

# **COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

## **COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**REVISED at Full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024**

### **GENERAL STRUCTURE:**

The work of the Council will be conducted by five Standing Committees, for which the terms of reference are defined and agreed by the Full Council, which may vote, at any time, to modify the Committee's powers. In addition advisory working parties may be set up either with or without terms of reference but which may not make decisions binding on the Council save in respect of the Emergency working party set out at 6 below.

#### **1. PLANNING COMMITTEE:**

Composed of: Nine Councillors

A Quorum will consist of: Four members of the Committee.

Meeting frequency: Once a month and occasionally more or less frequently as practical circumstances or the public interest may require.

The Planning Committee's objective is to evaluate and, where considered necessary, to comment on the potential impact and/or outcome of all applications, appeals, enforcements and other planning policies and processes which relate to sites in the Parish or are relevant to Residents of the Parish. The Planning Committee will seek to ensure that its comments are provided in writing and/or verbally, so they may be given due consideration by those evaluating the potential impacts and/or deciding the outcomes above.

A full Parish Council meeting will substitute for the Planning Committee on any matter where the Chair of the Parish Council and/or the Chair of the Planning Committee or a majority of all Parish Councillors consider this to be in the public interest.

The Planning Committee has delegated authority to make decisions relating to planning matters and these shall be binding on the Council

## **2. FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

Composed of:	Five Councillors plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee.
A Quorum will consist of:	FOUR (was 5) members of the Committee.
Meeting frequency:	Four times a year as specified in the Schedule of Meetings. The Finance Committee will meet in May to approve the internal audit and Annual Governance and Accountability Return, once in October and November to finalise and approve the Budget and in March to review expected Year End position and Strategic Reserve.

The Finance Committee will be responsible for, and consider and take decisions on matters concerning:

General: All matters concerning the Finances of the Council. In particular:

- All Financial Transactions
- Insurances
- Office Machinery and Furniture
- Annual Subscriptions to local associations etc
- Grants and management of CIL
- Letting of and upkeep of Council Property, including Cemetery Lodge.
- Council Elections

Budget setting:

- To prepare the Annual Budget and the Annual Precept, for consideration by the Finance Committee at the meetings in October and November and make a recommendation to Full Council for final approval.
- To consider the recommendations of other committees for inclusion in the budget.

Approval of Accounts:

- Consider the Annual Accounts at the meeting in May and make a recommendation to Full Council for final approval.
- Consider the findings of the Internal Auditors Reports and take appropriate action.

Review annually the risk register, the asset register and financial regulations and make recommendation to Council on appropriate action.

Matters considered to be of great importance shall be referred to the Full Council for a decision

### **3. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:**

Composed of:	Nine Councillors plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council.
A Quorum will consist of:	Five members of the Committee.
Meeting frequency:	Six times per year as specified in the Schedule of Meetings.

The General Purposes Committee, with consideration of the councils Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan, will be responsible for, and consider and take decisions on matters concerning:

**Allotments and Associated Land:** The administration of the three Allotments sites with regards terms of letting, collection of rent, site maintenance and upkeep and maximised use of allotments and associated land, including the Harris Woodbridge Wildlife Reserve.

**Cookham Parish Cemetery:** The administration of Cookham Parish Cemetery, including maintenance of the grounds, the continued checks of cemetery memorials and the upkeep of the cemetery buildings, including the Chapel.

**Open Spaces and Common Land:** The maintenance, general upkeep and improvement of the Alfred Major Recreation Ground and other Parish Council owned open spaces and/or common land within the Council's responsibility.

**Tree Survey:** To ensure that a tree survey for trees on Council owned land is completed periodically and results acted upon.

**Footpaths:** Vegetation clearance on limited (but not all) Footpaths shown on the definitive footpaths map within the Parish boundary of Cookham and to liaise with the RBWM Rights of Way Team where necessary.

**War Memorials:** The care of the two War Memorials at Cookham Dean and Cookham Village and the memorial bench at the Tarrystone.

**Street Lighting:** The upkeep, maintenance and improvement of the street lighting in Cookham controlled by the Parish Council and to liaise with the RBWM Highways Team (and other bodies) over the upkeep and improvement of other street lighting not under the control of the Council.

**Finance:** To prepare an Annual Budget by the month of October each year for consideration by the Finance Committee at their meetings in October and November with final approval from Full Council.

**Delegation:** Once the Budget has been approved by the Council, the General Purposes Committee has the executive power to decide on all matters relating to their administration within the framework of the Budget and policies agreed by the Council.

Matters considered to be of great importance shall be referred to the Full Council for a decision.

#### 4. FLOOD AND MAJOR INCIDENTS COMMITTEE:

**No change as** Adopted at the Annual Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
Minute ref Pg 3054, item 9.

Composed of: Five Councillors plus the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and Co-opted non-Councillor members as necessary from major stakeholders in the village or to fill specialist roles not able to be filled by Councillors, i.e., Flood Warden, Flood and emergency Co-ordinator x 2, Cookham Society Representative.  
The co-opted roles will have no voting rights but are able to chair a meeting.

