

COMMITTEES

SUB COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Adopted by Full Council – 9th May 2022

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**Introduction**

The terms of reference and membership of the committees and working groups and any special rules relating to membership are set out in each section.

Parish councils have a wide flexibility as to the number of committees appointed and their terms of reference.

Clear and certain written terms of reference confirm the nature, extent and limitations of the duties or powers which have been delegated\*.

It is important that any delegation arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet the needs of the parish council in changing circumstances.

The scope of any delegation, including any limitation, should be reviewed to ensure the arrangements are efficient.

\* It must be noted that working groups do not have any delegated powers of authority and work together with members of the constituency to gather knowledge and information before reporting back to the full parish council who make any final decisions.

Cornforth Parish Council committee structure is:

FULL COUNCIL

* Recreation and Amenities Subcommittee
* Planning Subcommittee
* Allotment Subcommittee
* Cornforth Improvement Working Group

FULL COUNCIL

Members of the parish council meet once a month, usually on the second Monday of the month, with the January meeting being on the third Monday due to the Christmas and New Year closure period, to which members of the public are welcome to attend, to discuss all aspects of the parish and agree financial, planning and governance aspects of the Council.

Meetings are run in accordance with the Parish Council’s Standing Orders.

Terms of the Committee:

The following matters shall be reserved for decision by Full Council, but the appropriate Committee(s) may make recommendation for the Council’s consideration:

1. The Precept
2. Borrowing money
3. Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Duties and Powers of Proper Officer provisions
4. Making, amending or revoking by-laws
5. Making of Orders under Statutory Powers
6. Matters of principle or policy
7. Addressing recommendations in any report from the Internal and External Auditors
8. Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Parish Council on any authority, organisation or body (except approved conferences or meetings)
9. Nomination of members of all proper and sub committees
10. New powers or duties
11. Prosecution or defence in a Court of Law
12. Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Council to any enquiry on matters affecting the town
13. To receive and adopt the Annual Accounts
14. To receive and sign off the Annual External Audit and Return
15. To receive reports referred to the Parish Council from the various Committees/Sub-Committees
16. To set up Working Groups as necessary
17. To receive reports and consider recommendations from all Working Groups set up by Parish Council
18. To appoint representatives on outside bodies or joint bodies
19. To confirm the appointment of the Chairman /Vice Chairman
20. To confirm the schedule of meetings of the Parish Council/Committees/Sub Committees for the ensuing year
21. To receive petitions and deputations from members of the public or any organisations
22. Any other matters not delegated to a committee or Sub-Committee or referred to the Council by Committees or Sub-Committees

RECREATION AND AMENITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

This is a Standing Committee of Cornforth Parish Council.

The Committee shall consist of 4 members, plus the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman (ex officio).

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the subcommittee are to be elected at the first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting.

**Quorum**

A quorum must comprise at least three voting Members or one third of the Committee members, if this figure is higher.

**The Subcommittee’s role is to take care and control of the following;**

* To exercise the functions of the Council in respect of open spaces, recreation grounds, play areas, village greens, shelters, allotments, public rights of way, footway lighting, street furniture, environmental services, and property in the ownership or control of the Council.
* To oversee the management of properties owned by Cornforth Parish Council and leased or licenced to external organisations.
* To oversee the grounds maintenance, including the monitoring of the contract.
* To oversee the Christmas lights and tree, including the monitoring of the contract/agreements.
* To monitor the war memorials and ensure renovations are carried out when required
* To consider matters relating to environmental protection and enhancement.
* To ensure all decisions are in accordance with Cornforth Parish Council’s adopted Policies and Financial Regulations.

PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE

This is a Standing Committee of Cornforth Parish Council.

The Committee shall consist of 4 members, plus the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman (ex officio).

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the subcommittee are to be elected at the first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting.

**Quorum**

A quorum must comprise at least three voting Members or one third of the Committee members, if this figure is higher.

The Parish Council considers all planning applications in the Parish. Comments are sent to the County Council as part of their consultation procedure.

The aim is to use Planning Law, Policy, and Periodic Planning Guidance notes to preserve and enhance the character of the village it serves, whilst encouraging its commercial and social vitality.

Cornforth Parish Council is not the Local Planning Authority and as such does not have the power to refuse or allow planning applications.

Cornforth Parish Council is a statutory consultee in the planning process.

**The Subcommittee’s role is to take care and control of the following;**

* To respond as consultee to any planning application or any consultation document relating to planning.
* To consider all planning aspects of development within the Parish including representation and the use of external consultants or advisers.
* To consider and monitor Development Plans and associated documents.
* To deal with all matters relating to transport, public paths, highways, vehicle parking and traffic management.
* In exceptional circumstances and if necessary for timing reasons, the clerk in email and or telephone consultation with all planning committee members may agree a response to planning applications and notify the next meeting of full council of this response.
* To delegate the power to the Clerk in discussion with the Chairman or Vice Chairman, to make recommendations to Durham County Council on minor revisions to applications for which there is insufficient time to call a Council meeting. The exercise of this power should be consistent with established practice and policy of the Parish Council, where defined, and shall be reported to the next Council meeting.

ALLOTMENTS SUBCOMMITTEE

*The Council is a member of the National Allotment Society.*

This is a Standing Committee of Cornforth Parish Council.

The Committee shall consist of 4 members, plus the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman (ex officio).

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the subcommittee are to be elected at the first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting.

**Quorum**

A quorum must comprise at least three voting Members or one third of the Committee members, if this figure is higher.

