

Objectives

The objective of this document is to define the expected best practice, guidelines, and targets for the internal operation of the Parish Council with respect to Communications and Committee Management.

It supplements and does not replace the legal requirements of the Standing Orders. In the event of conflict Standing Orders take precedence. It supports the Communications and Community Engagement Strategy.

This protocol is managed by the Management Group and agreed by Council.

Meetings

1. Committees should meet (at least) 10 days prior to the Council meeting as this enables full written reports and recommendations to be presented to the Council
2. The Management Group should meet within 10 days after the Council meeting
3. Management group meetings will be arranged by the clerk – the agenda will be published by the clerk in consultation with the Chairman, but will have a different format to that of the Council notices
4. Other Working Group Meetings will be arranged by the Group, but may ask for assistance from the clerk to arrange locations/meeting rooms if needed. The dates should be notified to the clerk and the notes of the meeting provided to the clerk within 5 days.

Working Groups

- 1) The Council or any Committees may create a Working Group at any time. The Council or Committee should define:
 - the name,
 - terms of reference,
 - number of members of the Working Group
 - the external bodies to be invited to nominate members.
- 2) A summary report of activity within the Working Group shall be presented at meetings of the Council or Committee to which it reports.

Recommendations of committees or WG

1. Recommendations of committees or WG must be included in full on the minutes/WG Report in order for the full council/Committee to give them proper consideration.
2. Recommendations of committees meeting after the notice of Council meeting has been sent to members must be circulated to all members as soon as practical.

Communications

1. Electronic mail is acceptable delivery media between Councillors and between the Clerk & Councillors. Councillors may request the clerk to provide paper copies
2. Correspondence and email will be addressed to the individuals expected to ACTION the item. It may be copied to others for information (ie no action required). The use of bcc (blind copy) is to be avoided
3. Notices regarding meetings and agenda items will be issued to the members of the relevant C'tee or WG and also cc'd to all other Cllrs for info.
4. Press releases shall be issued from the Clerks office and copied to all Cllrs
5. A monthly summary of council activity should be issued by the Clerk to the press, preferably within 2 working days of the regular Council meeting
6. Draft minutes of the Council should be available within 4 working days meeting. The draft minutes will be reviewed promptly by the relevant Chairman (or VC) prior to their being published.
7. The web site should be used to hold and publish all key documents (ref Scheme of Publication)
8. The web-site should be updated within 2 working days of changes to basic information eg Cllrs, Committee structures etc. Other information should be updated within 5 working days of approval by the Council.
9. The Clerk is the 'executive editor' for all public communications. The Communications should work with the clerk to develop the publications.
10. The target shall be 7 calendar days notice of meetings in 80% of all cases,
11. The meeting notices and supporting papers should be issued by e-mail at the required date. Then a paper copy of all items should available at least 2 clear calendar days prior to the meeting.
12. If supporting papers are not available with sufficient time to study them prior to the meeting the chairman should consider deferring the item for proper consideration.
13. Whenever meeting notices must be made public (for example: the date and place of the meetings), this may be on the PC web-site or on at least one of the PC Notice Boards. The target is to publish on all notice boards 80% of the time.

Councillors

1. Cllrs are expected to contribute to the active working of the council, and to be members of at least 2 C'tees/WG
2. The workload should be shared among the Cllrs and individual Cllrs should not represent the Council on more than 4 external bodies
3. All councillors are expected to keep up to date and to undertake training appropriate to their role
4. Members of the Planning C'tee must take special training within 2 months of appointment. If suitable training courses have not been run in that timescale then the Chair of the C'tee may grant an extension up to maximum 6 months total.
5. Failure to take the appropriate training within a reasonable timescale will be reported to the Council for consideration.

Chairmen

- 1) All Chairmen must be familiar with, and act in accordance with the NALC guidelines on Chairmanship. This states the basic principles of Chairmanship as follows:
 - 1) *The officers and agents of the Council must act as the Council's executive and carry out its decisions. They cannot do this properly unless they have instructions which they can understand.*
 - 2) *It is the primary, if not the only, function of the Council to frame instructions upon which people can act; even a decision to take no action, is such an instruction.*
 - 3) *The Council's instructions are conveyed by resolutions and it is the purpose of the Council's proceedings to reach, without unreasonable delay, an intelligible and lawful decision for the right reasons. The whole duty of a Chairman is to ensure that this purpose is achieved and to this end he must:-*
 - (a) protect the Council against *outside interference*;
 - (b) ensure that everything to be discussed is *lawful*;
 - (c) ensure that the Council is invited to deal with *clear issues*;
 - (d) ensure that as far as possible *information is complete*;
 - (e) permit every point of view to have a *fair hearing*;
 - (f) ensure that opinions expressed are *relevant* to the matter in hand;
 - (g) ensure that business is transacted with *reasonable speed*;
 - (h) ensure as far as possible that proceedings are *friendly* and *free form personalities*;
 - (i) co-operate with the officers and councillors.
- 2) In addition Wendover PC expects the chairman of Council and C'tees to:
 - act as a team leader
 - ensure that the VC is involved in all aspects and has regular communications regarding the work of the c'tee
 - ensure, in consultation with the Clerk, that related information is circulated in order to help keep their team up to date

WPC Management and Communications Protocol

- express the decisions of the C'tee at all times
 - act as a role model for the C'tee members
- 3) All Chairmen of C'tee and sub-C'tee must take special training within 2 months of appointment. If suitable training courses have not been run in that timescale then the Chair of the Council may grant an extension up to maximum 6 months total
- 4) Failure to take the appropriate training within a reasonable timescale will be reported to the Council for consideration.

Related Documents

- WPC Communication And Community Engagement Strategy
- Policy – Press Communications
- Role of the Working Group – adopted by Amenities Committee Jan 20th 2009
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