

**Protocol for the Formation,  
Operation and Closure of Working Groups**

**Adopted : 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

1. The Parish Council can set up working groups to carry out tasks as defined by the Council. The opportunity for residents to be aware of and join such groups will be made through the Parish Council Website, Village Newsletter, social media and on the Council's noticeboard.
2. The purpose of Working Groups formed from both councillors and members of the public is to meet to discuss issues, explore options and develop plans and then report back to the Council with recommendations. They have no decision-making powers but simply present the Council with their findings.
3. When setting up a Working Group, the Council must set clear terms of reference for it regarding objectives, scope and outcome(s). These will be approved by the Council. Once their work has been completed, the Working Group will be disbanded.
4. The Terms of Reference will include this protocol and all members of the Working Group will sign it to confirm acceptance. The lead councillor will forward these to the Clerk. These are retained and held.
5. The Terms of Reference and membership will be published on the Council's website.
6. The number of Councillors able to join a Working Group will be decided at the time of its formation but it must consist of no fewer than two councillors, one of whom will be the lead councillor.
7. A working group shall consist of no more than six members.
8. The maximum number of Councillors on any working group will be three.
9. The Working Group shall notify the Council, via the Clerk, of the name of the Lead once they are appointed after the first meeting.
10. The Working Group shall notify the Clerk with a minimum of three clear days' notice of an intention to meet. If possible, the agenda will be sent to the Clerk at the same time.
11. A quorum for any meeting of a Working Group will be three members, at least two of whom must be councillors.
12. Confidential Information shall not be shared with Non-Councillor members of any Working Group.
13. Non-Councillor members may be co-opted as and when required and for as long as is required.
14. Non-Councillor members will act in an advisory capacity only and will not have voting rights
15. The role of the Council is to consider and question the recommendations put to

it by the Working Group before a decision is taken.

16. The lead councillor shall provide regular updates to the Parish Council on progress made against the items as detailed in its Terms of Reference. Before the Working Group is closed or disbanded the lead councillor shall provide a report to the Parish Council including key events, issues encountered, achievements and outcomes against the items as detailed in its Terms of Reference.
17. The Working Group must provide the Council with as much information as possible to ensure it can make an informed decision on its recommendation(s).
18. A Working Group will not have a budget. The budget will remain with the Council.
19. Working Groups do not have to meet in public; therefore, the Council's Standing Orders are not applicable. However, the Code of Conduct still applies, and declarations of pecuniary and other interests will be required at each meeting.
20. The Working Group can, if it is so agreed, meet in public. If this is the case an agenda will be published on the Parish Council Website and Noticeboard giving three clear days' notice.
21. All Working Groups will follow all relevant Council policies.
22. The Clerk will ensure that a shared email and Cloud Storage Folders are set up for all Working Groups. The Lead of the Working Group will ensure that the importance of their use is communicated to all members. All emails are to be cc'ed or forwarded to working group email account, all documents are to be stored onto the Working Group's Cloud Storage Folder and key documents filed into the Working Group's lever arch file.
23. All documents and records produced and emails shared by working groups will be retained for 7 years in accordance with the Council's Freedom of Information Act Procedure.
24. As part of the closing down of a Working Group the lead Councillor will contact the members of the working group asking them to:
  - a. Ensure all emails they have received and/or sent related to the Working Group have been copied to the Working Group email. Once a working group member has confirmed they have copied all emails, then they must DELETE them from their personal email account.
  - b. Ensure key documents are copied into the named working group folder on the Cloud Storage System. Once a working group member has confirmed they have copied all documents, then they must DELETE them from their personal computer.

- c. Do not worry about storing duplicate copies – it is better to have multiple copies of some emails/files than no copies of other emails/files.
  - d. Provide paper copies of documents to the lead Councillor who will file them in the Working Group's file.
  - e. Once all members have copied over their emails, files and paper documents the lead councillor shall inform the Clerk. The lead councillor shall provide the document file to the Clerk.
25. The Clerk shall remove access of working group members to the Cloud Storage Folder and also change the password on the Working Group email account. The records are now archived.
26. If a similar working group is set up in the future, they will be provided with a new dedicated email/cloud storage with READ-ONLY access to the email/document archive(s) of any previous Working Group. This is to ensure the integrity of the records of the previous Working Group.