

DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL



Downton Parish Council

Terms of Reference – Committees & Working Groups

Re-Adopted by Full Council – 24/05/2021

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Committees

Full Council

Background:

Members of the parish council meet once a month, to which members of the public are welcome to attend, to discuss all aspects of the parish and agree financial, planning and governance aspects of the Council. Meetings are run in accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders.

Terms of the Committee:

The following matters shall be reserved for decision by Full Council, but the appropriate Committee(s) may make recommendation for the Council's consideration:

1. The Precept.
2. Borrowing money.
3. Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Duties and Powers of Proper Officer provisions.
4. Making, amending or revoking by-laws.
5. Making of Orders under Statutory Powers.
6. Matters of principle or policy.
7. Addressing recommendations in any report from the Internal and External Auditors.
8. Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Parish Council on an authority, organisation or body (except approved conferences or meetings).
9. Nomination of members of all standing committees.
10. New powers or duties.
11. Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Parish Council to any enquiry on matters affecting the parish.
12. To receive and approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
13. To receive and sign off the Annual External Audit and Return.
14. To receive reports and recommendations referred to Full Council from the various committees.
15. To set up direct reporting working groups as necessary.
16. To receive reports and recommendations and consider recommendations from all direct reporting committees and working groups set up by Full Council or indirect groups where considered appropriate by the Parish Clerk or Committee Chairs.
17. To authorise the sealing of various documents with signatures of two parish councillors.
18. To appoint representatives on outside bodies or joint bodies.
19. To confirm the schedule of meetings of Full Council and the standing committees for the ensuing year.

20. To receive petitions and deputations from members of the public or any organisations.
21. Any other matters not delegated to a standing committee or referred to Full Council by standing committees.

Finance and Strategy Committee

Background:

There are four recognized elements of financial management: (1) planning, (2) organising and directing including risk management (3) decision making and (4) regulating.

The last two of these can and should be managed by the full Parish Council – the Strategy and Finance committee can support this by taking responsibility for the first two elements. An organisation needs to have both a strategic plan and a budget. The strategic plan lays out the direction and goals of the organisation and guidelines for actions to achieve those goals, while the budget looks at the money needed to support achieving those goals. A Parish Council has limited ability to gain income above the set precept and must act within its budget. Undertaking all the activities that may be desired by residents will not be possible; therefore residents will need to be given information to understand the cost consequences, obligations, limitations and benefits of budget expenditure.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To include the chair of the Amenities Committee in addition to the Parish Council chair and deputy chair as ex officio members and be quorate only if at least four of these are present.
2. To work within the Council's financial regulations at all times.
3. To work with the Council's responsible financial officer (the clerk) to ensure that the Committee is fully informed of the Council's financial resources and expenditure obligations.
4. Be responsible for making recommendations to the Council on budget requirements, including recommendations for the precept level to ensure the Council manages its finances to meet its short and long term goals by:
 - a. Advising the Council of the potential cost of new services
 - b. Taking into account the estimates of services identified by other committees (e.g. the Amenities committee and Staffing Committee)
 - c. Considering forward planning and necessary earmarked reserves for the replacement of equipment, vehicles, buildings and specific items of expenditure required in the future in order to lessen the precept burden in any one year
 - d. Ensure that the budget is directly linked to the tasks identified in a 3 year strategy and the management of the Council's assets and responsibilities
5. To develop a strategy to manage the Council's business that is fully informed by residents of Downton by consultation, open meetings and actions managed by the

communications workgroup. The Communications workgroup is not a Parish Council committee but will provide information to the Finance and Strategy committee.

6. The Finance and Strategy Committee is expected to only meet two times per year; 1. to coordinate the outcomes of consultation, analyse feasibility, create a strategy that considers risk and benefits and identifies the budget implications and 2. to review the progress midway through the financial year.
7. To arrange extraordinary meetings if new legislation or external impacts are considered to have financial consequences that require recommendations to full Council to significantly change the strategic plan. Extraordinary meetings will only be arranged at the request of a full Parish Council meeting or may be called by the clerk, as responsible finance officer, if she considers that matters of risk or financial security require such a meeting **and** should be for matters that are deemed inappropriate to be considered in an ordinary Parish Council meeting.
8. In relation to risk management, the Finance and Strategy Committee will develop a strategy and budget for the Parish Council in compliance with the Council's Risk Management Policy and its stated role contained therein.
9. To make recommendations as to any professional and/or legal advice deemed necessary by the Committee to ensure that strategic development is maximised.
10. To co-opt any person or persons (up to a total of 3) it deems appropriate to the Committee. Such co-opted members will not have voting rights.
11. To designate committee members with key responsibilities for consultation and liaison with the Communications working group, for research, for budget presentation and for identifying legal obligations

