

Working Groups Policy

1. Introduction

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.

- The Parish Council has a considerable workload to support the parishioners it represents.
- The Parish Council normally meets for only about 14 hours per year. To successfully undertake all necessary work, Working Groups ensure that Parish Council meetings can concentrate on decision making.
- Working Group can share ideas and be more effective than an individual.
- To encourage wider community participation, greater use of residents within Working Groups is encouraged (except in a working group dealing with Finance, in compliance with Standing Order 4(b)).

2. Operation

- Working Groups should have a minimum of three members so that business can proceed in the absence of one member.
- Working Groups submit written reports to the Parish Council which are sent out with the papers for a meeting in advance, thereby promoting more effective communication and freeing up valuable meeting time. Recommendations from Working Groups are included within reports and reflected in the relevant Parish Council agenda.
- All Working Groups must be cognisant of and compliant with all prevailing Parish Council Policies and other governing documents in force at any time, such as the approved Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Each year Councillors will be appointed to all working groups and other positions at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May.

3. Working Groups

The current Working Groups are shown below. The Parish Council can add or remove Working Groups as the need arises.

Name of Group	Composition of Group
Finance, Administration and Communication (FAC)	The Parish Clerk and 2 or 3 Councillors including the Chair of the Council
Planning	2 or 3 Councillors and the Tree Warden
Highways and Public Rights of Way	2 or 3 Councillors and the Parish Footpaths Officer

Name of Group	Composition of Group
Climate Change and Environment (currently suspended).	2 or 3 Councillors and the Tree Warden

The Chair is an ex-officio member of all working groups, although not expected to attend all meetings.

Each Working Group will appoint a Chair who will not be the Chair of the Council.

With the approval of the Parish Council a Working Group may co-opt up to two non-Councillor residents to join a working group at any time provided that the number of non-councillors in a working group does not exceed the number of Councillors.

All Councillors are welcome to attend any working Group providing they notify the relevant Working Group Chair in advance.

4. Terms of Reference

Finance, Administration and Communication

Finance

- Prepare annual budget and precept and present to Parish Council.
- Monitor income and expenditure against budget monthly.
- 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 Parish Council.

Administration

- Review all Parish Council Policies and Processes in accordance with the Parish Council Standing Orders and make recommendations for updating / improvement as and when necessary.

Communications

- To ensure that the Parish Council is efficient and effective in communicating with members of the parish in a timely and informative manner, with particular attention to:
 - Weston News
 - Press
 - Website
 - Facebook and social media
 - Monitor compliance with Parish Council's Email Communications Policy
 - Notice Boards
 - Newsletters
 - Annual Parish Meeting report

Planning

- Management of Planning matters in accordance with the Parish Council's Policy for Managing Planning Applications and Related Matters.
- The Planning Working Group will represent the interests of the Parish Council by actively engaging with Herefordshire Council or its agents, and landowners / developers throughout the planning and development process, including:
 - Pre-Application,
 - Planning Application,
 - Pre-Submission of detailed matters previously reserved,
 - Monitoring during the construction phase,
 - Compliance with the conditions of planning approvals,
 - Compliance with the NP throughout the process,
 - Any other planning related matters.

Highways and Public Rights of Way

Road Maintenance

- Supervise and manage Lengthsman activities on highways.
- Report defects to Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) and monitor remedial work.
- Monitor waste bins and grit bins.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- Maintenance and improvement of PROW in accordance with Parish Council plans.
- Report defects to BBLP and monitor remedial work.
- Supervise Lengthsman activities on PROWs.

Road Safety

- Promote traffic calming.
- Promote road safety improvements.

Environment

- Work with the Community Change Climate Group (CCCG) bring about positive change in the parish.
- Promote biodiversity.
- Promote wildflower areas and planting.
- Promote tree preservation.
- Promote tree planting.

5. Other Accountabilities in addition to Working Groups

One Councillor will be accountable for each of the following three matters and will submit a written report to the Parish Clerk in advance of each Parish Council meeting.

Defibrillators and VETS

- Manage maintenance and report defects.
- Promote public awareness.
- Manage VETS system and routinely check its effectiveness.
- Organise necessary training.

Community Climate Change Group (CCCG) liaison

- Promote local solutions.
- Raise local awareness.

Village Hall Representative

- Liaise with the Village Hall trustees
- Attend meetings of the Village Hall trustees as necessary