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Special



Edition

News and Views from around the Parish

October 2020

Issue 305

Please note that the opinions expressed within this publication are not those of the Parish Church, editors or anyone other than the authors of the articles.

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Every parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is unique because every parish is unique. With his extensive knowledge of Morval, John Collings was an ideal choice to give us his take on...

Morval Parish: Background

Morval is an elongated rural parish in South East Cornwall, lying five miles south of the market town of Liskeard and two miles north of the coastal resort of Looe.

The name's origin is uncertain, with the Cornish words 'Mor' and 'Val' (relating to sea, berries and miners) offering little in the way of explanation. Scattered almost brain-shaped across acres of green and pleasant countryside, the parish has a population nearing 800. It is bounded to the north by the neighbouring parishes of Dobwalls and Trewidland, and Menheniot; to the east by St Germans and Deviock parishes; to the south by St Martin's-by-Looe and Looe, and to the west by Duloe parish.

Traditionally an agricultural heartland, settlements in the parish tended to be centred around the principal farms nearby the hamlets of Sandplace, Trenode and Morval, some of which were aligned to the historic Morval Estate, before more-modern ribbon development led to the main cluster of houses at Widegates. At one time canal boats would come up the Looe River to Sandplace and discharge cargoes of seaweed for spreading on the fields as fertiliser. The boats would later return to Looe with lime from the local kilns.

The parish is part of the Looe Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value and a Zone of Influence Natura 2000. The whole fabric of the area, dotted with mediaeval farm-buildings, is rich in character and history. Peer above the hedgerows of the many public footpaths that criss-cross the parish, or gaze through the gates of paddock-upon-paddock of green landscapes and the valleys and fields never disappoint.

Building designs range from typical farmworkers' cottages to the once-opulent Morval House; the enchanting Polraen Country House Hotel and the beautiful St Wenna's Parish Church.

Morval House, dating from Tudor times, was the seat of the all-powerful Glynn (1436-1512), Coodes (1512-1659) and Buller-Kitson (1659-1890) families, the last of which derived much political power from their kinship to the Trelawny hierarchy of nearby Pelynt.

German-British art and architectural historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-1983) famously described the property, which was owned by Major Robert Kitson (1918-1996) until 1973, as 'one of the best in Cornwall'.

During the winter of 1957, the Major and his wife moved out of the 15th Century Grade One country house to make room for former prime minister Sir Anthony Eden (1897-1977), who sought a remote hideaway, convalescing from the serious illness brought on by the fall-out of his controversial handling of the Suez Crisis in 1956.

After the nationalisation of the Suez canal by the Egyptian nationalist Col Abdul Nasser, Sir Anthony, fearing a new Arab alliance would cut off oil supplies to Europe, conspired with France and Israel in order to re-take the canal.

But following a badly performed invasion, widespread international condemnation from the United Nations, the Soviet Union, the Commonwealth and the threat of sanctions from the United States, Sir Anthony was forced into a humiliating retreat from public life, and the Tory's two years in No.10, after succeeding Sir Winston Churchill, were irrevocably tainted.

A month after Christmas 1957, Sir Anthony's doctors, including Looe's Dr Mervyn Cooper, were increasingly worried about his failing health, and ordered him, his wife and their two dogs to leave the estate and return to their Rowe Bower cottage at Broad Chalke, near Salisbury, where he could be closer to specialist hospital care.

Latter-day owners of Morval House have included the decorated diplomat and former Welsh Guards captain Keith Hamylton-Jones (1924-2007), the Mini-driving former ambassador to Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Polraen, built of Cornish granite around 1740, was a coaching inn on the Liskeard-Looe road and was also part of the Morval Estate, until being sold to the Liberal MP for South East Cornwall, Peter Bessell (1921-1985), in the 1960s. (Bessell was a popular constituency politician who was always striving for employment opportunities for his fellow folk).

But his dream of every man working turned into a working man's dream when, in an attempt to escape mounting business debts, he fled abroad for a new life in the sunny Americas.

St Wenna's Church, one of two places of worship in the parish – the other is Grace Community Church – dates back to the 13th Century, and nestles in trees alongside Morval House. It contains the oldest known sundial in Cornwall, believed to be 1671, and is one of only three 17th-Century dials left in the country's churches. It also has a well-kept cemetery dating back to the 17th Century.

