

## **1. BACKGROUND**

Laverstock and Ford Parish Council has expanded significantly in recent years, with residential development in Bishopdown, Old Sarum and Longhedge. This has resulted in increase responsibilities for the Parish Council, and an increase in staff numbers.

## **2. SUMMARY**

In 2021, in response to a council review conducted by LGRC Consultants, a new council structure was adopted, forming 4 new committees – Finance and General Purposes, Communications and Community Engagement CCE, Operations and Personnel.

Whilst the committee structure has worked well, bringing focus to specific tasks and projects, the structure brings an additional workload in terms of meetings for councillors and staff, and additional administration tasks for the staff team. The committees do not currently have delegated spending powers. In order to make best use of the powers of committees, a delegated spending power would enable committees to make their own decisions. However, in the case of a small/medium council such as Laverstock and Ford, it has been demonstrated in previous meetings that a small group of councillors often do not wish to make final decisions without consulting Full Council members.

The Clerk has reviewed the minutes of the Operations and CCE Committees. From 25 meetings held, only one resolution for action has been recorded (excluding apologies and approval of minutes). Four of the meetings called were inquorate. The remainder of the (excellent) work of these committees has been a recommendation to present to Full Council for approval.

Recommendations to Full Council can be made by Working Groups. Working Groups are informal and do not operate under Standing Orders. Working Groups can meet remotely, can include members of the public, do not have to be held in public and do not require formal publication of agendas and minutes.

The CCE Officer and Operations Officer have discussed the pros and cons of Working Groups at the respective committee meetings. Both committees have expressed a preference to become Working Groups.

It is the recommendation of the Clerk that the Scheme of Delegation is amended to dissolve the two committees and approve the terms of reference for the working groups.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That in accordance with Standing Order 4(d), the council resolves to dissolve the Communications and Community Engagement Committee and Operations Committee and create a Communications and Community Engagement Working Group and Operations Working Group

That the council approves the amended Scheme of Delegation attached Annex One.

ANNEX ONE

## Laverstock & Ford Parish Council Scheme of Delegations

Date last amended
Date adopted
Minute Reference
Date of next review

1. Subject to the matters reserved to the full Parish Council, **Standing Committees** are delegated with the powers and duties described below.
2. **Advisory Committees** which may be established from time to time, may consider matters within their remit and make recommendations to Council but may not take decisions in their own right. All Standing Committees and Advisory Committees will operate under Council Standing Orders and be accessible to the public. All members may attend all committees if they wish but may only vote at committees of which they have been designated a member. All members are entitled to be a designated member of at least one committee.
3. **Working groups** (sub groups ) may be established from time to time to work on specific projects or issues and may include non-members of the Council. Working Groups will not take decisions in their own right but report to a standing committee or to the Parish Council which will take appropriate decisions within their remit. Working Groups are informal and do not operate under standing orders. Councillors are however bound by the Code of Conduct when working on behalf of the Council in all fora whether full Council Committee or Working Group.
4. **The Parish Clerk** is delegated with the powers and duties identified subject to a subsequent report of actions taken to the Parish Council or to the appropriate standing committee.

### 1. PARISH COUNCIL

#### Meets Monthly

- 1.1. Chair –elected at the annual Parish Council Meeting
- 1.2. Members- All Councillors,
- 1.3. Administration Parish Clerk and/or Deputy Parish Clerk
- 1.4. Attending Parish Clerk, Deputy Parish Clerk and other staff as required.
- 1.5. Considers all matters reserved as outlined below plus recommendations from committees and individual councillor motions.

#### Matters reserved within Standing Orders.

- 1.5.1. Any special or general directions which the Parish Council may give from time to time.

1.5.2. Any relevant statutory provisions not mentioned below.

1.5.3. The following specific matters shall also be determined by the Full Council.

1.5.3.1. Adoption of the Council's Strategic Plan and approval of the implementation programme.

1.5.3.2. Powers reserved in respect of the Council's Finances including: -

- Final adoption of the forward plan and the annual budget of the Council and the precepts on Wiltshire Council.
- Schemes involving capital expenditure, outside that which has already been approved in the annual budget. When a scheme has been approved and the estimated cost agreed by the Full Council the appropriate Committee may proceed with it subject to any tender accepted not exceeding the approved estimate.
- Approval of the Parish Council's annual return and receipt of its audit reports.
- Determine applications for grants subject to all applications being considered on their merits and in accordance with the agreed grants process.

1.5.3.3. To review Parish Council Policies, Procedures and Processes and ensure that they are up to date, fit for purpose, consistent and appropriate

1.5.3.4. To determine all personnel policy matters, except any that may be delegated to the Personnel Sub Committee and personnel matters delegated directly by Full Council to the Parish Clerk

1.5.3.5. To determine Parish Council planning policy and the response to planning applications except decisions delegated to the Parish Clerk in consultation with members of the appropriate ward.

