



# MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. NUMBER AND NAMES OF COMMITTEES

There shall be five Standing Committees of the Parish Council called:-

1. Finance Committee
2. Planning Committee
3. Staffing and Resources Committee
4. Asset Management Committee
5. Highways and Street Scene Committee

### 2. PURPOSE & DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The purpose of committees is to assist the Council as a whole to fulfil its responsibilities and functions as swiftly and efficiently as possible, by ensuring matters are thoroughly examined so that decisions are based on well-informed opinion. The Council as a corporate body, has ultimate responsibility for committee activities and committees report to the main Council. All committee recommendations and decisions will therefore be formally recorded by the Clerk and referred to the main Council for final ratification and approval. Where the Council chooses to delegate authority to a committee this will be done via a formal Council resolution prior to the Committee meeting.

### 3. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS & FUNCTION

While the five main committees are Standing Committees, the frequency of meetings for committees will vary according to its function and responsibilities.

**3.1. Finance Committee:** The Finance Committee will meet at least 3 times per year in May/June, March and January. It will function to:

- a) Be responsible for all Council matters directly relating to finance and spending
- b) Prepare and monitor the Council budget (January)
- c) Recommend the Council precept, based on budget requirements (January)
- d) Ensure Council funds are managed and invested for maximum return
- e) Consider grant applications and allocate grant aid (March)
- f) Carry out an Annual Review of the Council Insurance Policy to ensure Council assets are properly insured and liabilities covered (May)
- g) Carry out an Annual Review of Financial Regulations & Risk Register (May/June)

- h) Carry out a review of Year End Accounts, Audit requirements and Compliance to Transparency Code (May/June)
- i) Finance Committee members will approve accounts at Council meetings and sign cheques and authorise online banking payments in the office monthly (2 signatories).

**3.2. Planning Committee:** The Planning Committee will meet every 3 weeks to review planning applications if necessary. It will function to:-

- a) Ensure all planning applications are properly considered within the legal time framework of three weeks, set by Wiltshire Council. The Planning Committee has delegated powers to submit comments on planning applications, licenced premises applications, street trading applications and pre-application consultations. Officers have delegated powers to automatically submit original comments made on the planning application, to the Planning Inspectorate for Appeals.
- b) Consider other planning matters and correspondence, including any queries and discussions relating to s106 legal agreements.
- c) Refer any planning item to Full Council as and when necessary.
- d) Nominate Committee members to attend planning inquiries, and Wiltshire Council Planning Committees (Strategic & Western Area) and to attend planning site meetings.
- e) To Review the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meetings.
- f) To meet with developers at pre-application stage and as projects progress, in line with the Pre-App Policy in the Neighbourhood Plan.

**3.3 Staffing and Resources Committee:** The Staffing and Resources Committee will meet as required. It will function to:

- a) Appoint members of staff in liaison with the Clerk.
- b) Conduct staffing interviews and assessments.
- c) Assess job contracts and job descriptions to ensure they meet Council requirements and are in line with current legislation.
- d) Be responsible for staff health and safety in the work environment and risk assessment.
- e) Encourage appropriate training for staff development
- f) Advise on staff-related matters; e.g. appropriate pay rates, disciplinary matters, disputes etc
- g) Review staffing policies regularly.

Should any disciplinary matter be discussed by the Staffing Committee, then the Chair of Council will leave the room.

**3.4 Asset Management Committee:** The Asset Management Committee will meet as required. It will function to:

- a) Seek quotes on the provision, maintenance, repair or renewal of assets in the parish to inform the Finance Committee/Full Council.
- b) Review and assess quarterly written play area reports, identifying any actions required; and Annual Independent Play Area inspection reports.

- c) Address continued management of Bowerhill Pavilion and Sports Field, including annual maintenance contracts and the promotion of hiring of the facilities.
- d) Liaise with Shaw Village Hall Management Committee to ensure maintenance schedules are adhered to so the building is suitably maintained and insured for its users.
- e) Review Allotment Tenancy Agreement and annual rent charges. Consider correspondence and requests from Allotment Tenants.
- f) Officers to have delegated powers to accept new bookings for the Bowerhill Sports Field and arrange suitable charges and for the Clerk to consult with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Asset Management Committee if necessary.
- g) Review Council resources, including parish and office equipment, to ensure staff are properly equipped to carry out work demands.

