

Cottenham Parish Council

Terms of Reference

Finance, Legal & Administration Committee

1 Membership

- a) Membership is 7 members of the Parish Council, including Chair and Vice Chair “ex-officio”
- b) Membership of the Committee shall be determined at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and subsequent Parish Council meetings if the need arises.
- c) The Committee shall appoint a Chair by election from members of the Committee at the first meeting in any Council year
- d) The Committee has only Councillors as members

2 Quorum

The quorum necessary for the transaction of any business shall be 3. If the number of Councillors present (not including those debarred by reason of a declared interest) falls below the required quorum then the meeting shall be adjourned and business not transacted shall be transacted at either the next Parish Council meeting or the next meeting of the Committee.

3 Frequency of meeting

The Committee shall normally meet quarterly, as per the calendar of public meetings circulated by the Clerk at the beginning of the year, as long as there is business to conduct and at such times as the Committee Chair shall require:

- a) at least one meeting shall be called to draft the budget for the following financial year and recommend a precept level to the Parish Council
- b) at least one meeting shall be called to consider the end of year accounts and Audit requirements

4 Notice of meetings

a) ordinary meeting

The Parish Clerk shall call an ordinary meeting of the Committee at such time as agreed by the Committee or the Committee Chair. Agenda shall be available (published on website and all four Parish Council Notice Boards) at least 5 clear days prior to the committee meeting and supporting statements available (published on website) at least 3 clear days prior to the committee meeting .

b) extra ordinary meeting

An extra ordinary meeting can be called by the Chair or two Parish Councillors in writing specifying the agenda item to be discussed. The Clerk must then call the meeting within 14 days publishing the agenda at least 5 clear days before the meeting date.

5 Minutes of meetings

Every meeting of the Committee shall be minuted and the minutes formally agreed by the Committee at its next meeting. The draft minutes shall be published (clearly marked “draft, subject to amendment”) on the website within 3 working days and a copy sent to the Cottenham Library also within 3 working days.

6 Areas of responsibility

The Finance, Legal & Administration Committee has delegated authority to:

Policy & Regulation

- a) review the Financial Regulations at least annually, recommending any amendments to the Parish Council
- b) review the Standing Orders at least annually, recommending any amendments to the Parish Council
- c) recommend, and produce where necessary, policy documents for adoption by the Parish Council
- d) ensure that the Parish Council meets its internal and external audit requirements and receives and considers internal and external audit reports
- e) respond to consultations and requests regarding financial or legal matters

Financial Strategy & Planning

- f) formulate medium and long term financial strategies
- g) prepare a rolling 4-year plan to be reviewed quarterly
- h) submit to the Parish Council consolidated estimates of income and expenditure for the next financial year so as to recommend budgets and the required annual Precept

Financial Review & Monitoring

- i) review the accounts and estimates as necessary throughout the year
- j) review and make prioritised recommendations on the financial implications of any matters raised by Committees and Working Groups
- k) monitor quarterly expenditure against plan, including any necessary detailed reconciliations

Assets, Risk & Insurance

- l) ensure the Asset Register is properly managed and up to date (at least annually and as required)
- m) oversee legal aspects of assets e.g. registration, insurance
- n) conduct strategic Asset Management, including acquisitions and disposals
- o) review the Risk Management Plan, ensuring insurance cover is adequate, at least annually
- p) review and update the detailed Risk Assessment at least quarterly
- q) oversee matters related to Parish Council acquisition or disposal of land and property assets

Contracts & Legal

- r) review terms of existing and proposed contracts and report issues to the Parish Council
- s) provide contract templates for use by Committees, when requires

Office & Employment

- t) ensure appropriate contracts of employment and job descriptions are in place for all employed staff
- u) ensure that PAYE and pension provision are administered in accordance with regulations
- v) oversee office management issues related to finance or services

Information & Communication

- w) review information management and communication and report to the Parish Council (at least annually), including, when necessary, registration of the Parish Council with the Information Commissioner's Office under the Data Protection Act

Donations & Grants

- x) oversee, within an agreed process, requests for donations and grants
- y) follow up outcomes of grants and donations

7 Delegation of powers

- a) The Clerk may spend on any matter (in accordance with the Financial Regulations) deemed as an emergency, up to £5000 in any one quarter and report back to the Parish Council at its next meeting.
- b) When authorised by a Committee vote, the Committee may approve spending, up to 10% of the budget in a quarter on a delegated expense line item without referring to the Parish Council, provided that the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is notified.

8 Precedence

The Parish Council's adopted Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct retain precedence over these Terms of Reference.

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Finance, Legal & Administration Committee

Adopted by Cottenham Parish Council on 1st July 2014

Amendments to membership to clarify "ex-officio" adopted by Council on 3rd February 2015

Amendments to delegated financial authority adopted by Council on 3rd March 2015

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