1.5.3.6. The disposal of any freehold land (other than minor adjustments of boundaries).

1.5.3.7. The granting or taking of a Leasehold interest in any land.

1.5.3.8. The appointment of Committees and representatives on outside bodies.

1.5.3.9. The appointment of a Parish Clerk

1.5.3.10. The revision of any scale of charges for any service.

1.5.3.11. The making of byelaws.

1.5.3.12. Any matter of major policy or of sufficient interest or novelty that any three members request that it be debated by Full Council through a motion raised in accordance with standing orders.

1.5.4. The Council will receive minutes/reports from standing Committees at the first appropriate meeting following the committee. Reports will be taken as read unless members identify matters for debate.

1.5.5. The Council will receive a report from the Parish Clerk at each meeting. Reports will be taken as read unless members identify matters for debate.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **2. Finance and General Purposes Committee.**

**Standing Committee with day to day responsibility for overseeing the Council's finances, and swift implementation of any projects delegated by the full council. Meets monthly two weeks before Full Council and otherwise as required.**

- **Chair – Chair of the Council**
  - **Members-**
    - **Chair of the Council**
    - **Chair of Operations Working Group**
    - **Chair of Communications and Community Engagement Working Group**
    - **Two other council members**
- **Attending- Parish Clerk/RFO**
- **Administration -Deputy Parish Clerk**

- 2.1. Day to day oversight of the Parish Council's Finances within the established budget.
- 2.2. Considers reports on financial matters presented by the RFO.
- 2.3. Undertakes a periodic review of financial Risk assessment and insurances.
- 2.4. Oversees Budget preparation for final approval by the Council.
- 2.5. Oversees preparation of the annual return before final approval by the council
- 2.6. Receives and oversees the response to internal and external audits
- 2.7. Undertakes initial action on council responsibilities designated within Financial Regulations and not reserved to the full council or delegated to another committee.
- 2.8. Review of Overall Financial Performance. Makes recommendations for improvements to full council.
- 2.9. Management of any project or programme specifically delegated to it by the Parish Council.
- 2.10. Institute, defend or settle any judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings on behalf of the council and engage legal representatives as required.
- 2.11. Submits Minutes/Reports to the Full Council

### **3. Personnel Committee**

**Standing committee with delegated authority for personnel matters not otherwise delegated to the Clerk.**

**Meets as required but not less than 2 times a year.**

- **Chair – Appointed by the Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting not being a chair of any other committee**
- **Members- Chair of the Council**
- **Two other council members**
- **Administration- Parish Clerk**

- 3.1. Forms a panel for any recruitment of the Parish Clerk.
- 3.2. Conducting the Parish Clerk's annual performance appraisal. (minimum of 3 members)
- 3.3. Receives reports from the Clerk on staff appraisals.

- 3.4. Holds meetings as required with the Parish Clerk to discuss any issues or concerns and report to the Parish Council.
- 3.5. Consider any grievances raised by the Parish Clerk.
- 3.6. To appoint, if necessary, a suitably qualified professional to conduct the investigations and/or hearing in the event that disciplinary action needs to be taken against the Parish Clerk.
- 3.7. Considers appeals in staff grievance and disciplinary matters following action by the Clerk.
- 3.8. Authority to dismiss staff failing to satisfactorily complete a probation period.
- 3.9. To settle disciplinary matters in accordance with the agreed Disciplinary Policy.
- 3.10. To receive any grievances against the Parish Clerk.
- 3.11. To authorise, if necessary, an independent professional to conduct any investigations as a result of a grievance or appeal.
- 3.12. To authorise commencement of any action or appeal before an industrial tribunal or in any court.
- 3.13. Consider any other matters delegated to it by the Parish Council
- 3.14. Oversee the development and implementation of employment policies subject to approval by the full council
- 3.15. Submits Minutes/Reports to the Full Council

#### **WORKING GROUPS – Terms of Reference**

##### **4. Operations Working Group.**

**Working group focusing on projects and improvements for Council Property, Outdoor Services Play and Leisure provision.**

##### **Meets as required usually 4 times a year**

**Chair – Appointed by the Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting not being a Chair of any other committee or Working Group**

**Members -Not less than three members appointed by the Council at the Annual Parish Meeting, plus non-members as agreed by the council.**

**Attending- Parish Clerk and Deputy Parish Clerk as required**

**Staffing – Operations Officer**

- 4.1. Recommend to the Parish Council the strategic priorities for all outdoor services.
- 4.2. Consider reports by Operations Officer relating to the ongoing operation of the outdoor services.
- 4.3. Consider all matters relating to definition and implementation of the Parish Council's Environmental Strategy and make recommendations to council.
- 4.4. Oversight of Management all Council Property.
- 4.5. Oversight of Management of all Parish Council recreational and leisure facilities.
- 4.6. Oversight of Provision, siting and maintenance of bins, bus shelters and benches.
- 4.7. Oversight of service level agreements with other bodies on operational matters.
- 4.8. Oversight of any project or programme at the request of the Parish Council.
- 4.9. Consideration of any other matters at the request of the Parish Council.
- 4.10. Submits reports and recommendations to the Full Council.