Amenities Committee

Background:

To oversee the ongoing provision, maintenance and future development of all assets either leased or managed by the Parish Council for the benefit of the Parish.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To comply with the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the governance and membership of the Amenities Committee.
2. To implement relevant policies of the Parish Council relating to the parish's amenities and, where appropriate, recommend amendments and new policies to the Parish Council.
3. To exercise the delegated powers and duties of the Parish Council with respect to the provision, care, maintenance and development of:
 - a. All buildings, the Barford Lane Cemetery, open spaces, playgrounds, village greens, allotment and horticultural areas whether owned, leased or managed by the Parish Council;
 - b. Sporting, cultural and recreational facilities provided by the Parish Council and to review the local provision of such facilities.

4. To work with the Memorial Hall Committee and to represent the Parish Council's interests in the management and use of the Memorial Hall.
5. To manage and maintain the provision of the Public Toilets in The Borough and in so doing recommend and manage the cleaning and maintenance contract for the Public Toilets.
6. To submit proposals to the Parish Council for new and improved services.
7. To formulate a budget for revenue/capital expenditure for the next financial year and to recommend it to the November meeting of the Parish Council.
8. To control the expenditure and income of the approved budgets (Revenue and Capital) for the Committee and to report to the Parish Council any possible variations.
9. To propose, budget and obtain quotes for revenue/capital expenditure subject to the permission of the Parish Council.
10. To set rents and fees for persons or groups using the facilities provided by the Parish Council.
11. To consider and consult on how the Moot Lane recreation area can be improved and determine how any recommendations coming from this should be managed, ensuring compliance with health and safety legislation and impact on insurance liability and make recommendations to the Parish Council on future management.
12. To be responsible for dealing with items of correspondence, consultations and projects relating the identified responsibilities of the Amenities committee.
13. To assess and discuss issues relating to the condition and maintenance of footpaths in the parish and correspond with the relevant bodies.
14. The Committee is authorised to establish sub-committees and working groups, and to appoint advisers as and when necessary to assist in its work.

Staffing Committee

Background:

This Committee is appointed to make decisions on all staffing matters subject to budget and expenditure limits decided by Downton Parish Council.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To establish and keep under review the staffing structure in consultation with the Parish Council.
2. To draft, implement, review, monitor and revise policies for staff.
3. To establish and review staff salary pay scales for all categories of staff and be responsible for their administration and review.
4. To oversee the recruitment and appointment of staff.
5. To arrange execution of new employment contracts and changes to contracts.
6. To review and revise employment contracts in consultation with staff and in compliance with legislation and, as appropriate, to recommend any changes to the Parish Council.

7. To keep under review the Clerk's Job description and ensure it reflects the requirement of the role.
8. To establish and review performance management (including annual appraisals) and staff training programmes.
9. To keep under review staff working conditions and Health and Safety matters.
10. To monitor and address regular or sustained staff absence (as per Absence Management Policy).
11. To make recommendations on staffing related expenditure to Downton Parish Council.
12. To consider any appeal against a decision in respect of pay.
13. To consider a grievance or disciplinary matter (and any appeal) including being responsible for making a decision to suspend the Clerk and implement the suspension and authorise the Clerk to impose possible suspensions of other employees if the need arises.
14. To oversee the management of the Clerk by the Staffing Sub-Committee.
15. To oversee any process leading to dismissal of staff (including redundancy).
16. To consist of 3 parish councillors as a minimum and a maximum excepting the chair and vice chair as ex officio members.
17. The Committee is authorised to establish sub-committees and working groups as and when necessary to assist in its work.

