SHAUGH PRIOR PARISH COUNCIL

STANDARD TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Adopted by: Shaugh Prior Parish Council
Date adopted: November 2026
Minute reference:
Review date: within 12 months from adoption

1. Purpose

These Standard Terms of Reference establish the framework under which committees of **Shaugh Prior Parish Council** ("the Council") shall operate.

They are intended to provide a consistent, transparent and lawful framework for the establishment, membership, meetings, decision-making, delegated authority, reporting and accountability of Council committees.

Each committee shall operate within these Terms of Reference, the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, adopted policies and all relevant legislation.

The Council may establish committees under its statutory powers, including those provided by **Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972**.

2. Establishment of Committees

2.1 The Parish Council may establish such committees as it considers necessary to assist it in the discharge of its functions.

2.2 Each committee shall be formally established by resolution of the full Parish Council.

2.3 The resolution establishing a committee shall specify:

- the name of the committee;
- its purpose and remit;
- its membership;
- its Chair and, where appropriate, Vice-Chair;
- any delegated authority;
- any financial authority;
- the duration of the committee, where applicable.

2.4 No committee shall exercise authority beyond that specifically delegated to it by the full Parish Council.

2.5 The Council may amend, suspend, review or dissolve any committee by resolution.

3. Membership

3.1 Shaugh Prior Parish Council comprises **nine Parish Councillors**.

3.2 Unless otherwise determined by the full Council, each standing committee shall have a **minimum membership of four Parish Councillors**.

3.3 Committee members shall be appointed by resolution of the full Parish Council.

3.4 A councillor may serve on more than one committee.

3.5 The Council may appoint additional councillors to a committee where it considers this appropriate, subject to the committee's approved membership arrangements.

3.6 Membership shall normally continue until:

- the next Annual Meeting of the Parish Council;
- the councillor resigns from the committee;
- the councillor ceases to be a member of the Parish Council; or
- the Parish Council resolves to change the membership.

3.7 A committee shall not appoint members of the public or external organisations as voting members unless the Parish Council has expressly authorised such arrangements.

3.8 The Council may invite members of the public, community representatives, officers, specialists or other persons to attend meetings in an advisory or non-voting capacity.

4. Chair and Vice-Chair

4.1 The Parish Council shall appoint the Chair of each committee unless it specifically delegates the appointment to the committee.

4.2 Where appropriate, the committee may appoint a Vice-Chair from amongst its councillor members.

4.3 The Chair shall:

- preside over meetings;
- ensure that the business is conducted fairly and efficiently;
- maintain order;
- ensure that decisions remain within the committee's delegated authority;
- ensure that declarations of interest are dealt with appropriately.

4.4 The Chair shall not have additional executive powers merely by virtue of holding the position of Chair.

4.5 Where the Chair is absent, the Vice-Chair shall preside. Where both are absent, the members present may elect a Chair for that meeting.

5. Quorum

5.1 The quorum for a committee meeting shall be **three councillors**.

5.2 A committee must have at least **four appointed councillor members**.

5.3 Where fewer than three committee members are present, the meeting may be opened but **no substantive business or decision shall be transacted**.

5.4 The Chair shall establish the quorum at the commencement of the meeting and whenever a member leaves the meeting.

5.5 If the number of members present falls below three during the meeting, the committee shall cease to take decisions.

5.6 Where a member has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest or other relevant interest and is required to leave the meeting, the effect on the quorum shall be considered before any decision is taken.

5.7 The three-member quorum is an **adopted committee requirement of Shaugh Prior Parish Council** and shall be applied in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders and the relevant statutory provisions.

6. Meetings

6.1 Each committee shall meet as frequently as necessary to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

6.2 Meetings may be:

- scheduled in advance;
- called by the Chair;
- called by the Clerk/RFO where necessary; or
- arranged following a resolution of the Parish Council or committee.

6.3 The date, time and location of meetings shall be determined in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and applicable legislation.