## **5. Communications and Community Engagement Working Group**

**Working Group focusing on Council Marketing, brand management, public relations, interaction and communication with the community and co-ordination of Council events**

**Meets as required usually 4 times a year**

**Chair – Appointed by the Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting not being a Chair of any other committee or Working Group**

**Members -Not less than three members appointed by the Council at the Annual Parish Meeting, plus non-members as agreed by the council.**

**Attending- Parish Clerk and Deputy Parish Clerk as required**

**Staffing – Communications and Community Engagement Officer**

- 5.1. Oversight, development and review of the Council's branding, communications and media programme
- 5.2. Oversight of Council communications media including social media, Council website, Newsletter and noticeboards.
- 5.3. Ensure consistent branding on signage at all Council property
- 5.4. Oversight, development and review of the Council's media relations activity, process for responding to events and for briefing the news media of Council policies and programmes.
- 5.5. Oversight, development and review of the Council's community engagement programme
- 5.6. Act as focal point for the management of Community events staged by the Parish Council
- 5.7. Oversee the development of the Council's Annual report.
- 5.8. Oversight of any project, programme or other matter at the request of the Parish Council.

## **PARISH CLERK**

### **6. The following matters are delegated to the Parish Clerk.**

- 6.1. Acting as Proper Officer as defined by Standing Orders.
- 6.2. Day to day management of the Parish Council and its resources subject to committee and council oversight.
- 6.3. Signs all official correspondence arising from resolutions of the Council. Receives all correspondence addressed to the council.
- 6.4. General personnel management of Parish Council employees in accordance with Council policy, including appraisal, training and first stage in discipline and grievance procedures.
- 6.5. Carrying out expenditure within the delegated spending limits specified within the financial regulations,
- 6.6. Discretion to agree up to five days special leave with pay in any one year for compassionate or other grounds i.e. bereavement, family illness, (compassionate leave in excess of five days up to ten days is subject to approval of the Personnel Sub Committee).
- 6.7. Determination of the Council's response, in conjunction with ward members of any routine planning applications. Ensuring that all significant planning matters are brought to the attention of the full council.
- 6.8. Parish Clerk has reasonable discretion on a day to day basis to interpret Council policy to

achieve reasonable outcomes providing that action taken shall in all cases be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Full Council. Also where possible or appropriate committee chairs and/or the council chair will be consulted.

## **RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

7. The following matters are delegated to the Responsible Financial Officer.
  - 7.1. Undertakes all duties designated to the RFO within financial regulations.
  - 7.2. Carrying out expenditure within the delegated spending limits specified within the financial regulations
  - 7.3. To deputise for the Parish Clerk in all matters in the event of their absence

## **8. Urgent Business**

In all cases where urgent decisions are required and unless otherwise provided, the Parish Clerk shall, from time to time, after consulting the Chair of the relevant Committee concerned (or, in his/her absence, the Vice Chair of the Committee); or the Chair of the Council (or, in their absence, the Vice Chair) and where appropriate the Ward Members, take all necessary steps for protecting the interests of, or advancing the business of the Parish Council, providing that action taken shall in all cases be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Full Council.

## **7 General Policy**

- 7.1 The minimum number of members to which any action shall be delegated is three.
- 7.2 The Parish Council may appoint members or officers to attend a meeting, or meetings, of another local authority or body as a representative of the Parish Council. He/she shall be formally appointed by the Council as its representative.
- 7.3 Any member or officer appointed by the Parish Council to attend a meeting of another authority or body shall represent the views of the Parish Council at that meeting unless they make it clear that the views expressed are their own and not necessarily representative of the Parish Council
- 7.4 Unless formally appointed as a council spokesperson, no member or officer shall make statements to any news media purporting to represent the views of the Parish Council. Otherwise members and officers should at all times make it clear that any views expressed are their own and not necessarily representative of the Parish Council.
- 7.5 Where appropriate, reports to Committees and the Parish Council should include a Parish Clerk's recommendation.
- 7.6 All reports to Committees or Parish Council should indicate the resource and financial implications of the matter and if there are no financial implications that should also be stated.
- 7.7 The Clerk will maintain and report to council not less than each quarter, a record of all resolutions taken by the council and progress made towards implementation.

**Reviewed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024**