



# WENDOVER PARISH COUNCIL

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## Terms of Reference for Wendover Parish Council Planning Committee

### 1. Function

The Planning Committee serves to represent the views of Wendover Parish Council which is a **Consultee** for the Local Planning Authority (LPA), currently Buckinghamshire Council, on all planning applications falling within the boundary of the Parish of Wendover and for the wider planning strategy for the County.

### 2. Authority

The Planning Committee is appointed by and is solely responsible to Wendover Parish Council (WPC). The Committee's duties are defined and agreed by the Council who may vote, at any time, to modify the Committee's powers.

### 3. Membership

All members of the Committee will be WPC Councillors. The membership of the Committee will be reviewed annually but will consist of no less than **five and no more than eight Councillors**. A quorum at the Committee meeting will consist of no fewer than **three Councillors**. If there are less than three Councillors, then the Planning Applications will be carried forward to the next meeting. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council will automatically be *ex officio* members of the Committee with full voting rights if in attendance making the maximum attendees 10 Councillors. **All members should familiarise themselves with the plans on the agenda prior to each meeting.**

### 4. Chair of the Committee

At its first meeting, following the Annual Council Meeting, the Committee will elect a Chair to preside at its coming meetings. The Committee will then elect a Vice Chair to the Committee. The Vice Chair cannot be the Chair of Council or a Chair of another Committee.

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, if present the Vice Chair will preside. If the Vice Chair of the Committee is not present at the meeting the Chair of Council will preside.

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, the Vice-Chair of Committee and the Chair of Council then first order of business of that meeting will be the nomination, by a show of hands, of a Chair to preside at that meeting. In this occurrence the Committee should consider carefully whether to proceed if it is quorate.

If, by January, the Vice Chair has not chaired a meeting, the Chair of the Committee should consider if it is practical to waive their right to chair the next ordinary meeting. The Chair of the Committee would consider the business being discussed and the frequency of the meetings before waiving this right to Chair.

If the numbers of Councillors do not permit the role of vice chair can remain unelected. This will be noted in the minutes and this decision reviewed should the number of councillors change.

The Chair should have a good knowledge of the Local and National Planning Policy and should be aware of the issues relating to each planning application submitted to the Parish Council for

comment and should be able to guide the Committee to make informed recommendations in its comments to the LPA.

## **5. Meetings**

The Planning Committee shall meet twice per month unless there are insufficient new planning applications to consider. If there are no new planning applications the next scheduled meeting will be cancelled, and the decision will be notified at least three clear days in advance. If only one or two new planning applications have been received, they shall be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council, or if the date for commenting is sooner the Clerk will canvass the opinions of the Committee by email and respond on its behalf.

## **6. Record of Proceedings**

Written minutes will be taken by an officer\* of the Council. If an officer\* is unavailable, a member of the Committee may be nominated at the start of the meeting to take the minutes.

Minutes must include all the Committee's decisions and any advice given by the Clerk even if that advice is not followed. Draft minutes will be circulated to all Councillors no later than 5 clear working days after the Committee meeting. The Clerk\* is responsible for arranging the distribution of the minutes and receiving any requests for amendments or additions. Where the Clerk\* is in doubt about any requested alteration to the agenda this will be decided by the Committee.

## **7. Public exclusion**

If the public are excluded from the meeting a record will be taken of all matters discussed and if not included in the general minutes, attached as a confidential record to be signed with the published draft minutes by the Chair at the next meeting. Should the Clerk be excluded from this part of the meeting, for any reason, the Chair shall take the minute/confidential record. Full minutes, including the confidential record, will be circulated to full Council, noting confidentiality if necessary.

At each meeting, the Committee will consider the draft minutes of the previous meeting. The Committee will make a resolution to accept the minutes (which may be subject to minor changes) and the Chair of the meeting will sign them accordingly.

All Councillors are asked to contact the Clerk\* at least two working days prior to the Committee meeting if there are any changes they wish to make to the draft minutes.

