

Weston under Penyard - Parish Council Working Groups

The Proposal

An extension of the current arrangements for working groups is proposed as detailed below.

Why extend the use of working groups?

Working groups are a normal feature in the organisation of parish councils, and ours should be clarified and extended for the reasons set out below.

1. The PC has been increasing the work they do to support the parishioners they represent.
2. Next year the financial budget indicates that the activities of the Parish Council will need to increase dramatically if the impressive spending plans are to be achieved.
3. The parish council normally meets for about 20 hours per year. In order to successfully undertake all necessary work, the full benefit of working groups should be applied so that formal meetings can concentrate on decision making. Twice each year the PC has a two-month gap between meetings, when it is even more important for the business of the working groups to continue.
4. Working groups submit written reports to PC, thereby promoting more effective communication and freeing up valuable meeting time.
5. In recent years some Councillors have not always been fully engaged in their role and may have felt underutilised and undervalued.
6. To build bridges with the community, greater use of residents within working groups could be implemented (except in the Finance working group).
7. A working group, comprising as few as two councillors, can share ideas and be more effective than an individual.
8. Having at least two members in a group allows the business to be continued in the absence of another member, particularly in PC meetings.

Proposed Working Groups (including existing working groups)

Effectively, seven of these groups already exist, each having at least one working Councillor. Another three working groups are proposed. Terms of Reference are proposed in the later section. Working groups can be added or removed as the need arises from time to time.

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| 1. Planning* | Normally with 4 members |
| 2. Finance* | Normally with 3 to 4 members |
| 3. Road Safety* | Normally with 2 members (only 1 at present) |
| 4. Road Maintenance* | Currently with 1 member working with the Lengthsman |
| 5. Public Rights of Way (PROW)* | Currently with 1 member |
| 6. Environment* | Currently with 1 member working with Tree Warden |
| 7. Defibrillators* | Previously with 1 member |
| 8. Climate Change | No representative |
| 9. Communications | No representative |
| 10. Administration | No representative |

* Existing

Notes

- a) Working groups should consult the Parish Clerk as required and respect his roles and responsibilities at all times.
- b) The working group for Finance will include the Parish Clerk
- c) The working group for Public Rights of Way will include the Parish Footpaths Officer
- d) The working group for Environment will include the Tree Warden
- e) The Ward Councillor may be invited to join particular working groups, if appropriate.
- f) With the approval of the Council a working group may co-opt up to two non-Councillor residents to join a working group at any time.
- g) Working groups must comply with the policies of the Parish Council.

Terms of Reference

1. Planning
 - Management of Planning matters in accordance with the PC's Policy for Managing Planning Applications and Related Matters
2. Finance
 - Prepare annual budget and precept and present to PC
 - Monitor income and expenditure against budget on a monthly basis
 - Ensure adequate financial controls are in place
 - Maintain asset register
 - Review the Financial Regulations annually and recommend amendments
 - Monitor and effect compliance with laid down internal and external audit and other financial procedures, regulations and statutes
 - Monitor the Council's risk assessments and recommend changes where necessary
 - At least quarterly, verify the bank reconciliation produced by the RFO
 - Recommend the annual accounts to the Council
3. Road Safety
 - Manage SID project
 - Promote traffic calming
 - Promote road safety improvements
4. Road Maintenance
 - Supervise Lengthsman activities on highways
 - Report defects to BBLP and monitor remedial work
 - Monitor waste bins and grit bins
5. Public Rights of Way (PROW)
 - Maintenance and improvement of PROW in accordance with PC management plans
 - Report defects to BBLP and monitor remedial work
 - Supervise Lengthsman activities on PROWs
6. Environment
 - Promote biodiversity
 - Promote wildflower areas
 - Promote tree preservation
 - Promote tree planting

7. Defibrillators
 - Manage maintenance and report defects
 - Promote public awareness
 - Manage VETS system and routinely check its effectiveness
 - Organise necessary training
8. Climate Change
 - Promote local solutions
 - Raise local awareness
9. Communications
 - Weston News
 - Press
 - Website
 - Facebook and social media
 - Monitor compliance with PC's Email Communications Policy
 - Notice Boards
 - Newsletters
 - Annual Parish Meeting
10. Administration
 - Review all PC Policies and processes in accordance with the PC Standing Orders

Implementation

Each year Councillors will be appointed to all working groups at the Annual Meeting in May.

Councillors should be encouraged to participate in at least two working groups.

Note

The term "working group" may need to be realigned with the Standing Orders terms of "Committees" or "Sub-Committees".