Batheaston Parish Council

RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Background facts

1. Our experience with Committees and Working Groups ("C&WGs") is mixed at BPC level, and poor at community level. The 2019 review found:

    1.1. Working Groups seem set up around BPC interests rather than clear choices of community need;
    1.2. WGs are not managed to recruit, coordinate and optimise collaboration with residents, i.e. to work *with* the community;
    1.3. WGs are not focused on the unique value the BPC can add relative to voluntary organisations and residents.

2. Many C&WGs have not delivered outcomes recognised and valued by the community.

3. With 11 C&WGs for 10 councillors, none of them represent discrete centres of expertise and activity. Each is a trade-off of another's time and skill.

Proposal

4. The BPC will have 2 standing committees and 1 advisory group:

    4.1. A **Village Committee** focusing on all the work we do for and with the community;
    4.2. A **Council Committee** focusing on all internal workings of the council;
    4.3. A **Planning Advisory Group** engaging with residents on planning matters, making recommendations to BPC and making comments to B&NES.

5. The **Village Committee** will focus all the work we do for, in and with our community:

    5.1. Share information with residents and the media;
    5.2. Manage community assets and open spaces, sustained into the future;
    5.3. Build community and environmental resilience;
    5.4. Forge relationships with other organisations, businesses and the voluntary sector;
    5.5. Be a forum for discussing existing and future village matters with residents, and in a way that enables the public to be heard.

6. The **Council Committee** will focus on ensuring our Council is run efficiently and effectively, including:

    6.1. Financial regulations;
    6.2. Staff management and development;
    6.3. Code of conduct;
    6.4. Health, safety and welfare;
    6.5. Data protection;
    6.6. Risk management;
    6.7. Complaints.

7. The **Planning Advisory Group** ("PAG") will engage with residents and B&NES on planning matters, and make recommendations to BPC and comments to B&NES. It is not a decision-maker on planning matters but a consultee and focuses on:

    7.1. Major planning issues, engaging whenever possible in advance of any formal planning application
    7.2. Commenting on and monitoring decisions made by B&NES.

8. Each of the standing committees will have delegated powers to make regular decisions.

9. Membership of each committee and the PAG will be on the basis of allocating the best mix of skill, experience and time so each can achieve the best possible outcomes for the village.

Discussion

10. The new structure aligns with the primary roles and responsibilities of Council vis-à-vis residents.

11. The 2-committees structure provides flexibility to adapting to evolving priorities, circumstances and resource availability.

12. The separation of internal from external matters dedicates part of Council to engage without distraction with our community.

13. The use of delegated powers speeds up decision-making on routine decisions where value-added is limited. It unclogs Full Council to focus on working with the community on their near- and longer-term priorities.

14. The "specialisation" on internal matters increases the skill and time we will devote to monitoring our activities.

Batheaston Parish Council

VILLAGE COMMITTEE
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The Village Committee ("Committee") is constituted to assist the Batheaston Parish Council ("Full Council") in working directly with residents in making Batheaston a great place to live, work and visit, and sustain all that into the future.

2. Specifically, the Committee shall have responsibility and delegated powers:
   - Be a forum for discussing existing and future village matters with residents, and in a way that enables the public to be heard;
   - Build and/or promote the cohesive, resilient and sustainable development of community, economic and environmental infrastructure, including but not limited to common land, highways, tourism, recreation.
   - Forge relationships with other organisations, businesses and the voluntary sector.

3. The Committee shall comprise of at least four members of Council, to be confirmed every year at the Annual Parish Council meeting and approved at the next Council meeting. The Chairman of the Batheaston Parish Council shall be an ex-officio member. Full Council shall appoint the Chairman of the Committee.

4. The quorum for conduct of business shall be three, one of whom must be the Chair of the Committee or her/his nominee in the event of absence.

5. The agenda will be set by the Clerk. Items for the agenda must be sent to the Clerk one week prior to publication and the Clerk has the right to refuse an item if it is not within the remit of this Committee. The agenda will be made public at least three clear days before the meeting.

6. The Committee shall meet at least monthly and meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest. The decision to exclude the public from part or all of a meeting shall include its reasons.

7. Meetings of the Committee shall be minuted and all resolutions shall be recorded by the Clerk and reported to Council at the next Parish Council meeting.

8. The Clerk shall be responsible for the maintenance of any documents and records necessary for the effective fulfilment of the Committee's duties. All correspondence with residents and B&NES should be conducted through the Clerk, so far as practicable.

9. The Committee may establish a time-limited advisory sub-committee or working group for a defined purpose in support of its work and for no longer than one year. Membership of the sub-committee may include non-councillors with expertise in the matter under consideration and such persons will be non-voting.

10. The Committee shall report any significant concerns, irregularities or shortcomings arising in the fulfilment of the Committee's duties to Full Council without undue delay.

11. The Committee's terms of reference and delegated powers are reviewed annually at the Annual Council meeting and may be amended, varied or modified after consultation and agreement by Full Council.

