



North Hinksey Parish Council



Terms of Reference for NHPC Committees, Sub-Committees and Advisory Committees

1. NHPC Standing Orders and these Terms of Reference.

This document should be read in conjunction with relevant sections of the NHPC Standing Orders. Should there be any conflict between these two documents then the Standing Orders take precedence.

2. Overview of Committees and Advisory Committees.

There are three possible types of Committees which are described in sections (a), (b) and (c) below and also shown in the summary table of characteristics which appears as Appendix 1 of this document. The three types are Committees, Sub-Committees, and Advisory Committees.

Where it refers in this document to decisions being made in a meeting of either a committee or sub-committee those decisions could equally be made under an agenda item in a full council meeting or a parent committee where that course of action is either practical or necessary. Reasons for this occurring would include: (i) urgency, where no meeting is already planned for the committee / sub-committee and it can more easily be handled elsewhere, (ii) the matter being referred upwards by the committee / sub-committee, or (iii) the inability to hold a quorate meeting of a committee or sub-committee due to an insufficient members present.

(a) Committees (Standing Committees):

NHPC operates with a number of long-term Committees (alternatively known as Standing Committees) that are delegated with specific responsibilities, and in some cases also allocated a budget in order to carry out the tasks required of them. Where Committees wish to incur expenditure but do not have an allocated budget or require funds beyond those held in its budget the matter must be referred to full Council for approval.

At the time this version of this Policy was adopted these Committees consisted of the following:

- Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee – to deal with the preparation of budgets and accounts and other general financial matters.
- Planning Committee – to deal with planning issues.
- Recreation & Amenities (R&A) Committee – to deal with the provision and maintenance of recreational open spaces, facilities and buildings, plus the North Hinksey Nature Reserve and Community Orchard.
- Remembrance Day Committee – to deal with the Remembrance Day Service organised by NHPC.
- Communications Committee – to deal with all aspects of NHPC internal and external communications including the management of the NHPC website and Social Media pages.

- Environment and Wellbeing Committee – to deal with matters impacting on the environment and/or the wellbeing of parishioners that are not otherwise specifically allocated to one of the above Committees.
- Personnel Committee – to deal with appointment and review processes for all NHPC employees and to give employees an additional route for raising any concerns.
- New Pavilion Committee - The Committee is to provide a supplementary decision-making body for the building works of the New Pavilion when decisions are required quicker than the next scheduled Parish Council Meeting.

Further specific details relating to the individual Committees appear under sections 6 to 13 of this document.

(b) Sub-Committees:

In addition, NHPC may operate Sub-Committees which are set up by a specific Committee, and report in directly to that parent Committee. Sub-Committees are established to provide support for the parent Committee and may have authority or funds allocated to it from the levels of authority or budget already held by the parent Committee.

Alternatively, it may have to report back to the parent Committee on a specific issue to either carry out a desired action, or to gain approval for funds to cover expenditure.

A Sub-Committee's mode of operation is generally the same as for its parent Committee, however a number of differences are highlighted in the following sections of this document.

Currently NHPC has no Sub-Committees in operation.

(c) Advisory Committees (also known as Working Groups):

The final category is the Advisory Committees (alternatively described as a Working Group). No Advisory Committee can be allocated a budget and therefore it must gain approval from its parent body prior to incurring any expenditure.

Advisory Committees report in directly to a parent body, which can be full Council or one of its Committees or Sub-Committees.

Advisory Committees are not able to set Council Policy, or to make decisions that impact on NHPC operations. Additionally, they are not able to carry out functions on behalf of NHPC. Primarily they are intended to research topics, gather information, and provide advice and recommendations to their parent body, either on a short-term basis with a specific objective and set deadline, or on a longer-term basis to provide expertise on ongoing issues.