There was once a Wesleyan Association chapel at Widegates, and the Buller family is said to have built a chapel at Sandplace in 1864 while a Sunday school building at Tregarland was in use until the early 1960s.

At the entrance to the Morval Estate is the parish's principal War Memorial; a smaller one can also be found at Shortacross alongside the main A387 Looe-Torpoint road to the eastern end of Widegates village.

Education for the early years is provided at Trenode Church of England VA School, with Secondary schools at Looe and Liskeard and colleges at Callington, Launceston, St Austell, Saltash and Plymouth. Originally there was also a schoolhouse in Morval, near the War Memorial.

The Reading Room Community Hall is located within Widegates village, opposite a peaceful area known locally as the 'Village Green', and the parish is served by a number of new bus routes as well as having a train station at Sandplace on the Looe-Liskeard branch line, which connects with the Penzance to Paddington express.

With so much history, and such a rich tapestry of life conducive to good health and bonhomie, it is no surprise that the parish, with its relatively easy road and rail connections to all parts of the country, has become home to all manner of people throughout the centuries.

As well as landed gentry, politicians and professional folk, a host of television and film stars often chose to make their base here, albeit some temporarily like tv and radio presenter Judi Spiers and Heartbeat police sergeant John Duttine and his wife Mel Martin, who also starred alongside Clint Eastwood in the 1990 film, *White Hunter Black Heart*, and played Demelza in the 1996 adaption of *Poldark*.

Employment prospects within the parish are limited since the demise of the blacksmith's Forge; the end of the cobblers' workshops at Shoemaker's Row, Sandplace, and the closure of the Pearn's Boatyard, Morval, which had a UK-wide renowned reputation for good workmanship and design.

There are a number of small industrial units, both at Oaklands, the former boatyard, and in Widegates village but other than that, job opportunities are restricted mainly to working off the land.

Tourist accommodation facilities also exist with farmhouse B&Bs, country house hotels, glamping and the like cashing in on the lure of rural walks, horse and pony-trekking and the nearby beaches and quaint Cornish fishing harbours.

Leisure facilities are provided by the 18-hole Looe Golf Club at Bindown. Designed by six-times British Open champion Harry Vardon (1870-1937), the 5,940-yard course is set in an area of breathtaking beauty with panoramic views of Dartmoor, the Tamar estuary, Looe Island and the English channel and rolling Cornish moorland.

Despite its disseminated nature, the parish has always boasted a number of close-knit friendly groups, clubs and organisations, often linked together by the glue that is the parish magazine, Outlook, or dedicated social media pages of the modern era.

The once-thriving village horticultural show, the football club, youth club and cricket club may no longer be troubling the scorers of rural life but with an influx of new people, following the limited development around Widegates since the 1960s, this 'brain-shaped' parish retains the ability to be one of the most important organs of a happy, content and thoughtful community.

Morval Parish Councillor vacancy

A vacancy has arisen on Morval Parish Council. Anyone interested in joining the Parish Council is asked to contact Robert Larter (the Parish Clerk) for a chat, whose contact details are:

- 'phone: 01872 500995
- email: clerk@morvalparishcouncil.org.uk

To fellow parishioners from the Morval Steering Group

On behalf of the Morval Steering Group, we would like to thank you for sharing your thoughts, views and vision for what you and your family would hope for our Parish to become in the future through your response to the Morval NDP questionnaire.

The Steering Group have been working hard, in spite of the problems thrown up by Covid-19 and, with the help of a professional consultant, have produced a Consultation Document which has all your views and comments documented in text and in tables or bar charts.

The Consultation Document is quite a size and so we have decided, instead of sending each household a copy, to provide a summary of key finding and also make the full document available for you to view on-line. Some hard copies of the full document can be made available to those without internet access.

The process that we are going through with you now would normally be done as a Public Consultation.

This means, we would have had some coffee mornings, bbq's and various other meetings so that you, the Parishioners, could come along, look at what we had produced/achieved to date and you could comment on that.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has made this impossible, but we don't want to waste time, we want to forge ahead so that everyone's views are made known. The sooner our Neighbourhood Development Plan gets approved, the sooner our voices get heard.