Last reviewed and agreed by Council: [date]
Next Review Date: Annual Council meeting 2021

Batheaston Parish Council

COUNCIL COMMITTEE
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The Council Committee ("Committee") is constituted to assist the Batheaston Parish Council ("Full Council") in running an efficient and effective organisation.

2. Specifically, the Committee shall have responsibility and delegated powers:
   - To monitor income and expenditure against the budget and examine monthly budget analysis reports, bank payment reports, bank statements and quarterly bank reconciliations administered by the Clerk who is appointed as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer;
   - To make recommendations to full Council for any projects related to participatory budgeting;
   - To examine, recommend and propose annual budget changes to full Council for resolution;
   - Be responsible for the review of risk management, internal control and insurance;
   - Be responsible for the provision, maintenance and insurance of all Council owned or managed assets;
   - To oversee all legal matters pertaining to leases, mortgage, insurance claims, easements, tenancies, contracts, loans, insurance cover, damage to property, vehicle insurance specification of work and debt recovery and make recommendations to Council;
   - To set and manage staffing structures, staffing levels, job descriptions, person specifications, staff appraisals, salary and term conditions, recruitment, contracts of employment, training, qualifications, health and safety aspects and other conditions of service of all employees;
   - To undertake an annual review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and submit to Full Council for resolution;
   - To draft, review, monitor and implement all Council policies subject to resolution by Full Council, in particular pertaining to its statutory responsibilities and public accountability;
   - To consider and report to Full Council on matters of complaints against Clerk;
   - To consider any other matters delegated to the Council Committee by the Council and facilitate a working/advisory group as appropriate.

3. The Committee shall comprise of at least four members of Council, to be confirmed every year at the Annual Parish Council meeting and approved at the next Council meeting. The Chairman of the Batheaston Parish Council shall be an ex-officio member. Full Council shall appoint the Chairman of the Committee.

4. The quorum for conduct of business shall be three, one of whom must be the Chair of the Committee or her/his nominee in the event of absence.

5. The agenda will be set by the Clerk. Items for the agenda must be sent to the Clerk one week prior to publication and the Clerk has the right to refuse an item if it is not within the remit of this Committee. The agenda will be made public at least three clear days before the meeting.

6. The Committee shall meet at least monthly and meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest. The decision to exclude the public from part or all of a meeting shall include its reasons.

7. Meetings of the Committee shall be minuted and all resolutions shall be recorded by the Clerk and reported to Council at the next Parish Council meeting.

8. The Clerk shall be responsible for the maintenance of any documents and records necessary for the effective fulfilment of the Committee's duties. All correspondence with residents and B&NES should be conducted through the Clerk, so far as practicable.

9. The Committee may establish a time-limited advisory sub-committee or working group for a defined purpose in support of its work and for no longer than one year. Membership of the sub-committee may include non-councillors with expertise in the matter under consideration and such persons will be non-voting.

10. The Committee shall report any significant concerns, irregularities or shortcomings arising in the fulfilment of the Committee's duties to Full Council without undue delay.

11. The Committee's terms of reference and delegated powers are reviewed annually at the Annual Council meeting and may be amended, varied or modified after consultation and agreement by Full Council.

Last reviewed and agreed by Council: [date]
Next Review Date: Annual Council meeting 2021

Batheaston Parish Council

PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The Planning Advisory Group ("PAG") is constituted to assist the Batheaston Parish Council ("Full Council") in engaging with residents and B&NES on planning matters.

2. Specifically, the PAG shall be responsible for:
   - Undertaking all duties of Full Council under Town and Country Planning Acts, Orders and Regulations and all matters relating to roads and highways including Road Closure Notices, road signs, traffic management, traffic regulations and bus shelters;
   - Providing straightforward advice to the community and developers on how to make planning applications;
   - Making recommendations to Full Council and occasionally responding to urgent significant consultations to be ratified by Full Council ex post;
   - Delegating authority to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, to respond to minor planning issues on behalf of Full Council.

3. In discharging its responsibilities, the PAG may:
   - Consult relevant bodies to help its members reach a fair view on applications;
   - Arrange site meetings provided that all members of the PAG shall be invited to site meetings;
   - Co-opt members of the public onto the PAG to assist it in its deliberations. Such co-opted members may not vote.

4. The PAG shall comprise of at least three councillors, to be confirmed every year at the Annual Parish Council meeting and approved at the next Council meeting.

5. Full Council shall appoint the chairman of the PAG.

6. The PAG will meet on at least six occasions each year. Its meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest. Additional meetings can be convened as needed to ensure that all planning applications received are considered and replied to within the timescale.

12. The Clerk shall be responsible for the maintenance of any documents and records arising from the effective fulfilment of the PAG's duties. All correspondence with residents and B&NES should be conducted through the Clerk, so far as practicable.

7. The PAG's terms of reference and delegated powers are reviewed annually at the Annual Council meeting and may be amended, varied or modified after consultation and agreement by the Council.

Last reviewed and agreed by Council: [date]
Next Review Date: Annual Council meeting 2021