3. Setting up Committees, Sub-Committees and Advisory Committees.

(a) Setting up a new Committee:

New Committees can only be set up by means of a motion in a full Council meeting. That motion must clearly identify the purpose of the Committee, any authority delegated to it, any membership restrictions and the initial budget being allocated to it (if any). Initial members of a new standing Committee and a Chairman (who must be a NHPC Councillor) must also be identified at the time the Committee is set up. A Vice Chairman (who must also be a NHPC Councillor) is elected at the first meeting of the new Committee.

(b) Setting up a new Sub-Committee:

New Sub-Committees can be set up by a motion at a meeting of a Committee, after which it reports into that parent Committee. Sub-Committees can be allocated a budget from the parent Committee budget, either on being set up or at any later time. In addition, the other requirements for setting up a new Committee also apply (see section 3 (a) above).

(c) Setting up a new Advisory Committee:

Advisory Committees can be set up via a motion agreed at any meeting of full Council, a Committee, or a Sub-Committee, after which that body becomes the parent body which the Advisory Committee reports to. No Advisory Committee can be allocated a budget, and a Chairman and Vice Chairman (who do not have to be NHPC Councillors) are only selected at the first meeting of the Advisory Committee by all of its members present at that meeting, but otherwise the same requirements apply as for setting up a Committee or Sub-Committee (see sections 3 (a) and 3 (b) above).

4. Membership:

(a) Committees and Sub-Committees:

Both Committees and Sub-Committees share the following requirements regarding membership:

- They must have a minimum of 4 Councillor members.
- The maximum number of Councillor members must be the number of Councillors in the parent body less one. (N.B. In cases where an election amongst parent body members is necessary to reduce candidates by one then the Chair and Vice Chair of the parent body have priority of membership and do not take part in that election process).
- Councillor members are elected or re-elected annually at the NHPC Annual Meeting. Following the Annual Meeting it is still possible for Councillors to join a committee or sub-committee provided that a majority of the committee / sub-committee Councillor members vote to agree this at a meeting of that committee / sub-committee, and also that a vacancy exists. Should any committee or sub-committee have less than the required minimum of 4 Councillor members at any time then approval for further Councillors to join that committee / sub-committee must be given by a majority of Councillors in the parent body at a meeting of that parent body.
- It is possible for most of these bodies to co-opt non-Councillor members at any time, who have restricted voting rights. Non-Councillor members only have the right to vote on issues relating to the following:
 - Management of land
 - Tourism functions
 - Management of a festival.

Where the above categories of issues fall within the remit of specific Committees a definition of detailed voting rights pertaining to each individual Committee is included within sections 6 to 13 of this document.

- Councillor members must constitute a majority of the total members of the committee or sub-committee (but not necessarily a majority of members attending any meeting).
- When non-councillors form a majority of those able to vote on an issue at a specific meeting, they do not have the authority to authorise additional expenditure of any type (even when funds are held by that committee which could be used to cover that expenditure), they are only able to recommend additional expenditure to be approved at a subsequent meeting.
- Non-Councillors do not have a right to vote on the following matters, which are only able to be decided by Councillors at a full Council meeting:
 - setting a total budget for a Committee, and
 - the disposal or change in use of land, or acquisition of new land.
- All co-opted members terms of office on any committee or sub-committee end at the next AGM after their co-option, with co-option then occurring again at a subsequent meeting of the committee or sub-committee. There is no limit to the number of times an individual can be co-opted.

Additional restrictions apply to membership of the F&GP Committee (see section 6 below) and the Personnel Committee (see section 13 below).

Sub-Committees have the following additional requirements:

- Any Councillor members must be members of the parent Committee to have full Councillor voting rights on that sub-committee.
- It is possible for Councillors who are not members of the parent Committee to be co-opted onto a Sub-Committee, but in that context, they will be sitting on the Sub-Committee in a non-Councillor role, and as such they will have non-Councillor voting restrictions and will not count towards the required majority of Councillor members.

