured to act as part of Notts Flood Wardens.

We have obtained road closure signs, cones and flood equipment including pumps, following the training and funding received from Notts CC. Our flood store will be operational in the coming months ready for the next event.

Drains are now regularly checked and reported to NSDC, inspections are completed, and repairs completed or scheduled. Dykes are also being reviewed and plans are afoot to work with the inland drainage board to unblock any obstructions through public land.

In addition we now have a dedicated telephone hot line 07421 421495 which residents can contact for advice and help during a flood incident.

Cllr Pogson deals with communications, updating our Facebook page during a flood event, with Cllr Powell updating the Website.

Finally we have teamed up with Bleasby and Rolleston our neighbours and hope that we can learn lessons from them in how to spring into action when we are needed and equally help them with road closures etc when required.

Much more to do but we are progressing.

VILLAGE EVENTS

Whilst the Council hasn't arranged any of its own social events this year, we have financially supported other community activities at the Arthur Radford and on the village green which has allowed these events to go ahead.

DOG BINS: We continue to fund the ongoing collection of all 5 bins across both villages.

DEFIBRILLATORS: We continue to monitor and pay for the maintenance of 2 defibrillators-one by the village shop and the other in Morton phone box.

FINANCIAL: We worked on budgeting and set the precept for 2024/25 accordingly. This year we

decided unusually to not increase the precept as we have reserves that we could use to balance any budget shortfall this financial year although costs have obviously increased and we are spending more as we increase PC activity. We continue to manage the council bank accounts at Unity Trust Bank which is more suitable for councils and allows us to authorise payments with at least 2 councillors on-line. We have moved our investments (predominantly the Section 106 money) to CCLA.

With our accounts, we continue to identify spending to either our S106 account (for village green and play equipment expenditure) or council funds - further increasing transparency of our financial situation for residents. The budgeting for this year is available on the website. As ever, all spending must be agreed at the PC meetings. We are currently looking for a new internal auditor and our external auditor remains unchanged.

POPPIES: Members of the PC have put up and taken down lamp post remembrance poppies. We worked with the History Society to make them even more relevant to our villages by including the names of lost residents and, where possible, locating that poppy near to where they lived.

NEWSLETTERS: this year, we have moved our newsletters online residents who are register with the Parish Council now receive a monthly update of news and information about the upcoming council meeting.

We have liaised with the SGA, Women's Institute, Croquet Club and Church to provide information on events.

COMMUNITY SURVEY: over the autumn period, we carried out a predominantly online community survey to find out what was important to residents. Some 50 responses were received and the council will use this information to guide its future planning. Responses covered such things as roads, a possible 'good neighbour network', more social events, dog bins and hedges. The council isn't always the responsible body for these suggestions but we will take on board what we can.

Work for next year will include:

Compliance and information sharing

Continue review of policies and procedures

Play Equipment audit and planning for future use

Developing the Flood Group and improving liaison

Website updates and use; resident subscriptions

Maintenance of the Village Green especially the wooded areas (with FoG) and other public areas

Speeding Concerns – investigate interest in a community speed watch group

Maintain pressure on the NCC to uphold their responsibilities

Social events