Staffing Sub-committee:

Background:

This sub-committee is appointed to manage the Clerk and to consider grievance and disciplinary matters (not including any appeal therefrom) referred from the Staffing Committee.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To manage, supervise and appraise the Clerk.
2. To agree and monitor achievement against annual objectives; administer leave requests; record, monitor and manage absences from work.
3. To review and monitor the Clerk's timesheets and agree 'Time off in lieu' allowances.
4. To authorise overtime, where appropriate.
5. To consider a grievance or disciplinary matter in accordance with Downton Parish Council's Grievance or Disciplinary procedures, including being responsible for making a decision to suspend the Clerk and implement the suspension and authorise the Clerk to impose possible suspensions of other employees if the need arises.

Housing Development Committee

Background:

This Committee is appointed to consider all aspects of new housing developments within the parish.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To make recommendations on all matters relating to new housing developments to be built within the parish.
2. To work in partnership with the developer, Wiltshire Council, other key parties and the Parish Council to deliver the design, affordable housing, facilities and infrastructure needed to provide a development which preserves and enhances the character of the parish.
3. To make recommendations on a detailed response to any planning application for a new development.
4. To identify and agree the key priorities for the parish as a response to new housing developments.
5. To engage with the developer, Wiltshire Council and other key parties at an early stage to ensure that an appropriate community contribution is secured.
6. To engage with the developer, Wiltshire Council and other key parties at an early stage to ensure the delivery of the agreed key priorities.
7. To make recommendations as to any professional and/or legal advice deemed necessary by the Committee to ensure that maximum benefit can be realised from any development. Provide budgetary estimates to the Parish Council for approval.
8. To review, secure evidence and advise on any changes required to the Downton Neighbourhood Plan, Wiltshire Core Strategy and Development Plan.
9. To co-opt any person or persons it deems appropriate to the Committee.
10. The Committee is authorised to establish sub-committees and working groups as and when necessary to assist in its work.

Watermeadows and Flood Committee

Background:

This Committee is appointed to consider all aspects of flooding and flood mitigation within the parish. The primary purpose of the Committee is to seek to mitigate flooding and to provide help and support to residents in preparation for and during flood events, thereby reducing risk to life and property within the parish. This will be managed through a Parish Flood Plan.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To monitor regularly the parish's flood mitigation measures (drains, culverts, watercourses and ditches) and ensure that they are 'fit for purpose'.
2. To advise the relevant Statutory Authority and land owners in the event of the flood mitigation measures being deemed to be in need of remedial action and to assist with the implementation of any measures which may be required.
3. To provide a system of communication with (a) owners of properties within the Parish at risk of flood, (b) a volunteer help team, (c) a road closure team and (b) government agencies and other organisations responsible for flood matters.

4. To maintain an emergency Flood Plan which covers the communication process for the parish.
5. To liaise with the road closure team to secure relevant road closures in times of flood.
6. To keep residents, specifically those at risk of flood (now and potentially in the future), informed of activities and to encourage their participation as and where possible.

Complaints Committee

Background:

This Committee is appointed to review formal complaints made against the Parish Council or the Clerk which cannot be dealt with by the usual complaints procedure. Meetings will only be convened in these circumstances. Complaints against individual members of the Parish Council shall not be considered by this Committee. Complaints of this nature should be made directly to the Wiltshire Council Monitoring Officer.

Terms of the Group:

1. The Committee will comprise four parish councillors.
2. The Committee will have full delegated authority to deal with complaints about the Parish Council or the Clerk, in accordance with the Complaints Policy.
3. The quorum shall be three members.
4. Meetings will be convened as and when required to review a formal complaint.
5. Notice to complainants shall be in accordance with the adopted Complaints Policy.
6. Meetings shall be open to the public unless the Committee decides that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the information to be discussed is of a confidential nature and the public interest would not be served in disclosing the information.
7. Voting shall be in accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders.
8. A record of each meeting will be made and the findings of Committee made known at the next appropriate Parish Council meeting.

Working Groups

Communications Working Group

Background:

The role of this working group is to maximise the effectiveness of communication to all residents within the parish, taking into consideration a range of communication channels to reach as wide an age range as possible. Communications should be clear, concise and timely.