(b) Advisory Committees:

The following requirements apply to membership of Advisory Committees:

- There can be any mix of Councillors and non-Councillors including the possibility of an Advisory Committee consisting solely of non-Councillors, however North Hinksey Parish Council consider it to be good practice to include at least one Councillor in normal practice.
- There are no restrictions on voting rights for non-Councillors.
- There must be a minimum of 2 members on any Advisory Committee, but ideally there should normally be 4 or more. Where particular specialist knowledge is required to participate fully in an Advisory Committee this may limit the potential availability of suitable candidates.
- Membership of an Advisory Committee can continue across more than one NHPC Council term and there is no automatic need for re-election of Councillor members at an AGM.

5. Meetings and Record Keeping.

(a) Committees and Sub-Committees:

Meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees are generally open to the press and general public, and they are notified about them via the NHPC website and by means of displaying the agendas on NHPC noticeboards. N.B. When confidential matters are being discussed members of the press and public may be excluded – see also section 13 below on the Personnel Committee and relevant sections of the NHPC Standing Orders.

All meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees are attended by the Parish Clerk, who takes formal minutes which are kept as official NHPC records. Where the Parish Clerk is not available, the elected Vice Chair of the Committee will become responsible for the formal minutes and for negotiating any actions allocated to the Clerk. Should the Vice-Chair be chairing the meeting or otherwise unavailable, the meeting will agree another Councillor to be responsible for taking the formal minutes.

The required quorum for meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees is one half of that body's members or a minimum of 3 members, whichever is greater.

(b) Advisory Committees:

Meetings of Advisory Committees are less formal and are not notified to the public or open for them to attend unless invited to do so by the Chair of that Advisory Committee. In addition, they are not necessarily attended by the Parish Clerk and records may consist of informal notes (which do not form part of NHPC's official records) rather than formal minutes of the meeting. There is still a required quorum for meetings of one half of that Advisory Committee's members, however.

Whenever Advisory Committees report back to their parent body then that report will be minuted and become part of official NHPC records by those means. Any report back to the parent body must be based on records previously approved by a majority of Advisory Committee members at a meeting of that Advisory Committee.

6. F&GP Committee.

Membership restrictions. In addition to the standard restrictions on Committee membership detailed in section 3 (c) above the following further restrictions also apply:

- Non-Councillors cannot be members of the F&GP Committee.
- Councillor members are restricted to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council, the Committee Chairs, a 'Councillor with extensive knowledge of the Parish' and a 'further Councillor'. The last two of these categories are open for election at the NHPC AGM. Any Councillor other than those already on the F&GP Committee by nature of holding one of the positions identified above may put themselves forward for election as the 'Councillor with extensive knowledge of the Parish' or the 'further Councillor'.

Committee budget. The F&GP Committee does not have a separate Committee budget as such with any related expenditure generally falling exclusively under the administration budget due to the nature of its activities.

Its main responsibilities are to work with the Parish Clerk in order to prepare or revise budgets and accounts, to recommend to full Council the level of Precept for the following year, and to deal with other general financial matters. All of these matters are referred to full Council for final approval

based on the recommendation of the F&GP Committee and detailed data provided by the Parish Clerk.

7. Planning Committee.

Delegation of authority to the Planning Committee. In appointing the membership of the Planning Committee, Council delegates responsibility to that committee for making comments on behalf of the Council on planning related matters and planning applications to the relevant planning authority.

Referral of planning matters to full Council. For major planning matters/applications the Planning Committee may agree at one of its Committee meetings to either report back to full Council or to refer it to full Council to debate and suggest a response if a majority of Planning Committee members agree that this would be an appropriate course of action. Alternatively, it is possible for a motion to be put to full Council by any Councillor to require that a planning application or other planning issue is debated in full Council in order to provide recommendations to the Planning Committee which will then subsequently make the formal response.

Training. It is a requirement that any councillor who serves on the Planning Committee, will, within a reasonable time of being appointed, undertake planning training offered by either the District Council or the OALC.