A Quorum will consist of: Four members of the Committee.

Meeting frequency: Three a year as specified in the Schedule of Meetings, or as needed in times of emergency/flood or major Incident.

The Terms of Reference will be:

1. To ensure that the Community Flood and Major Incident Plan is prepared managed and maintained by the Parish Council.
2. Act as a conduit of information between the emergency responders, including the Borough and other Emergency Services, as necessary, and the wider community to help everyone understand the risks to the community and how individuals, households, businesses and the community as a whole can be prepared.
3. To engage with voluntary groups in the area to understand what they can do in an emergency and support them as appropriate.
4. To look for funding opportunities in order to support the community's resilience.
5. To engage with surrounding communities in relation to the plan in the area so as to dovetail with their plans, in particular in relation to flooding.
6. To appoint a representative to attend the Borough and Parishes Flood Liaison Committee.
7. To undertake debriefs after any emergency or training/exercise event in order to learn and improve the plan.

## **5. STAFFING COMMITTEE:**

Composed of: Five Councillors being the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council, The Chairman of Finance Committee and two further Cllrs.

A Quorum will consist of: Three members of the Committee.

Meeting frequency: Twice a year as specified in the Schedule of Meetings and at such other times as may be required.

The Public and Press may not be admitted to these meetings as "In accordance with s1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of these items due to the confidential nature of this item".

The Terms of Reference will be:

1. Staff employment, including appointment
2. Staff appraisals
3. Staff remuneration
4. Staff grievances and associated procedures
5. Staff disciplinary issues and associated procedures
6. Staff dismissals (decisions to be ratified by Full Council)
7. Engagement of locums to cover staff
8. To consider matters concerning the health, safety and welfare of all staff.

### **Reporting and Accountability**

Other than for such matters where the Full Council has expressly delegated responsibility to this Committee, the Committee will only have the power to make recommendations which will be ratified at the next meeting of the Full Council.

## **6. EMERGENCY WORKING PARTY :**

Composed of: Committee Chairmen (Planning, General Purposes, Finance, Staffing and Flood and Major Incident) plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council.

A Quorum will consist of: Three members of the Working Party .

Meeting frequency: When required.

The Terms of Reference will be:

1. To deal with "urgent" business which either has not been notified in time to appear on the agenda of a scheduled Council meeting , or where there is not enough time to call an extraordinary meeting or otherwise deal with at the next scheduled Council meeting. As first item of business at such Working Party meeting, the members shall agree that the matter is so urgent that it cannot be considered at either a scheduled or extraordinary meeting of the Full Council, given on required notice. The minutes of the meeting shall expressly note the basis for such urgency.

2. "Urgent" routine business will be dealt with by the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Council.

3. A Working Party is not empowered to make any decisions on behalf of the Council but can make recommendations to the Full Council, which depending on the matter can be considered for approval at its next scheduled or extraordinary meeting. To the extent that the Working Party considers the matter so urgent and that a "decision" needs to be made by it, notwithstanding it has no formal power to do so, then :-

- a) the quorum shall include the Chairman or the Vice Chairman;
- b) that the reasoning why such "decision" cannot be left until a scheduled or an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council shall be minuted;
- c) that such "decision" needs ratifying by the Full Council , for which an extraordinary meeting shall be called (if such meeting date be sooner than that due for a scheduled meeting) ;
- d) notwithstanding such members present will have acted in good faith, they acknowledge that it is for the Full Council to ratify and approve such "decision".

## **7. RULES CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF COMMITTEES:**

1. Planning, Finance and General Purposes Committees will consist of at least one Council Member from each ward.
2. All Committee Meetings, except any necessary site meetings, will be held, if possible, at either the Parish Office or the Parish Community Room. All Council Meetings are not permitted, by law, to be held in a private dwelling or on licensed premises.
3. The Chairman of all Committees will be elected by the other Committee Members at their first meeting after the Annual Meeting in May.
4. No decision emanating from any Committee can be taken by the Chairman alone or by any Members of the Committee other than at a meeting specifically called for a named purpose which is quorate. Any such decision can be entered in the official Minutes of the Council.
5. The conduct of Councillors at Committees will be in accordance with the Government's National Code of Local Government Conduct which all Councillors undertook to abide by when signing their declaration of office. In this Code, your overriding duty as a Councillor is to serve the local community who voted for you, and those who did not. In agreeing to join a Committee, therefore, you are expected to attend the meetings on a regular basis and fully participate in the work of the Committee.

6. In line with Standing Order 4b, any Committee (except Finance) may co-opt an additional person who is not a Councillor. This person will have no voting rights but may chair a meeting.
7. Extra committee meetings will be at the discretion of the relevant committee Chairman or Chairman of Council.
8. These terms of reference are supplementary to, and do not override, the Parish Council's Standing Orders and/or Financial Regulations