

Arborfield & Newland Parish Council

The Parish Council Finance & General Purpose (F&GP) Committee

Terms of Reference

General

The F&GP Committee terms of reference have been produced to clarify the role in which the Committee and members therein are to consider issues and operate as a Standing Committee of Arborfield & Newland Parish Council.

Membership

The Arborfield & Newland Parish Council F&GP Committee comprises of a maximum of 6 Councillors. The quorum of the Committee is 4 members. The Responsible Financial Officer should attend all F&GP Committee meetings. The Committee elects a Committee Chair and Committee Vice Chair from the Committee membership annually at the first Committee meeting after the Annual General Meeting of the Council or at the Annual General Meeting of the Council

Meetings

F&GP Committee meetings are held quarterly on the 1st Tuesday of May, September, November & February subject to requirement. The F&GP Committee is responsible for holding the preliminary budget meeting in December.

Principal Functions & Delegated Powers

Principal functions of the F&GP Committee as set out in the Standing Committee document are:

- to coordinate the preparation of the Council's annual budget and to monitor income and expenditure against that budget throughout the year
- to advise the Council on the financial implications of its policies
- to keep the Council's procedures and policy documents under review and recommend improvements as necessary - including Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for the conduct of meetings
- to oversee and review the Council's insurance cover
- to monitor banking arrangements including gaining best value for the Special Project Fund and Reserves.

- to oversee the provision of the 'Arborfield News', including reviewing advertising rates and to oversee the editorial group
- to oversee the provision of the arborfield.org.uk website and other means of publishing information
- to assess and report risks associated with any of the above
- to oversee other Council activities delegated to the Committee by the Full Council

Responsibilities

Overall accountability for the management of the Council's financial affairs in accordance with legislative requirements, regulations and guidelines. These will include:

- a. Monitoring the work of the Responsible Financial Officer, ensuring that the post holder has adequate training for the role and that there are adequate controls in place to govern the financial management of the Council's affairs.
- b. Approving the opening and closing of bank accounts and the transfer of funds between accounts
- c. Providing end of year accounts and balance sheets and supporting documentation
- d. Set up appropriate accounting practices and systems
- e. Reviewing the Committee's annual estimates which are prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer
- f. Considering all the Council's committees annual estimates to obtain an overall position of the Council's finances in order to make appropriate recommendations to Council and Committees.
- g. Recommending a precept to Council
- h. Applying Best Value principles to the Council's affairs, even though there is no legal requirement to undertake this, and recommend accordingly
- i. Taking into account forward planning and providing earmarked reserves for the replacement of equipment, buildings and specific items of expenditure required in the future in order to lessen the precept burden in any one year.

- j. Undertaking an annual review of all fees, charges and allowances.
- k. Considering all aspects of the Council's service delivery and recommend accordingly
- l. Seeking grant aid and appropriate support in respect to the responsibilities of the Council.
- m. Making investments in the long and short term.
- n. Ensuring the Council is adequately insured, that this is reviewed annually and recommend accordingly. To instigate insurance claims being made.
- o. Reviewing the annual financial report prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer to be made available to residents and the public as part of the Annual Report for the Annual Parish Meeting.
- p. Monitoring the petty cash system operated by the Responsible Financial Officer
- q. Ensuring that claims for the recovery of VAT are submitted in a timely fashion and are complete
- r. Authorising subscriptions to organisations that are involved in local and national issues, which affect the work of the Council.
- s. Monitoring all Committee's income and expenditure during the financial year and where appropriate recommending action to be taken.
- t. Ensuring cheques, standing orders and direct debits are signed by two members.
- u. Monitoring recording of expenditure under Section 137 of the Local Government Act and recording this in end of year balance sheets.
- v. Recommending the borrowing of funds and making the appropriate Loan Sanction Applications.
- w. Ensuring that the Council complies with pension auto-enrolment regulations and has adequate pension provision in place for the employees of the Council
- x. Ensuring that the Council complies with GDPR regulations and has adequate procedures in place to maintain compliance
- y. To review and recommend fees for the use of the Council's facilities.

Financial Regulations

To review annually and update the Financial Regulations, ensuring they are observed and make appropriate recommendations to Full Council.

Annual Budget

To prepare and submit the Council's annual budget for approval to the January Full Council meeting.

Reserves

To ensure that all reserves are managed in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

Internal & External Audit

To receive and review both Internal and External Audit Reports and arrange for implementation of any recommendations. (The Internal Auditor carries out an Audit and is appointed by the Council. The External Auditor carries out an annual Audit of the Annual Return and is appointed by the Audit Commission).

Legal Matters

To oversee all legal matters pertaining to leases, mortgage, insurance claims, easements, tenancies, contracts, loans, insurance cover, damage to property, vehicle insurance specifications for work and debit recovery and make recommendations to Full Council.

Standing Orders

To prepare, review, monitor and amend the Council's Standing Orders and recommend accordingly.

Councillor Matters

To set Councillor's allowances and expenses and to recommend to Full Council accordingly.

Parish Wards

To deal with all issues related to boundary reviews, warding arrangements and electoral matters affecting the Parish. To consider proposals and legislation relating to changes within Local Government and recommend accordingly.

Legislation

To consider all legislative matters, regulations and guidance and where appropriate, refer such matters to the appropriate Committee of the Council. To consider new and proposed legislation, including consultation documents and views expressed by individuals or organisations, to respond accordingly. To make representations to amend or abolish existing legislation, if necessary to undertake consultation on such matters.

Council Policies

To be responsible for the production and amendment of all Parish Council Policies

Publicity Matters

- a. To comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in making as much information as possible freely available to the public as approved by a Council meeting held in May 2007.
- b. To submit and regularly revise the Council's Publication Scheme.
- c. To deal with all press enquiries and the issue of press statements.
- d. To respond to items that appear in newspapers, media and journal when necessary.
- e. To provide general and specific information for residents. Provide an annual report for residents, including a summary of the Council's accounts. Provide and maintain notice boards. Issue the Arborfield News. Arrange exhibitions and civic functions when necessary.

Historic Records

- a. To support the Arborfield Local History Society to maintain and expand the Council's historic records.
- b. To ensure relevant documents are recorded and stored appropriately including all meeting minutes at the Berkshire Records Office.

Review

This document is to be reviewed annually.