Committee Budget. The Planning Committee does not hold a separate budget of its own, and any expenditure must only occur after agreeing the use of general funds for that purpose at a full Council meeting.

8. R&A Committee.

The R&A Committee is authorised to manage all recreational open spaces, facilities and buildings or other outside body as identified in this section and is allocated a separate Committee budget to allow it to do so.

At the time of adoption of this policy these open spaces, facilities and buildings include the following:

- North Hinksey Nature Reserve and Community Orchard
- Upper Louie Memorial Playing Field and facilities/buildings located on it including the Pavilion, shelter, MUGA, and Trim Trail equipment. N.B. In terms of the Pavilion the R&A Committee is solely responsible for managing the exterior of the building, with the responsibility for managing the interior of the building and the hiring of the Pavilion falling under the separate Pavilion Management Committee.
- Lower Louie Memorial Playing Field and facilities located on it including the children's play equipment.
- The fen and copse adjoining the Lower Louie Memorial Playing Field.

R&A Committee responsibilities include:

- The maintenance of all of the above in a reasonable and safe state, meeting the requirements of all relevant legislative bodies (e.g., ROSPA) and NHPC insurers.
- The identification and provision of additional leisure facilities where appropriate (and subject to agreement of full Council where it impacts on expenditure above budgeted funds, planning issues, or a significant change to the overall level or nature of leisure facilities being offered by NHPC) to bring overall provision in line with recognised national, regional or local guidelines.

Definition of ‘land management’ in the context of voting rights for co-opted members of the R&A Committee:

‘Land management’ in this context consists of dealing with the natural features of the land rather than man-made facilities placed on it.

Matters on which co-opted members can vote include general management issues involving the NHPC land managed by the R&A committee in terms of the upkeep and improvement of natural features, flora and fauna occurring there, and environmental aspects of that land.

Matters on which co-opted members are unable to vote include any decisions on leisure facilities located on NHPC land that is being managed by the R&A committee including the provision of new facilities, upkeep / management of those facilities, rules for usage of the facilities, publicising the facilities etc. Specifically, those facilities currently include the Louie Memorial Pavilion and play equipment located on the Louie Memorial Playing Fields.

9. Remembrance Day Committee.

The Remembrance Day Committee is authorised to make arrangements for the NHPC Remembrance Day Service including the appointment of a guest speaker, and it has a separate Committee budget to allow it to do so. It does not, however, have the authority to change the structure or content of the service away from the customary model without prior approval from full Council.

10. Communications Committee:

Communications Committee responsibilities include the following:

- Reviewing all current methods of communication, both internal and external, and recommending to Council improvements to the content, structure and frequency of those communication methods.
- Identifying additional methods of communication not currently used and recommending how best to use them to improve the effectiveness of Council communications.
- Following approval of any changes to methods, content, structure or frequency of communications this Committee would also normally be responsible for implementing them unless other specific individuals or bodies are identified by Council as responsible for carrying out that task.
- Maintenance of the NHPC website and Social Media pages.

The Communications Committee is not responsible for the detailed content of communications which should be provided by the Council Chairman, Committees or Sub-Committees or individual designated Councillors as appropriate to the topic. There is, however, an expectation that the Communications Committee will suggest editing of content to maximise the positive impact and efficiency of any communications.

Website specific positions within the Communications Committee.

The Committee must include at least 2 specific Councillors appointed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting to carry out maintenance of the NHPC website and social media pages, one of whom will be designated the title Webmaster. Also, the Parish Clerk is automatically included as a non-Councillor member of the Communications Committee and is authorised to carry out maintenance of the NHPC website. Details of the website and social media responsibilities of the Committee and roles of these website specific positions are included in the separate NHPC Website and Social Media Policies.

Committee budget. The Communications Committee is allocated a separate budget to cover maintenance of the NHPC website and printing of documents including the annual NHPC newsletter.

