



NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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Terms of Reference for Committees

1.0 Introduction

This document defines the Terms of Reference for standing committees of Northchurch Parish Council (The Council).

These Terms of Reference are in two parts:

- i. General Clauses which apply to all standing committees
- ii. Specific Clauses which apply to particular standing committees

Where a Specific Clause differs from a General Clause, the Specific Clause will take precedence.

2.0 General Clauses

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference set out in this document are approved by the Full Council, and subject to amendment at future Council meetings.
- 2.2 The Committee will operate in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council.
- 2.3 The Committee will allow members of the public to address the Committee meeting about items on the agenda. Members of the public may speak for 3 minutes in accordance with Standing Order 3.g. However, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, members of the public may be excluded from the meeting if confidential business is to be transacted.
- 2.4 The Committee will be quorate in accordance with Standing Order 4.d.ix
- 2.5 The Clerk to the Council shall act as the Secretary of the Committee. The Clerk shall minute the proceedings and resolutions of all meetings of the Committee including recording the names of those present and in attendance.
- 2.6 The Full Council will determine the number and frequency of ordinary meetings in accordance with Standing Order 4.d.ii.
- 2.7 The Full Council will appoint the members and the Chair of the Committee in accordance with Standing Order 4.d.vii.
- 2.8 The Clerk will prepare and circulate the agenda and any relevant papers for each meeting to all Committee members and take action notes of the meetings.
- 2.9 Meetings will be called with a minimum three clear days' public notice which will not include the day on which the notice is issued or the day of the meeting
- 2.10 Items to be discussed at the meetings are limited to those that are included on the agenda for the meeting.
- 2.11 Minutes of Committee meetings shall be circulated promptly to all members of the Committee and shall be considered and approved at the next meeting.
- 2.12 If a Committee chooses to elect a Vice Chair, one can be elected at any time
- 2.13 All committees will promote the Council's vision as set out on the home web page.

3.0 Finance and General Purposes Committee

3.1 Authority

- 3.1.1 The Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee is constituted to monitor all income and expenditure of the Council.
- 3.1.2 The Financial Regulations of NPC govern the conduct of all financial transactions of the Council. The Committee has the authority to approve spend as set-out in Section 4 of the NPC Financial Regulations.

3.2 Overall Purpose/Function

- 3.2.1 The primary objective of the F&GP Committee is to assist the Parish Council in overseeing the proper financial management, financial risks, management strategy, internal and external audit, policy and treasury transactional matters. This includes the preparation of the annual budget, delegated to it by the Council, and in reviewing and making recommendations on major financial transactions and the annual precept rate to the Full Council.

3.3 Duties & Responsibilities

In addition to the Purpose as stated in section 3.2 above, the F&GP Committee is also responsible for General matters:

- 3.3.1 HR matters
- 3.3.2 Managing and responding to complaints
- 3.3.3 Reviewing policies and procedures
- 3.3.4 Health and Safety
- 3.3.5 Overseeing non-maintenance contracts
- 3.3.6 Reviewing applications for grants and donations and making recommendations to Full Council

3.4 Administration of Meetings

- 3.4.1 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is responsible for the proper administration of the Parish Council's financial affairs and is responsible for the maintenance of any documents and records necessary for the effective fulfilment of the F&GP Committee's duties as listed above.

4.0 Planning Committee

4.1 Authority

- 4.1.1 The Planning Committee is constituted to represent Northchurch Parish Council in planning matters referred to the Council by the Planning Authority Dacorum Borough Council
- 4.1.2 The Planning Committee is not the Local Planning Authority and as such does not have the power to refuse or allow planning applications. The Planning Committee on behalf of Northchurch Parish Council is a statutory consultee in the planning process.

4.2 Overall Purpose/Function

- 4.2.1 The Planning Committee will review planning applications within Northchurch Parish. The committee will take into account the council's vision for the parish, local opinion and comments from third parties. They will base their response on relevant or 'material' planning considerations e.g. (in order of weight)
 - Dacorum Borough Council's Development Plan which sets out the policies and proposals for the development, conservation and use of land and buildings in Dacorum
 - National policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and government guidance
- 4.2.2 Inform the local planning authority (Dacorum Borough Council) whether they support, have no comment or object to the application i.e.
 - support the application because it will have benefits for the parish, either now or in the future;
 - support the application but ask for details of the proposed development to be reconsidered and changed;
 - make "no comment", since the proposal's overall effect would be neutral or of little relevance to residents;
 - register an objection to the application, but suggest action that could be taken to address the objection, such as amending the proposal or attaching planning conditions or a planning obligation; or
 - request that the application be refused permission because of its adverse effects, which can't be dealt with satisfactorily by using conditions or obligations.
- 4.2.3 After the meeting, the Chair will prepare detailed statements explaining each decision made by the Committee based on NPPF criteria. These statements will be sent to the Clerk who will update the Planning Authority's Planning Portal accordingly.