6.4 Committee meetings are formal meetings of the Parish Council and shall be conducted accordingly.

6.5 Meetings shall be open to members of the public unless the committee resolves to exclude the public and press in accordance with the law.

6.6 The committee shall provide reasonable opportunity for members of the public to make representations, ask questions or provide evidence where permitted under the Council's Standing Orders.

7. Public Notice of Meetings

7.1 **All committee meetings shall be properly advertised and convened in accordance with applicable legislation, the Council's Standing Orders and relevant statutory guidance.**

7.2 Public notice shall be given for committee meetings in accordance with the statutory requirements applying to local council meetings.

7.3 As a minimum, the Council shall aim to ensure that the public notice of a meeting is displayed for the required statutory period and contains:

- the name of the committee;
- date of the meeting;
- time of the meeting;
- place of the meeting; and
- appropriate information regarding the business to be considered.

7.4 The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that meetings are properly convened and publicised.

7.5 The Council shall maintain an appropriate public record of committee meetings, including agendas and minutes.

The statutory framework for local authority meetings includes provisions concerning public access and notice, and NALC's current guidance specifically identifies the importance of agendas and minutes demonstrating lawful convening and decision-making.

8. Agenda

8.1 The Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, shall prepare the agenda.

8.2 Items of business shall be clearly described and shall fall within the committee's remit.

8.3 Committee members may request items to be placed on a future agenda.

8.4 The Chair and Clerk shall ensure that the agenda does not give the committee authority to consider matters outside its delegated responsibilities.

8.5 Urgent business may only be considered where permitted by legislation and the Council's Standing Orders.

9. Decision-Making

9.1 The committee shall make decisions only on matters within its delegated authority.

9.2 Decisions shall normally be made by majority vote of members present and voting.

9.3 Each councillor present and entitled to vote shall have one vote.

9.4 The Chair shall have a casting vote where required by law and the Council's Standing Orders.

9.5 A committee shall not commit the Parish Council to expenditure unless the expenditure is:

- within an approved budget;
- within the committee's delegated financial authority; and
- compliant with the Council's Financial Regulations.

9.6 Where a matter is outside the committee's delegated authority, the committee shall make a **recommendation to the full Parish Council** rather than purporting to make the final decision.

10. Delegated Authority

10.1 The Parish Council shall clearly identify the powers delegated to each committee.

10.2 Delegated authority may include responsibility for:

- considering specific projects;
- developing recommendations;
- monitoring budgets;
- overseeing specific Council assets;
- making decisions within an approved budget;
- responding to consultations;
- overseeing particular services or functions.

10.3 Delegated authority shall not be assumed merely because a matter has historically been considered by a committee.

10.4 Where there is uncertainty regarding whether authority has been delegated, the matter shall be referred to the Clerk and, where necessary, the full Parish Council.

10.5 The full Parish Council retains ultimate responsibility for the exercise of its statutory functions unless legislation provides otherwise.

11. Financial Authority

11.1 Committees shall operate within the Council's approved budget and Financial Regulations.

11.2 No committee may incur expenditure outside its approved delegated authority.

11.3 Any expenditure requiring approval of the full Council shall be referred to the next appropriate Parish Council meeting.

11.4 The committee shall monitor expenditure within its area of responsibility and report significant financial matters to the full Council.

11.5 Procurement shall comply with the Council's Financial Regulations and applicable procurement requirements.

12. Declarations of Interest

12.1 All councillors shall comply with the Council's Code of Conduct and statutory requirements relating to declarations of interest.

12.2 Members shall declare relevant interests at the appropriate point during the meeting.

12.3 Where a member is required to withdraw from consideration of an item, the member shall leave the meeting for that item unless the relevant legal provisions permit otherwise.

12.4 Declarations and any resulting withdrawal shall be recorded in the minutes.

13. Minutes and Records

13.1 Minutes shall be prepared for every committee meeting.

13.2 Minutes shall record:

- the date, time and location;
- members present;
- apologies;
- declarations of interest;
- decisions made;
- votes where appropriate;
- recommendations to the full Council;
- significant actions arising;
- any other information required by law or Standing Orders.

