

MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH AND THE LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Adriana Jones

Email: clerk@mblparishcouncil.co.uk

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council, which will be held on **Tuesday 13th January 2026 at 7.30pm at MORETON VILLAGE HALL.**



Adriana Jones
Parish Clerk and RFO
7th January 2026

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. OTHER ABSENCES

To note any absences for which no apology has been received.

3. CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR

Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** the possible co-option of Councillor(s). Further details will be provided at the meeting.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any Declarations of Interest by Members. A Member with a personal interest in a matter must consider whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable or Non-Registerable Interest, and declare it accordingly. A Member who is unsure as to how to declare their interest should seek independent advice.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the 11th November 2025 Parish Council meeting, and to note the minutes of the inquorate extraordinary meeting of 16th December 2025.

6. PARISHIONERS' FORUM

To receive questions from members of the public. In accordance with an agreed procedure, the time allocated for public questions may be limited to 10 minutes or such other period determined by the Chairman of the Meeting.

7. REPORTS

To receive any verbal reports from Councillors, which may include those who are representatives on Committees, Working Groups, Outside Bodies or who have attended other meetings. Councillors are asked to note that no decisions can be taken under this agenda item.

- a) Chairman's Report
- b) Vice Chairman's Report
- c) District and County Councillor Reports
- d) Parish Councillor Reports
- e) Police reports

8. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PRoW)

To **NOTE** any updates or issues.

9. ONGAR COMMUNITY NETWORK

A new local 'emergency plan-type' initiative has been launched called "Ongar Community Network", and is being managed by the local news and information service Everything Epping Forest with the endorsement of Ongar Town Council. Attached to the agenda is a summary of this new group – a volunteer and information service for Ongar and the surrounding areas (High Ongar, Moreton, Willingale, Fyfield and Stanford Rivers). OCN is currently gathering contact information of people willing to help in an emergency, perhaps bad weather

- flooding or storms - during or after a major fire, or during long periods of power or water supply issues. Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** this group, and what action / information they wish to take / provide.

10. HERITAGE PROJECT

The Clerk has submitted a grant funding application to the ECC Community Initiatives Fund for costs associated with this project. The criteria of the grant funding means that the Parish Council must be willing to provide 50% of the costs (matched funding). As such, the grant application is for £4,541. The CIF panel will meet in January, and their aim is to communicate the outcome with applicants at the end of February 2026. The Clerk will also continue to search for further funding opportunities.

11. COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

To receive an update on any community speedwatch activity.

12. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR) / DEVOLUTION

On 16th December 2025, an Extraordinary meeting was scheduled for Councillors to consider the current consultation on Local Government Reorganisation. Unfortunately, the meeting was not quorate and as such no decisions could be made. However, the four Councillors present did discuss the matter, and recorded their discussion, with the request that it be put forward to Councillors for their information. This was done on 17th December, with Councillors asked to contact the Clerk with their opinion on the proposals, as well as encouraging Councillors to complete the consultation themselves. The Clerk will provide an update at the meeting on this matter. Councillors are asked to formally **AGREE** their response to the consultation.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT

In December 2025, EFDC adopted a new Code of Conduct, based on the Model Councillor Code of Conduct developed by the Local Government Association (LGA). A copy of this is attached to the agenda. Councillors are asked **CONSIDER** the adoption of this new Code of Conduct.

14. ASSERTION 10 AGAR

From the 2025/26 financial year, Parish and Town Councils must complete a new section in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) called *Assertion 10: Digital and Data Compliance*. This assertion confirms that the council is meeting modern digital, data protection, and accessibility standards. In practical terms, Assertion 10 requires councils to:

- Use a council-owned (preferably .gov.uk) domain for the official website and for all councillor and staff email addresses.
- Operate an accessible website that meets current accessibility regulations (WCAG 2.2 AA).
- Comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring personal data is processed lawfully and securely.
- Recognise and fulfil the council's role as a Data Controller, with appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Publish required documents under the Freedom of Information Act and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- Have appropriate IT and email management policies to support secure and compliant digital operations.

The Clerk has been working on these matters over recent months, however the following is required to ensure the Council is able to confirm it is working towards compliance:

1. Training for Councillors on Data Protection and Compliance (Clerk to provide update)
2. Adoption of IT Policy (draft attached to the agenda)

15. DIGITAL ESSEX

Further to this matter being discussed at our November meeting, the Clerk has received a request from Digital Essex for an informal online meeting with Digital Essex and Atlas Tower Group (who are working with Digital Essex to improve mobile connectivity across Essex). The purpose of the meeting is to share information about connectivity in our area and explain how coverage could be improved, including the potential for phone masts. This is not a decision-making meeting, but they want to provide insight and answers to our questions. They state that any future steps will only happen with our (and community) support. This meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 13th January, with both the Clerk and Chairman attending. An update will be given at the meeting.

16. CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

To receive the oral report of the Clerk on matters which may be of current interest to Members and which require a formal update, and to receive such correspondence and communication, as the Clerk may place before the Council. Items under this agenda item are for noting only, and at the time of printing the agenda includes:

- a) ECC, EFDC, EALC and RCCE communications are emailed to Members on a regular basis and where relevant information is included
- b) Possible postponement of local elections in 2026
- c) Online briefing session via Teams on Wednesday 21st January 10.00am to 11.00am on the upcoming food and garden waste separation initiative, starting in March/April. This session will provide key information on why the change is happening, how collections will work, and how you can support residents. The session is open to Town and Parish Clerks and Councillors. Councillors are asked to contact the Clerk if they would like the link to attend.
- d) Government Consultation on changes to the NPPF – deadline 10th March 2026.
- e) 17th December London Stansted secured planning approval to increase annual passenger limit up to 51 million passengers (a number they expect to reach early in the 2040s). This permission allows the airport to grow its passenger volumes and to make the best use of its existing single runway, but without any increase in the number of permitted flights. This will unlock a wide range of consumer, economic and community benefits over the next 20 years. Full approval is subject to the final sign-off of an extensive S106 community package of support. They will be launching a Parish Council Forum in early 2026, this will be an opportunity for Parish Council's to hear from teams at the airport about work that is going on and an opportunity to ask questions that the residents you represent may have.
- f) Bovinger sign ordered
- g) Letter sent to Moreton PCC regarding specific use of funding. Note received from the Church as a thank you for the grant awarded.

17. OPEN PARISH MEETING

This years open parish meeting took place on Tuesday 9th December. There were 19 members of the public in attendance, along with Cllrs Crosbie, Offord, Day, Stuart, Carpenter and Collins. Short presentations were given on Local Government Reorganisation, changes in waste services, fund raising for St Mary's Church Moreton, and feedback on Rural Affordable Housing for the Parish. As a result of the meeting, the following was agreed:

- The Clerk would place further information on the Parish Council website regarding the new EFDC waste system
- When those present were asked if, as a general principle, they supported affordable housing in the parish, and if they wanted the Parish Council to continue working on this, the vote was evenly split. As such, it was suggested that perhaps the Parish Council should look at this again later in 2026.
- Numerous potholes on Moreton Road coming down from Shelley – keep reporting them on ECC website – appreciate this is a frustrating situation. If urgent, use the phone number to report it
- Safety of Moreton Bridge – is this ever inspected for safety reasons – place on January agenda for update on history.

18. MORETON BRIDGE

This matter was raised by a local resident at the Open Parish Meeting in December, and it was agreed it would be placed as an agenda item on the January meeting for update. The concern from the local resident was to question if the bridge was ever inspected for safety, HGV use of the bridge, possible weight limit and if restrictions could be placed on the bridge, including possible one way only. The Clerk will provide an update at the meeting.

19. BUDGET / PRECEPT 2026/2027

Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** the budget, and subsequently the precept, for 2026/2027. This will be completed on a 'live' basis during the meeting. Councillors are asked to contact the Clerk prior to meeting if they have something specific they would like to be considered. The District Council has asked to be notified of the Precept request by 31st January 2026. Attached to the agenda is a copy of the draft budget spreadsheet.

Councillors are asked to note that for the current year (2025/2026) the Parish Council element of the Precept for a band D property is £40.45 (77p a week). The calculation to get to this is the amount the Council request in precept divided by the tax base (no. of houses EFDC is expecting to collect council tax from), which for this current year was as follows: £25,406.64 / 628.1 = £40.45. The tax base for 2026/2027 has decreased to 627.2. If the Parish Council wishes to show a NIL increase in the parish council element of Council tax for next year, the maximum amount the Council can demand of EFDC in terms of precept would be £25,370.24 (£25,370 / 627.2 = £40.45).

Councillors are also asked to note that to date, no referendum principles have been set for town and parish councils by Government, and this approach has been contingent on town and parish councils taking all available steps to mitigate the need for council tax increases. The government proposes to continue with this approach, and reminds these authorities to carefully consider the impact of their precepts on taxpayers.

Councillors will be asked to **CONSIDER** the 2026/2027 budget and precept. Some of the main points for consideration include:

- Annual Subscription to EALC / CouncilWise The Clerk will provide an update on these matters at the meeting.
- Continued Grant Funding of the 5 churches in the Parish (£700 per church) for Grounds Maintenance
- Possible Additional Funding for churches (possibly placed into EMR)
- Review of Clerks Salary
- Matched Funding towards the History Project
- To consider any projects expected for the 26/27 or beyond

Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked reserves (which are set aside for specific purposes and for savings for future project) should be realistic and approved by the council. In addition, the amount of general reserves should be risk assessed annually and also approved by the council. It is recognised general good practice that the minimum level of General Reserves a Parish Council should hold is between 25%-100% of the precept. Smaller councils would be nearer the 100% end. The current predicted figures for 31st March 2026 show that the level of General Reserves (i.e. those reserves that have not been placed into an earmarked fund) is expected to be around 66% of the account balance, but 124% of the precept (based on the 25/26 precept figure). This is higher than average, and the Parish Council will be required to justify this at the 2025/206 Audit. The Parish Council has a reasonable level of Earmarked Reserves (34% of the account balances). Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** the Earmarked Reserves, and if any changes or movements are necessary.