4.3 Duties & Responsibilities

- 4.3.1 The Planning Committee has an obligation to consider all comments made about planning applications from all third parties whether they are provided prior to or during the meeting.
- 4.3.2 Where an application is subject to an appeal, the Planning Committee is authorised to make written representation or to elect a member or members of the Committee to attend the hearing or inquiry to present the Council's views to

the Planning Inspector.

- 4.3.3 The Planning Committee may nominate a representative from the Committee (or the Clerk if appropriate) to attend the Planning Authority's Development Management Committee (DMC) and other meetings to represent the Parish Council's views in respect of planning applications and other planning matters.
- 4.3.4 The Planning Committee has a policy not to offer pre-application comment except in cases determined by the Committee.
- 4.3.5 The Clerk will submit the Planning Committee's recommendations and supporting reasons to the Planning Authority or other relevant body and will ensure that communications arrive within the timescale required by the Planning Authority.

4.4 Administration of Meetings

- 4.4.1 Meetings will be held every 21 days.
- 4.4.2 The Proper Office will ask the Planning Officer of the Planning to grant an extension of the time for consideration of an application if the application is received after the agenda has been set and cannot be amended and the closing date for comments is outside of the next 21 days.

5.0 Open Spaces Committee

5.1 Authority

- 5.1.1 The Open Spaces Committee is constituted to support Northchurch Parish Council (NPC) in promoting and managing all open spaces in the parish.
- 5.1.2 The Open Spaces Committee has the authority to approve spend as set-out in Section 4 of the NPC Financial Regulations.
- 5.1.3 The Open Spaces Committee is authorised by the Full Council to request the attendance of councillors from within the council, employees, contractors or members of the public, if it considers this necessary to discharge its duties.

5.2 Overall Purpose/Function

- 5.2.1 The purpose of the Open Spaces Committee is to support and promote the NPC Missions to protect and improve access to the Green Belt and other open spaces; improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the local people; preserve the environment and increase biodiversity in the parish.
- 5.2.2 The Open Spaces Committee will make recommendations to the NPC for consideration and resolution, and will act on the Council's behalf when authorised through resolutions agreed at Council meetings.

5.3 Duties & Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Open Spaces Committee include:

- 5.3.1 Developing a full understanding of NPC's land assets and the responsibilities for maintenance of all our open spaces. This includes establishing clearly which areas/duties fall to the responsibility of the Parish Council.
- 5.3.2 Accessing grants, including S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies, to fund improvements to the Parish's open spaces.
- 5.3.3 Reviewing and approving (within the limits as detailed in the Financial Regulations) proposals for maintenance or developments in open spaces of the parish for adoption by resolution of the Full Council, or presenting proposals to the Full Council for approval and adoption by resolution of the Full Council.
- 5.3.4 Ensuring the maintenance of the following assets (by working with the Borough Council, County Council and any other third party where applicable (*))
 - 5.3.4.1 Roads and pavements*
 - 5.3.4.2 Lighting*
 - 5.3.4.3 Recreation Ground
 - 5.3.4.4 Footpaths*, verges and Rights of Way*
 - 5.3.4.5 Bus Shelters*
 - 5.3.4.6 Cemeteries*
 - 5.3.4.7 Allotments
- 5.3.5 To maintain a log of requests for maintenance and developments of open spaces in the parish, and supporting the Clerk with referrals to appropriate bodies for their resolution.
- 5.3.6 Undertaking any other related activities on behalf of the Parish Council.

5.4 Administration of Meetings

5.4.1 Not used

6.0 Allotment Committee

6.1 Authority

- 6.1.1 The Allotments Committee is constituted to oversee the Allotment Sites of Northchurch Parish Council (NPC).
- 6.1.2 The Allotments Committee does not have the authority to approve spend and will report to the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- 6.1.3 The Allotments Committee will work closely with the Northchurch Allotment Association

6.2 Overall Purpose/Function

- 6.2.1 The Allotments Committee will oversee without prejudice the maintenance and upkeep of the Allotments sites in accordance with the current rules, as circulated to tenants at the annual rent renewal.

6.3 Duties & Responsibilities

- 6.3.1 To conduct an annual review of the Allotments Tenancy Agreement.
- 6.3.2 To conduct an annual review of plot rents and present its recommendations to the Open Spaces Committee who, on approval, will present them to the Full Council for approval.
- 6.3.3 To conduct an annual review of plot development and the dispute policy.
- 6.3.4 The Allotments Committee will conduct site visits in April and October each year to ensure that allotment holders adhere to the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.
- 6.3.5 To hold an annual meeting at the end of the growing season, preferably in early September or early October and prior to setting plot rentals for the following year, to review any outstanding business or matters arising via prior notification to the Clerk of the Council.

6.4 Administration of Meetings

- 6.4.1 Not used