



# Morton-On-Swale

## Parish Council

### RFO Report to Parish Council Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The following reports are being distributed and scheduled as attachments to the agenda for consideration/approval at the Parish Council Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

#### **1. 2026/27 Routine Finance Schedules**

##### (a) Bank Reconciliation Report

The total of funds held in the Current and Business Money Manager (Savings) Accounts amounts to £20,443.32. Of this, £7,324.76 is the unspent balance of CIL funding, and a further £402.10 is what remains of the Locality Budget Grant of £850 received from NYC earlier this year courtesy of Cllr. Wilkinson. The latter will be used towards the costs of repainting the white railings and tidying up the cobbles near the pub.

The schedule is currently predicting an end-of-year reserve of £9,370.70

Total routine expenditure for the first two-month period of 2026/27 was £2,806.34 (including £121.98 recoverable VAT). There were no exceptional items except as noted under (c) below. In addition we received a charge from Synergy Outdoors for £537.48 (including £89.58 recoverable VAT) for repairing a Chicane Barrier on Back Lane, paid for from the Locality Budget Grant referred to above.

The only receipts during the period were the first of two half-yearly instalments of the Parish Precept (£6,600) and a VAT refund of 1,533.48 in respect of the VAT incurred on expenditures during 2H 2025/6.

For further details of Receipts and Outgoings please refer to the yellow-highlighted section at the bottom of the schedule, and also to the separate Income and Expenditure Transaction Details Reports.

The green-highlighted section in the middle of the report contains details of anticipated receipts and routine outgoings during the next 2-month period, June-July 2026. All of the expenditure items listed here were previously included on the Schedule of Routine Expenditure which was received and pre-approved by Council at the January 2026 Council Meeting (and subsequently updated at the March 2026 meeting). As such, and provided also that the invoiced amounts do not exceed the amounts shown here, authorisation of these payments will be required from only two signatories to the bank mandate, in accordance with Financial Regulations. Particular attention is drawn to the Annual Insurance Premium Renewal charge of £888.40, advance notification of which has just been received, and which is just under £50 lower than the provision that was included in this year's budget.

##### (b) Income Transaction Details

Nothing exceptional to report.

##### (c) Expenditure Transaction Details

See notes under (a) above. There were only 2 "exceptional" items during the period. One of these was the cost of a replacement laser printer toner cartridge at £82.91 plus VAT, required to complete the printing of the May Parish Council newsletter, which was undertaken "in house". However this contrasts with the quotation of £170 plus VAT which was obtained from a commercial printing company for carrying out the same task.

The only other unexpected item was the cost of £24.41 plus VAT for the purchase of a new combination padlock for the main Play Park gate. The original padlock, which was acquired only about a year ago, was reported as being missing in April, but, despite only a small handful of people having been notified officially of the pin code, we were unsuccessful in being able to identify who might have removed the padlock and then subsequently failed to replace it.

(d) Accounts Summary (including budgetary performance report)

All routine income and expenditure to date is in line with budget expectations and there are no exceptional items to report. Just over £200 remains of this year's contingency budget provision of £288.10, after the unplanned purchase of a new toner cartridge.

## 2. AGAR 2025/26

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is a 6-page document which is the annual audit submission. The first two pages are essentially "notes for completion" as well as instructions relating to subsequent publication following receipt of Council's approval. The remaining 4 pages are being submitted herewith for formal Council adoption/approval at the May Council meeting:-

- 1) Page 3 is the Certificate of Exemption. This is a document which confirms that neither the annual gross expenditure nor the annual gross income of the Council in 2025/26 exceeded £25,000, and that as such the Council continues to be exempt from a requirement to undergo a full and formal external audit. The relevant figures are (gross including VAT): Income: £23,255 and Expenditure: £19,180. As RFO I have, as required by audit regulations, signed the Certificate to this effect on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026. The Certificate now needs to be counter-signed (and minuted uniquely as such) by the Chair at the May meeting as denoting approval of this declaration, for subsequent display on the Parish Council noticeboards and website.

NB Whilst this year's gross income figure was not far short of the £25,000 thresh-hold, this was due largely to the receipt of £7,248 CIL funding, which can be considered as an exceptional item.

- 2) Page 4 is the Annual Internal Audit Report. This was signed by the auditor Ian Smithson CPFA following his audit on site on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026. There were no exceptional items in his AGAR report. Acceptance of the Internal Audit Report needs to be minuted. A further copy of Ian Smithson's general commentary report to the Council (previously circulated) is also attached for reference. This report identified no specific areas of concern.
- 3) Page 5 is the Annual Governance Statement, which needs to be signed and uniquely minuted by the Chair and the Clerk at the May meeting. It confirms Council's agreement to the acceptability and appropriateness of our current accounting management policy and procedures.
- 4) Page 6 contains the Accounting Statements for 2025/26 and this page needs to be signed and uniquely minuted as such by the Chair at the May meeting. All of the figures reported in this schedule are as reported and previously approved by Council at the March meeting when the provisional accounts for 2025/26 were accepted and approved. There have been no changes or alterations to any of the figures reported at that meeting.

Notification of Dates of Public Rights to view accounting records:

Provision has to be made in accordance with regulations for parishioners to be able to view accounting records (including invoices, receipts etc) during a 6-week (30 working day) period following publication on the website of the signed Certificate of Exemption and Accounting Statements after their adoption at the May Council Meeting. The dates during which this right may be exercised, subject to reasonable notice, have been provisionally set by me (and will be published as such as soon as is practically possible following the May Council meeting) as commencing on Monday 22 June 2026 and ending on Friday 31 July 2026.

### **3. Revised Standing Orders**

Standing Orders are required (under Standing Orders!!) to be (re-)adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May each year, whether or not these have undergone any revisions since the previous year. The only changes made since the version previously adopted in May 2025 are:

- (i) A change to clause 13e to remove the obligation to publish draft minutes on the website “not later than one month after the meeting has taken place”. Draft minutes may (should?) still be published on the website wherever possible but the removal of this timetabled obligation allows the opportunity for the draft version to be reviewed and for corrections to be suggested on matters of accuracy, as appropriate, by members prior to its publication. It should be noted that, notwithstanding any such interim corrections that may be made, draft minutes are still not considered to be finalised until or unless formally ratified at the subsequent Council meeting.
- (ii) An addition to clause 23 to set a “normal” limit of 20 working days for making official responses to correspondence received from members of the public. This is in keeping with NALC general advice and guidance to local authorities.
- (iii) An editorial correction to clause 13b to correct an erroneous reference to clause 10(a)(i) which should have referenced clause 11(a)(i).

### **4. Financial Regulations**

As with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations also are required to be (re-)adopted at each Annual Meeting. In this case, however, there have been no changes since the version adopted in May 2025.

**Report prepared 18 May 2026 by R M Dale (RFO)**