Please email feedback to ndp@morvalparishcouncil.org.uk, or by phoning the contacts listed below, or on paper to collection points at Tredinnick Farm Shop, the box outside 32 Morview Rd, Widegates, or AHT Design, The Old Chapel, Widegates by Friday 16th October

The full Consultation Document can be seen at:-

www.morvalwidegates.weebly.com/morval-ndp. However, if you can't access this site and would like a hard copy, please contact:-

Dawn James (01503 240482), Deb Kirkland (01503 241064), Lou Phillips (01502 240518) or Maggie Willmott (01503 240218) so they can organise for a hard copy to be sent to you as soon as possible.

The final Neighbourhood Development Plan will include a Vision, Objectives, and a series of Policies which reflect the views expressed in questionnaire responses and subsequent consultation. Here's a draft introduction and a summary of the key findings so far.

Introduction

The Parish of Morval occupies a quiet, rural area between the market town of Liskeard and the historic fishing port of Looe in South East Cornwall. Much of the land between the residential areas is farmland, agriculture being the main occupation in the parish alongside a number of small owner-run businesses. Details of the characteristics of the parish which are important to the community can be found in the 'Heritage', 'Green spaces' and 'Nature and Characteristics' sections of this document.

Our vision is to safeguard the present nature of the Parish whilst allowing for the limited growth necessary to keep local young families and the elderly within the community.

Our Objectives

1. To faithfully represent the views of parishioners as expressed through responses to detailed questionnaires and outreach opportunities. All other objectives stem from this.
2. To respect the Area of Great Landscape Value designation which covers much of the parish.
3. To seek to maintain the general characteristics of the area in terms of building design, size, materials and distribution.
4. Whilst being mindful of Objective 3, to seek to incorporate renewable energy solutions and ecological considerations into any new development.

Summary of key findings (detailed in the full Consultation Doc)

Section1: Community, Heritage and Environment

- There was very positive feedback as to how the respondents see the parish with over 90% rating their experience as good, very good or excellent.
- Most respondents valued very highly the rural setting of the parish combined with the peacefulness that brings. Many expressed the need to protect the natural environment and green spaces.

- Concern was expressed by a large number of residents over the overdevelopment of Widegates.
- There was a feeling that the parish needs more amenities, such as a larger community hall and a play area for children

Section 2: Transport and getting around

- The main means of transport is by private cars
- There was some concern regarding the volume and speed of traffic, mainly through Widegates, and the number of cars parked on the roadside
- Lack of safe pedestrian access around the parish was highlighted, and more footpaths and cycle paths would be welcome
- More public transport would also be welcome

Section 3: Employment and Enterprise

- Relatively few respondents work within the parish; some of those who do might need minor expansion in the next few years, and many would benefit from faster broadband and better mobile phone reception
- Over half of respondents felt the Parish should be encouraging more shops within the Parish; there was also support for food and drink establishments, artisan crafts industry and post office facilities.
- Most felt that any new businesses should make use of existing sites rather than expanding into new green space

Section 4: Housing and Development

- There was general support for small new housing developments if needed, and strong opposition to developments of more than 20 houses. Some respondents opposed any new development
- Affordable homes for local young families was the main priority for any new development, with small family homes, starter homes and bungalows the most popular types
- Most responses stated that new houses should be of traditional build in keeping with the existing character of the parish, and that parking spaces should be provided

- There was a strong feeling that any new housing should be on brownfield sites i.e. those that have been previously built on, or within existing settlements. There was also concern about inadequate infrastructure and facilities.

Section 5: Tourism

- Given the proximity of many tourist attractions, there was no strong support for tourism to be promoted further within the parish. Some respondents felt that second home ownership should be discouraged.
- ## **Section 6: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**
- There was strong support for solar panels on private homes and community buildings, but not for large scale developments such as wind or solar farms
 - There was support for energy saving measures that could be included within new builds such as solar energy capture, ground or air source heat pumps, recycling facilities and grey water recycling

In order to move to the next stage of this project, the NDP Steering Group needs input from the community. If you wish to comment on anything you have read here or in the full Consultation Document, please get in touch by emailing ndp@morvalparishcouncil.org.uk, or by phone Dawn James (01503 240482), Deb Kirkland (01503 241064), Lou Phillips (01502 240518) or Maggie Willmott (01503 240218) or on paper to collection points at Tredinnick Farm Shop, the box outside 32 Morview Road, Widegates, and AHT Design, The Old Chapel, Widegates.

Responses please by Friday 16th October ~ Thank you



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