11.Environment and Wellbeing Committee:

The Environment and Wellbeing Committee is responsible for matters impacting on the environment and the wellbeing of parishioners that are not otherwise specifically allocated to one of the Committees described in sections 6 to 10 above.

At the time of the adoption of this version of the Terms of Reference these responsibilities include:

- Implementing the NHPC Climate Emergency Policy (as adopted February 2019).
- Implementing relevant Community Actions contained within the emerging North Hinksey Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2031 (including CAS12, CAUT1, CAGS1, CAGS2, CAGS3 and CABU2 in the version of the Plan submitted for Independent Examination) in liaison with other appropriate local bodies.

Committee budget. The Environment and Wellbeing Committee does not hold a separate budget of its own, and any expenditure must only occur after agreeing the use of general funds for that purpose at a full Council meeting.

12.Personnel Committee:

Membership restrictions. In addition to the standard restrictions on Committee membership detailed in section 3 (c) above non-Councillors cannot be members of the Personnel Committee. Committee Chairman. It is recommended that the Chairman of this Committee is not the NHPC Chairman in order to provide employees with an alternative designated Councillor to approach with any concerns.

Because of the private and confidential nature of matters being discussed by the Personnel Committee members of the public and press will not normally be able to attend these Committee meetings, and minutes will not be published on the Council website. The Committee will report

back to full Council and issues will be dealt with appropriately in those meetings in terms of their confidentiality.

Personnel Committee responsibilities include the following:

- To oversee any recruitment and review processes of Council employees. N.B. Any panels set up by the Committee to carry out interviews or reviews can contain Councillors not on this Committee and/or the Clerk / RFO as appropriate and should be in line with any guidelines put forward by full Council.
- Ensuring that all Policies directly relevant to employees (including the Recruitment Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Sickness and Absence Policy, Protocol on Councillor – Employee Relations and Grievance Policy) remain fit for purpose and are being fully adhered to by Council. N.B. Any changes to Policies proposed by the Committee require negotiation with staff and their trade union representatives (if appropriate) and approval by full Council before being adopted.
- To provide a channel for employees to informally raise any matters of concern (either relating to personal wellbeing or performance issues, or behaviour of individual Councillors or the Council as a whole) outside of the formal Council Policies and Procedures.

Committee budget.

The Personnel Committee does not have a separate Committee budget, with any related expenditure requiring prior approval by full Council.

Amended Clause 12 Adopted by North Hinksey Parish Council at its meeting on 28th April 2022.

13. New Pavilion Committee

Membership restrictions. In addition to the standard restrictions on Committee membership detailed in section 3 (c) of Terms of Reference for NHPC Committees, Sub-Committees and Advisory Committees the following further restrictions also apply:

Non-Councillors cannot be members

The Committee shall consist of up to thirteen Members, appointed by the Parish Council from its members and shall include the Chair of Council.

The Committee is to provide a supplementary decision-making body for the building works of the New Pavilion when decisions are required quicker than the next scheduled Parish Council Meeting. When the building works are complete the Committee will cease to exist.

In appointing the membership of the New Pavilion Committee, Council delegates responsibility to the committee for making decisions on behalf of the Council on urgent matters related to the building of the New Pavilion.

The Committee cannot appoint a sub-committee or delegate its powers to a member of staff.

The Committee shall undertake the following role and functions:

Meetings to be ad hoc, as and when required.

To decide that the matter is urgent and requires a decision by the Committee rather than Council and be able to justify that decision at the next Parish Council Meeting.

To agree expenditure to a maximum of £5,000 taking into account, at all times, the policies and procedures of North Hinksey Parish Council, in particular, its financial regulations and to be able to justify any decision at the next Parish Council Meeting.

The Committee cannot revoke a decision already taken by Council.

Clause 13 Adopted by North Hinksey Parish Council at its meeting on 20th October 2022