For Councillors information, the last 5 years precept increases have been as follows:

2025/2026 – Nil increase

2024/2025 – 2% increase

2023/2024 – 10% increase

2022/2023 – 29% increase

2021/2022 – 6% increase

Councillors are now asked to **CONSIDER** and **AGREE** both the budget and precept for 2026/2027.

20. PLANNING

a) To **AGREE** responses to planning applications which may not have been responded to before the date of this meeting:

EPF/2585/25 Full	Firs House, Moreton Road, Bobbingworth, Ongar, CM5 0LU	Construction of a single storey storage shed for equipment and machinery storage. https://eppingforestdc.my.site.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv00000EWfb5
EPF/2586/25 Variation of condition	Firs House, Moreton Road, Bobbingworth, Ongar, CM5 0LU	Variation to Condition 2 of EPF/0466/25 (Removal of existing side extension and front section of house. Construction of two storey front gable, single storey side extension and two storey rear extension, conversion of loft space and rear dormer - inline with Certificate of Lawful Development Approval EPF/1551/23). https://eppingforestdc.my.site.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv00000EWoHI
EPF/2531/25	North Wilmore Barn, Workers Road, High Laver, Ongar, CM5 0DZ	Reduce the height of the constructed entrance lobby eaves and increase the pitch, whilst keeping the apex of the lobby the same as the consented scheme. Submitted to vary the existing consents of 1931/19 and 2059/19. https://eppingforestdc.my.site.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv00000EMoe3
EPF/2562/25	Wood Farm, Moreton Road, Ongar, CM5 0EY	Grade II Listed Building Consent for re-rendering of Wood Farmhouse. https://eppingforestdc.my.site.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv00000ESP3R

EPF/2337/25	The Dower House, Harlow Road, High Laver, Ongar, CM5 0DT	Proposed demolition of existing garages and stores, and erection of Garages for The Dower House, and Annex accommodation for dependent relative. https://eppingforestdc.my.site.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv00000DQURC
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- b) To **NOTE** the following planning applications below which have been responded to by way of the Clerk's delegated powers following email consultation with Councillors: **NIL**
- c) To **NOTE** the following planning application for which EFDC do not accept comment: **NIL**
- d) To **NOTE** the following Planning decision by EFDC:

EPF/2309/20	Envilles Barns, Two Hoots Barn, Abbess Road, Little Laver Ongar, CM5 0JH	Proposed subdivision to create 2 dwellings	10/12/25 Approved <i>PC asked for particular attention to access (back in 2020)</i>
EPF/1803/25	Greenways, Moreton Bridge, Moreton, Ongar, CM5 0LL	Double storey side extension.	5/12/25 Refused reason Impact on Green Belt. <i>PC had no objection to the application.</i>
EPF/2188/25	Wind Hill Cottage, Wind Hill, Magdalen Laver, Ongar, CM5 0EX	Single storey rear infill extension.	18/12/25 Approved <i>PC had no objection to the application</i>
EPF/1461/25	Spinney Farm, Spinney Farm Barn, Workers Road, High Laver, Ongar, CM5 0DZ	Car port.	26/11/25 Refused for reasons of scale and insufficient material detail, would appear incongruous within the historic farmstead, and impact on farmhouse <i>PC had no objection to this application</i>
EPF/2087/25 & EPF/2070/25	Wynters Cottage, Hastingwood Road, Magdalen Laver, Ongar, CM5 0EW	Removal of outbuilding, new garden room, changes to fenestration and roof repairs, and Grade II listed building application for the same.	27/11/25 Refused for reasons of unacceptable visual impact of the proposed replacement doors and the introduction of a garden room, causing harm to the special character of the cottage, its wider setting and the openness of the Green Belt <i>PC had no objection to the application</i>

21. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a) To approve the payments listed below:

BACS	A Jones	Nov and Dec Salary / PAYE	£1,109.46 & £277.40 PAYE
BACS	HMRC	Employers National Insurance contribution Nov & Dec	£82.90
BACS	Moreton Village Hall	Hall hire 2025	£240.00
BACS	Information Commissioners Office	Annual Data Protection Fee	£52.00
BACS	Adriana Jones	Reimburse Expenses – Signage, open meeting expense, etc	£300.28 (VAT £39.57)

- b) To review the bank reconciliation against the bank statements up to 31/12/25
- c) To **NOTE** monthly fee for Unity Bank increasing to £7 per month (from £6) from February 2026

22. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING / UPDATE TO KEEP ON AGENDA

23. DATES AND LOCATIONS OF MEETING 2026

Tuesday 13th January 2026 – Moreton Village Hall

Tuesday 17th March 2026 – Magdalen Laver Village Hall (*note this is the third Tuesday in the month*)

Tuesday 12th May 2026 – Moreton Village Hall
Tuesday 14th July 2026 – Magdalen Laver Village Hall
Tuesday 8th September 2026 – Moreton Village Hall
Tuesday 10th November 2026 – Moreton Village Hall
Tuesday 8th December 2025 – Moreton Village Hall Open Parish Meeting