Terms of Group:

1. To comply with the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the governance;

2. To implement relevant policies of the Parish Council relating to communication in the Parish and, where appropriate, recommend amendments and new policies to the Parish Council;
3. To seek views from residents of the Parish regarding their wishes for communication from the Parish Council.
4. To assess feasibility of expressed views and to submit proposals to the Parish Council for new or improved methods of communication.
5. To accurately convey relevant information to residents of the Parish regarding the key decisions, proposals and actions of the Parish Council, the sub committees and, where appropriate, working groups;
6. To ensure that communications proposed through this group enable all residents, whether users of technology or not, have access to key elements of information conveyed.
7. To be responsible for dealing with items of correspondence, consultations and projects relating to communication in the Parish where this is the responsibility of the working group. This does not include communication from individual residents directed to the clerk of the Parish or communications that fall directly within the role of the clerk of the Parish;
8. The Working Group is authorised to appoint advisers as and when necessary to assist in its work and to increase membership of the working group from interested members of the public to a maximum of 5.

Post Office Working Group

Background:

Following the closure of the village Post Office, this working group will seek the view of residents, assess the requirement for the service and propose alternative solutions to support the parish.

Terms of Group:

1. To comply with the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the governance and membership of sub-groups of the Parish Council;
2. To implement policies of the Parish Council where relevant in relation to Post Office service provision in the Parish
3. To seek views from residents of the Parish regarding the need and potential for Post Office service provision.
4. To assess feasibility of expressed views
5. To investigate the opportunities and costs of the current Post Office provision.
6. To write to Post Office Services Ltd outlining the issues for Downton (for example the above average over 60 age population; very limited bus service and return delay for visits to nearest POs; population of village; parcel pick up if delivery not possible; request for local consultation and request for temporary provision by mobile

service). Also requesting info re what is needed for a PO – training, security, size of premises

7. Make initial contact with any identified possible options to establish willingness to host provision in the light of information obtained from the Post Office
8. To identify an appropriate named contact for communications regarding Post Office provision in Downton
9. To undertake costing exercises/quotes for any proposals and make recommendations to the Parish Council;
10. The Working Group is authorised to appoint advisers as and when necessary to assist in its work and to increase membership of the working group from interested members of the public to a maximum of 8.

Leisure Centre Working Group

Background:

To work with members of the Brian Whitehead Sports Club Association to support the success of the provision as a resource for residents of the Parish.

Terms of Group:

1. To comply with the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the governance and membership of sub groups of the Amenities Committee;
2. To implement relevant policies of the Parish Council relating to the management of assets in the Parish and, where appropriate, recommend amendments and new policies to the Parish Council;
3. To consist of 3 Parish Councillors and up to 3 members of the Brian Whitehead Sports Centre Association (including the chair) and to be considered quorate if 2 members of each organisation are present.
4. To review the requirements of the lease held by the BWSCA and consider how the Parish Council can support the association in fulfilling these requirements.
5. To assist the BWSCA in creating a 5 year Business Plan for the Leisure Centre that identifies the goals, marketing and competitors, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, income opportunities, finance and strategy to achieve the goals.
6. To review the structure of the committee to eliminate any conflict of interest in achieving the Business Plan objectives and support the BWSCA in achieving a team approach.
7. To identify opportunities for the Parish Council to lobby Wiltshire or other potential funding bodies to maximise finances to achieve the Business Plan objectives.
8. To support the BWSCA in undertaking public consultation to identify information to inform the Business Plan;
9. The Working Group is authorised to appoint advisers as and when necessary to assist in its work.

Bridge over the Avon Working Group

Background:

This working group will be facilitated by the Downton Parish Council but will coordinate views and actions from councillors and members of the community. The project group will continue to exist until either the footbridge becomes a reality or there is a community decision, ratified by the Parish Council to cease or put on hold ongoing work. The Parish Council will review the terms of reference as necessary and, in any case, if the function and/or status of the project group changes.

The project group can set up working groups to undertake practical tasks and has the authority to recruit working group members beyond the project group from within the community. The group will meet at least bimonthly and at more regular intervals if progress necessitates it.