**The Subcommittee’s role is to take care and control of the following;**

* To ensure all rents are collected from plot holders in April each year and any rent increase is notified to tenants by the end of March each year giving a minimum of 12 months’ notice as legally required.
* Develop and maintain an Allotments Strategy.
* Develop and maintain an allotment handbook.
* Monitor and review the allotment rules and regulations, making any recommendations and or changes to full council for consideration and approval.
* Monitor and review the allotment application form, making any recommendations and or changes to full council for consideration and approval.
* To oversee allotments provision, management, improvement and funding.
* To ensure that there are good channels of communication between tenants and the Parish Council and good channels of tenant / site representative communication.
* To assist in promoting awareness and best practice amongst all plot holders.
* To encourage tenants to grow produce using organic methods and promote sustainability.
* To monitor health & safety at the allotment site and ensure that there is a safe working environment for staff, allotment holders and visitors.
* Carry out spot visits to the allotment site and issue correction notices as required.
* Report to council for consideration any evictions that are required and comply with relevant legislation, guidance and council policy.

CORNFORTH COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT GROUP

**Introduction**

The Cornforth Community Improvement Working Group (‘the Working Group’) is a Working Group of Cornforth Parish Council (‘the Council’).

The aim of the Working Group is to enhance the Community facilities in and around the village of Cornforth in partnership with residents, partner organisations, businesses, and other groups as appropriate.

**Membership**

The Working Group shall consist of Five members of the Council and members shall be appointed by resolution of the Council.

Members who wish to be nominated for consideration for appointment to this working group must be available for daytime, evening and weekend meetings as required and be prepared to take on responsibility of the workload in assessing, investigating, and preparing information in connection with any ideas for community improvements.

On being nominated to the Working Party, all members must read and adhere to its Terms of Reference.

The Clerk is also appointed to the Working Party and will convene the meetings and prepare notes of the discussions and prepare necessary reports for presentation to the appropriate committee/ordinary meeting of full council for information and any decisions if required.

Membership shall be reviewed annually at the Annual Council Meeting.

The Working Group may also recruit any number of members of the public who may attend meetings, participate in organised activities, and contribute ideas, but who will have no voting rights.

A Leader of the Working Group shall be chosen by the Working Group members at its first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting.

The Leader may be a Councillor, or a Community Member and the Leader will be the main point of contact for the Group.

**Voting/Decision Making**

On matters requiring a decision, the Group will discuss matters with a view to reaching consensus. If this cannot be achieved, the Leader shall decide if the matter should go to a vote, or the differing views recorded in writing and communicated to the Parish Council.

Each Member of the Working Group has one vote. In the case of equality of votes, the Leader of the meeting has the casting vote whether he or she gave an original vote.

**Meetings**

Meetings will be held on an ad-hoc basis, as required.

Working Group meetings are not required to be held in public.

**Quorum**

The quorum shall be three members of the Working Group, not including the Clerk, provided at least one of them is a member of the Council.

A minimum of 7 days’ notice is required when calling any meeting.

If the number of Members present falls below the required quorum, the meeting shall be adjourned, and business not transacted until the next meeting or on such other day as the Leader may fix.

**Purpose and scope**

To consider matters associated with the enhancement of green spaces, park, allotments, street furniture and any other item that is within the powers of the council that will improve the community of Cornforth for the benefit of both residents and the natural environment.

Such matters shall not be limited to land owned or leased by the Council but may, by permission of the landowner, include any open space within the village of Cornforth.

**Responsibilities**

The Working Group shall be responsible for:

* Developing and implementing plans for enhancing sites and facilities identified as being worthy of improvement for the benefit of the village and/or the natural environment, such plans to be approved by the Council.
* Identifying alternative funding sources for grant applications to enhance the funding of the Parish Council towards any ides or projects proposed.
* Liaising with outside agencies, such as Durham County Council, Livin, Church of England, etc.
* Coordinating the work of the members and volunteers, completing risk assessments, and ensuring that appropriate health and safety measures are taken.
* Communicating with the public through the Council Web site and noticeboards and other channels.
* Advising the Council on progress and ideas/projects to improve the community of Cornforth.
* Complying with the Data Protection Act requirements and all matters of confidentiality as required.

**Work Sessions**

The Working Group may organise any number of work sessions in line with the purpose and scope of the Group, such sessions to be covered by the Council’s Public Liability insurance.

A risk assessment shall be completed by a member of the Working Party for each work session.

For insurance purposes, any person taking part in a work session must sign an attendance sheet giving their full name and telephone number and confirming that they have read and understood the risk assessment.

Completed risk assessments and sign-in sheets should be retained by the Leader for 6 months and then destroyed to comply with GDPR and as per the Council’s Retention of Document Policy.

All parent/guardians of young people aged 14 – 17 who wish to take part in any work sessions will be required to complete the Parent Consent form.

Consent will be required to be updated in January of each year and retained by the Leader of the Working Party for a maximum of 12 months.

**Powers**

Working Groups cannot make decisions or speak on behalf of the Parish Council.

Any recommendations made by the Group will be subject to approval by the Council or by delegated authority to the Clerk/lead member.

The Working Group shall have an annual budget of £500, to be exercised through delegated authority to the Clerk. Any additional expenditure should be agreed at a Full Council meeting.

In all cases, Financial Regulations will be applied.

**Reporting**

The Clerk will update the Council through the reporting of delegated authority used.

The Working Group will keep residents informed of its activities by reporting at the Annual Parish Meeting and by providing updates at Council Meetings through the Leader of the group from time to time.

**Life of the Cornforth Community Improvement Working Group**

The Working Group shall continue until deemed unnecessary by the Council or until such time as its members determine.