## **8. Agenda Setting**

The agenda for the Planning Committee is determined by the Clerk and will include the planning applications received at the Parish Council's offices and any consultations, relevant to planning, for which the Parish Council have been invited to comment. Further standing items relating to infrastructure and neighbourhood planning may also feature as standing or regular items as required.

Parish Councillors can request additional agenda items, which must be received in writing at least 5 working days before the meeting date. The agenda for the next Planning Committee Meeting to be held will be circulated to the Members three clear working days before the meeting.

The plans relating to the applications will be available for viewing as a hard copy at the Parish Council Office and online on the Buckinghamshire Council website.

## **9. Responsibilities**

- To have an understanding of the current Planning Regulations.

- Under delegated power from Wendover Parish Council, to respond to the LPA when consulted on new planning applications falling within the parish boundary.
- The Committee has a responsibility to consider equally all representations made to it, either in writing or during public participation at the meeting, before making its decision.
- When contentious planning applications are referred to the LPA Development Management Committee for decision at their meetings a representative from the Planning Committee should be nominated to attend the meeting and present the views of the Parish Council. If nobody from the Planning Committee is available another Parish Councillor or member of staff can attend the meeting.
- To prepare appropriate responses to consultations for planning related matters and to report these back to the Parish Council.
- To represent the views of the Parish Council at any planning appeals or inquiries.
- To influence the planning strategy of the LPA by responding to consultations in a manner that is realistic but protects the amenities of Wendover and its surrounding area.
- To review and maintain the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and to use it in order to influence development within the parish, to manage changes in a sympathetic way and to preserve the special character and amenities of Wendover parish. To use the NP as a reference when considering new development within the parish.
- A Member of the Committee (usually the Chair) should represent the Parish Council at the Local Planning Liaison Group meetings which are arranged on an ad-hoc basis by the LPA.
- To notify the relevant enforcement authority of any breach of planning regulations that is brought to the Council's attention.
- To liaise with public bodies and organisations with the responsibility for the maintenance and development of infrastructure in the Parish.
- HS2: The Committee will work with the WPC's HS2 Working Group to consider applications made to the LPA under various sections of the High-Speed Rail Bill. The Committee will represent the views of the community, with regard to these applications, to the LPA using whatever channels are open to it.
- The WPC HS2 Working Group will report to Full Council through the WPC Planning Committee.

## **9. Site visits**

There is a protocol for site visits which must be followed when Parish Councillors wish to make a formal site visit. Safeguarding measures against Covid need to be adhered to. The arrangement of a site visit must be done through the Clerk who will notify all Members of the Committee of the visit. Councillors who make individual ad-hoc site visits are not representing the Parish Council although the Code of Conduct still applies. Following a site visit a report will be made to the Committee.

## **10. Responses**

Following the Planning Committee meeting all comments on planning applications and responses to consultations will be notified to the relevant authority by the Clerk before the due date.

On occasion when an objection to a planning application has been made by the Planning Committee an amendment to the plans may be made by the applicant that then nullifies the objection. In this situation, where the majority of the Planning Committee is in agreement, the Clerk has the delegated authority to withdraw the objection.

The Clerk is responsible for maintaining a detailed record of all planning applications, the Council's responses, and the final decision in the Parish Council's Planning Log and in the minutes of the meetings.

## **11. Conduct at Committee Meetings**

Committee members are expected to always abide by the WPC Code of Conduct.

Although debate at Committee meetings is often less formal than at the Council meeting, Councillors may at the discretion of the Chair still be asked to raise their hand to speak and to only speak when invited to by the Chair.

### **All Councillors must:**

- **respect other members' right to express their opinions**
- **not interrupt members or officers when they are speaking**
- **consider all views before concluding on an item on the agenda**

Clear and concise resolutions are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the minutes and to ensure that the intention of the resolution is conveyed to the members for them to vote on.

**\* In this document where marked, "Clerk" should be read as "Clerk or their delegated officer".**

Last Review Date: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024