Terms of Group:

1. To bring together the work to date on the footbridge and review
2. To identify tasks required to continue the footbridge project
3. To undertake actions to inform the future of the footbridge
4. To undertake relevant consultation locally, Council wide and nationally to obtain views and increase knowledge of options and requirements
5. To gain outline costs of options
6. To report initially to the Amenities Committee and ultimately to the Parish Council if the magnitude of the required decisions require this.
7. To manage correspondence related to the footbridge
8. To maintain records of action, correspondence and meetings.

Caring Community Working Group

Background:

Set up to support people with dementia and others who may be vulnerable within the parish.

Terms of Group:

1. To comply with the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the governance and membership of sub groups.
2. To seek the views of residents of the Parish regarding who may need support, review what is available and identify how the current support may be enhanced.
3. To assess the feasibility of expressed views.
4. To identify opportunities for the Parish Council to lobby residents and Parish shops and amenities, to promote ways in which they can get involved.
5. To formulate plans and solutions within the constraints of current GDPR regulations.

Rights of Way Working Group

Background:

The purpose of the Working Group is to consider all aspects of Rights of Way within the parish.

Terms of Group:

1. To advise and make recommendations to the Amenities Committee over matters relating to the establishment, re-establishment, protection, maintenance, closure, diversion or modification of Parish footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic and roads used as public paths.
2. Where appropriate, to liaise with and support the work of those with statutory responsibilities for maintaining the Rights of Way network.
3. To organise working parties to undertake maintenance of the Parish footpaths.
4. To consider and undertake projects which will be of benefit to the parish and increase the use of Parish footpaths.

Moot Lane Recreation Ground Working Group

Background:

The purpose of the Working Group is to consider all aspects of the management of the Moot Lane Recreation Ground as an asset of the Parish, to maximise the use and benefit to residents.

Terms of Group:

1. To comply with the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the governance and membership of sub groups of the Amenities Committee;
2. To implement relevant policies of the Parish Council relating to use of land in the Parish and, where appropriate, recommend amendments and new policies to the Parish Council;
3. To consider the terms of the Trust under which the Moot Recreation ground is held by the residents of Downton
4. To seek views from residents of the Parish regarding potential use of the Moot Recreation area.
5. To assess feasibility of expressed views.
6. To consider whether suggested uses for the land would require the presence of a new building or pavilion
7. To undertake costing exercises/quotes for any proposals to the Amenities Committee;
8. To consider the terms of access for funding from potential funding bodies
9. To seek advice on likely success of applications for funding
10. To submit proposals to the Amenities Committee for future use of the Moot Recreation Ground;

11. To be responsible for dealing with items of correspondence and consultations relating to the future use of the Moot Recreation ground where this is the responsibility of the working group;
12. The Working Group is authorised to appoint advisers as and when necessary to assist in its work and to increase membership of the working group from interested members of the public to a maximum of 10.

Downton Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group

Background:

The purpose of the Working Group is to review the adopted Downton Neighbourhood Plan and to make recommendations on any amendments which need to be made to it.

Terms of Group:

1. To comply with the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the governance and membership of sub groups of the Parish Council and the protocol for working groups of the Parish Council;
2. To be accountable to the New Housing Development Committee (NHDC) initially unless agreement is made, due to expediency and subject to agreement via email of a majority of members of the NHDC, that recommendations should be made directly to the Parish Council;
3. To follow policies of the Parish Council where relevant in relation to the review of the Neighbourhood Plan;
4. To seek involvement from residents in being part of this working group to undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Plan;
5. To make appropriate arrangements to closely examine the Plan adopted in January 2017 and identify specifically what needs to be updated in terms of narrative;
6. To make appropriate arrangements to closely examine the Plan adopted in January 2017 and identify specifically what statistics and surveys require renewing, updating or repeating;
7. To investigate the opportunities for applying for funding to undertake external surveys and advice and, subject to point 2 above, to make recommendations to the Parish Council via the NHDC for applications;
8. To identify suppliers and experts to undertake such advice or surveys;
9. To undertake costing exercises/quotes for any proposals and, subject to point 2 above, make recommendations to the Parish Council via the NHDC;
10. To plan and make recommendations to the Parish Council via the NHDC for an open meeting to establish interest in setting up a Neighbourhood Plan review Strategy Group;
11. The Working Group is authorised to appoint volunteer advisers as and when necessary to assist in its work and to increase membership of the working group from interested members of the public to a maximum of 8.

