

Terms of Reference

Standards Committee

1 Membership

- a) Membership is 6 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 Standards Committee has only Councillors as members
- e) When required, the Standards Committee will co-opt two non-Councillors familiar with Council matters to form the necessary 5-strong Complaints Committee to investigate complaints about actions by the Parish Council
- f) When required, the Standards Committee will co-opt two non-Councillors familiar with Council matters to form a Code of Conduct Committee to investigate complaints about actions by any Parish Councillor

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 twice a year, 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 review and recommend for adoption by the Parish Council, the Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee, policies and procedures for handling complaints against the Parish Council and/or the conduct of any Parish Councillor
- b) at least one meeting shall be called to prepare an annual report of the Committee’s activities to the Parish Council

4 Notice of meetings

a) ordinary meetings

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, where not restricted by confidentiality or privacy issues, shall be published (clearly marked "draft, subject to amendment") on the website normally within 3 working days and a copy sent to the Cottenham Library also within 3 working days.

6 Areas of responsibility

The Standards Committee has delegated authority to:

- a) review (at least annually) the Code of Conduct, recommending any necessary changes to the Parish Council
- b) review (at least annually) the Complaints procedure, , recommending any necessary changes to the Parish Council
- c) conduct, with co-opted independent members, formal procedures properly brought against a Parish Councillor under the Code of Conduct
- d) conduct, with co-opted independent members, formal procedures to handle any complaints properly brought against the Parish Council
- e) review and make recommendations for the training status of all Parish Councillors and staff to assure familiarity with correct practice

7 Delegation of powers

- a) For convenience in cases where an urgent response is required to areas delegated to this Committee, the Chair of the Committee together with one other person serving on the Committee and the Clerk may prepare and submit a representation on behalf of the Parish Council without referring to the Parish Council, provided a report is made in writing to the next available meeting of either the Committee or the Parish Council whichever is sooner.

8 Precedence

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