**3.5 Highways and Streetscene Committee:** The Highways and Streetscene Committee will meet every three months in line with Wiltshire Council Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG)

**3.6** It will function to:

- a) Consider all Highways, Footpaths & Rights of Way issues, recommending those to be supported and requested for action via LHFIG, within a timeframe that allows the Council Appointed Representative to report back to the next LHFIG meeting and [submission of requests in time for the LHFIG agenda](#).
- b) Officers have delegated powers to consider all non-statutory Highways and Streetscene jobs to be carried out by the Parish Steward, prioritise these and report to Wiltshire Council using their approved system. The committee will set the overall priorities for the Parish Steward tasks.
- c) Consider correspondence and requests from residents on Highways and Streetscene matters.
- d) Make recommendations for jobs to be addressed by the Parish Caretaker that do not fall under the statutory remit of Wiltshire Council or the Parish Steward.

#### **4. CHAIRMAN & MEMBERSHIP**

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be ex-officio members on all committees **(To review during 4 year term of office)**

In line with Standing Order 4)d)vi) Every Committee shall at its first meeting before proceeding to any other business elect a Chair and may elect a Vice-Chair who shall hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council. If both the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair are unable to attend, the Committee may elect a Chair for that Meeting.

Every member of the Council will be expected to serve on at least one Committee.

The quorum for committees wholly comprised of Council Members is half of the members on each committee **(All committees are currently 7 members, therefore the Quorum is 4 Members)**.

Only members nominated to serve on a Committee may vote on committee decisions made, unless attending as a substitute.

In line with Standing Order 4d)v) A member who is unable to attend a committee meeting may send another suitable councillor as a substitute for that meeting. The substitute may then vote in that meeting on any resolution on behalf of the committee member. The member must inform an officer of the proposed substitution in advance of the committee meeting.

All Council members are welcome to attend any Committee meetings and may speak at the discretion of the Chair.

## **5. NUMBER OF MEMBERS ON COMMITTEES**

The number of members on committees will be as follows:

### **Finance Committee**

Chair, Vice-Chair & 5 Council members

### **Planning Committee**

Chair, Vice-Chair & 5 Council members

### **Staffing & Resources Committee**

Chair, Vice-Chair & 5 Council members

### **Asset Management Committee**

Chair, Vice-Chair & 5 Council members

### **Highways & Streetscene Committee**

Chair, Vice-Chair & 5 Council members

## **6. RULES OF AGENDA, PROCEDURE AND DEBATE**

Any item for an Agenda on any committee, if not referred to the Committee by Full Council will need to be communicated in writing (email is sufficient) to the Clerk at least ten days prior to the Committee Meeting in question.

The Clerk will give Committee members at least three days clear notice of a committee meeting, including Saturdays but excluding Sundays. All Committee meetings will be advertised on Council notice boards at least three clear days prior to a meeting.

The Council rules of procedure and debate as detailed in the Council Standing Orders, will apply to all committees.

All discussion on an item will be directed through the Chair. A member may speak for up to 3 minutes on any particular item. Once a committee decision has been made in the normal way via a proposer, and seconder and formal vote, no further discussion may place on that item.

All committees will have regard to Council policy already in place.

Any major expenditure item, which has not already been included in the Council budget for the year in which funds are required, will be referred to the next meeting of the Council and if necessary the next Finance Committee meeting for consideration.

Declarations of Interest, pecuniary or otherwise, must be declared by all members at the commencement of a committee meeting and recorded in the Minutes.

## **7. ATTENDANCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The press and public are welcome to attend all Committee meetings. The Committee will adjourn to allow for a period for public participation if members of the public attend. The time allowed for public participation will be at the discretion of the Chair.

Exclusion of the press and public will not be exercised generally but will only take place by resolution, for a particular occasion, if publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business under discussion. Reasons for exclusion are in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960: matters relating to employees, terms of tenders, proposals and counter-proposals in contract negotiations, preparation of legal cases, and disputes.

A councillor who is not a member of a committee has the same rights as a member of the public. Therefore, if such a councillor wants to see certain exempt information or documentation, or remain in a committee meeting where members of the public have been excluded for Data Protection, Employment law or reasons detailed above; they must demonstrate the reasons for their "need to know" and explain how it is necessary for them to perform their duties as a councillor. It will then be at the discretion of the committee (or for papers outside of the meeting, the officer).

***These terms of reference were reviewed and approved by Melksham Without Parish Council at the Annual Council Meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022.***