13.3 Draft minutes shall be submitted to the next appropriate committee meeting for confirmation.

13.4 Committee minutes shall be provided to the full Parish Council where they contain recommendations, significant decisions or matters requiring Council consideration.

13.5 The Clerk shall maintain the official record of committee proceedings.

NALC guidance emphasises maintaining agendas and minutes for committee and sub-committee meetings and ensuring that records demonstrate lawful convening and decision-making.

14. Reporting to Full Council

14.1 Each committee remains accountable to the full Parish Council.

14.2 The Chair or nominated committee member shall provide a report to the full Parish Council when requested.

14.3 Matters requiring full Council approval shall be clearly identified as recommendations.

14.4 A committee shall not represent a recommendation as a decision of the Parish Council until the full Council has formally resolved the matter.

15. Urgent Matters

15.1 Where an urgent matter arises which falls within the committee's remit but cannot reasonably wait until the next scheduled meeting, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and any delegated authority given to the Clerk, Chair or committee.

15.2 The use of urgency procedures shall be recorded and reported to the full Parish Council.

16. Public Participation

16.1 Members of the public are welcome to attend committee meetings subject to the Council's procedures.

16.2 Public participation shall be managed in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

16.3 Public participation does not give members of the public voting rights.

16.4 The Chair may impose reasonable limits on contributions to ensure that the meeting can conduct its business effectively and fairly.

17. Exclusion of Public and Press

17.1 The public and press shall only be excluded where permitted by law and where the committee has passed an appropriate resolution.

17.2 Any resolution to exclude the public and press shall identify the general nature of the confidential or exempt business.

17.3 Confidential information shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policies and legal obligations.

18. Conduct of Members

18.1 Committee members shall act in accordance with:

- the Councillors' Code of Conduct;
- Council Standing Orders;

- Financial Regulations;
- relevant Council policies;
- applicable legislation; and
- the principles of good governance.

18.2 Members shall treat fellow councillors, officers, members of the public and invited participants with respect.

18.3 Members shall not use committee meetings to exercise authority that has not been delegated to them.

19. Officers

19.1 The Parish Clerk/RFO shall provide appropriate administrative and procedural support to committees.

19.2 The Clerk shall advise the committee where a proposed action appears to be outside its authority or inconsistent with legislation, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or Council policy.

19.3 The Clerk shall not be required to implement a decision which they reasonably consider to be unlawful or outside the Council's authority without the matter first being appropriately resolved.

20. Review of Terms of Reference

20.1 These Standard Terms of Reference shall be reviewed at least annually or whenever there is a material change in legislation, Council governance arrangements or the committee structure.

20.2 Any amendment shall be approved by resolution of the full Parish Council.

20.3 Individual committee Terms of Reference may contain additional provisions specific to that committee, provided that they do not conflict with these Standard Terms of Reference, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or legislation.

21. Individual Committee Schedule

Each committee established by Shaugh Prior Parish Council should have a short schedule attached to these Standard Terms of Reference.

Committee Name

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Purpose

Review financial and legal matters.

Specific Responsibilities

1. Develop and prepare Precept / Budget and make recommendation
2. Review / Monitor financial spend
3. Report any financial concerns to full Council
4. Review legal matters and make recommendation
5. Review grant applications made to the Council
6. Review grant applications made from the Council

Delegated Authority

None

Financial Authority

Nil

Membership

Minimum: 4 Parish Councillors

Quorum

3 Parish Councillors

Chair

Cllr Tim Thomas

Frequency of Meetings

AS REQUIRED

Reporting

The committee shall report to the full Parish Council as required and shall submit recommendations requiring Council approval to the next appropriate Parish Council meeting.

22. Adoption

These Standard Terms of Reference were adopted by resolution of **Shaugh Prior Parish Council** at its meeting held on:

Date: _____

Minute reference: _____

Chair: _____

Clerk/RFO: _____