



Terms of Reference for the Parish Council's Standing Committees

Thurston Parish Council

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1.0 Introduction

This document defines the Terms of Reference for standing committees of Thurston Parish Council (The Council).

These Terms of Reference are in two parts:

- i. General Clauses which apply to all standing committees
- ii. Specific Clauses which apply to particular standing committees.

Where a Specific Clause differs from a General Clause, the Specific Clause will take precedence.

2.0 General Clauses

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference set out in this document are approved by the full council, and subject to amendment at future Council meetings.
- 2.2 The committees will operate in accordance with the Standing Orders of the council.
- 2.3 Full council will appoint the members and the Chair of the Committee (if applicable) in accordance with Standing Order 4.d.vii.
- 2.4 Meetings will be called with a minimum three clear days' public notice which will not include the day on which the notice is issued or the day of the meeting.
- 2.5 Items to be discussed at the meetings are limited to those that are included on the agenda for the meeting.
- 2.6 The Council's standing orders will determine the date, place, notices and other procedures to regulate the committee.
- 2.7 The Committees' duties are defined and agreed by full council, which may vote, at any time, to modify a committee's powers.

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Purpose of the committee:

The committee is established to manage, maintain and improve the performance of the statutory powers and functions and related work of the parish council. The committee is appointed by and solely responsible to Thurston Parish Council.

The Committee is defined as a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Orders Section 4.

Membership:

The Committee will consist of a minimum of seven Councillors. The Chair of the council will preside at each and future meetings. Any elected member can preside by agreement in the chair's absence. A quorum will be a minimum of five Committee members.

Record or Proceedings:

Such meetings will be scheduled for the year and called by the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer to the Council.

The Clerk will provide full administrative support for the Committee. The Responsible Financial Officer will be in attendance at relevant meetings in relation to the financial management of the council's affairs.

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded by the Clerk, or any member nominated at the meeting.

Written minutes will be taken to record the Committee's decisions, and a report will be tabled at the next full Council Meeting which will be formally received and acknowledged.

Responsibilities:

On behalf of the Council this shall include the following responsibilities:

- a) To keep under review the statutory functions and powers and other legal responsibilities of the council on the council's behalf.
- b) To advise the Council, following research or investigation, on changes required to its procedures and functions in light of new legislation coming forth.
- c) To draft, implement, review, monitor and revise policies for the Council in light of new legislation coming forth.
- d) To prepare budgets and recommend precepts and submit them to full Council for approval.
- e) To ensure adequate financial controls are in place to utilize and protect the Council's finances and assets.
- f) To review and amend the Council's Financial Regulations annually and to ensure that the Council is observing the regulations.
- g) To monitor and effect compliance with laid down internal and external audit and other financial procedures, regulations and statutes.
- h) To consider all complaints referred to the Committee, as submitted against the council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action

was taken, or the service was provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.

- i) To ensure appropriate measures are in place to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- j) If appropriate and upon resolution by the Council, to investigate the circumstances and the effect(s) of an information security incident (data breach) as described under the Council's Information Security Incident Policy.
- k) To formally record the incident and the associated response relating to Item J above for submission to the Council and undertake any reviews as outlined in the Information Security Incident Policy.
- l) To put forward to the Council, proposals for any improvements, developments or any capital expenditure when requesting funding for the following year.
- m) To lead on and approve tenders for all aspects of maintenance of the parish and its functions in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
- n) To monitor, review, recommend on and consider all matters relating to the Council's staff, emoluments and conditions of service.
- o) To monitor the Council's financial risk assessments and recommend changes where necessary.
- p) To approve to Full Council such delegated powers to the Council's Committees as thought appropriate.
- q) To appoint annually (or to reconfirm annually) the Responsible Financial Officer to oversee the Council's financial affairs.

In all other aspects the parish council's standing orders will determine the date, place, notices and other procedures to regulate the committee.

PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Committee:

The consideration of local planning applications and other planning issues relating to the parish of Thurston.

The committee's duties are defined and agreed by full council, which may vote, at any time, to modify the committee's powers. The Planning & Infrastructure Committee is defined as a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Orders Section 4. The committee is appointed by and solely responsible to Thurston Parish Council.

Membership:

The Committee will consist of no fewer than eight councillors and the Chair of the parish council will preside over each and future meetings when in attendance. Any member of the Committee can preside by agreement in the Chair's absence. A quorum will be five members.

All other members of the Parish Council have the right to attend the meeting and make representations on the matters being discussed within the Public Forum.

Records of Proceedings:

Such meetings will be scheduled for the year and called by the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer to the Council. Written minutes will be taken to record the committee's decisions and will be received in draft form at the next full council meeting. Minutes will be formally signed at the next relevant Planning and Infrastructure Committee Meeting.

The Proper Officer will ask the Planning Officer of the Local Planning Authority to grant an extension of the time for consideration of an application if the application is received after the agenda has been set and cannot be amended and the closing date for comments is outside of the next 21 days.

The Parish Clerk will be responsible for arranging the recording and distribution of the minutes. All decisions will be relayed to the relevant planning authority by the Clerk. The Clerk will submit the Planning and Infrastructure Committee's recommendations and supporting reasons to the Planning Authority or other relevant body and will ensure that communications arrive within the timescale required by the Planning Authority.

Should a Planning Application be received that is deemed to be potentially contentious, the Proper Officer will notify all members of the parish council and invite them to attend the Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting or submit any comments they wish to make prior to the relevant committee meeting.

Responsibilities:

The committee will be granted full delegated powers to make a council decision regarding responses to the appropriate authorities. It will therefore have the delegated authority to act as per the items below:

- a) To consider and provide a response, to the relevant Planning Authority, to all planning applications when notified under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 20, Schedule 16 or not, regardless of their size, controversial nature or effect on the parish.
 - In considering matters before it, the committee will take into account the council's vision for the parish, local opinion and comments from third parties. They will base

their response on relevant or 'material' planning considerations e.g. (in order of weight) and will have mind to:

- material considerations which include referring to particular policies that Mid Suffolk District Council have adopted within their Local Plan
- policies within the Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan which was adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council on 24th October 2019.
- the most relevant Draft of the [Joint Babergh Mid Suffolk Local Plan](#)
- the most relevant version of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

- The response will indicate whether the Council supports, has no comment or objects to the application and will be formed along the following lines:

- support the application because it will have benefits for the parish, either now or in the future;
- support the application but ask for details of the proposed development to be reconsidered and changed;
- make "no comment", since the proposal's overall effect would be neutral or of little relevance to residents;
- register an objection to the application, but suggest action that could be taken to address the objection, such as amending the proposal or attaching planning conditions or a planning obligation; or
- request that the application be refused permission because of its adverse effects, which cannot be dealt with satisfactorily by using conditions or obligations.

- b) In responding to all consultations regarding planning issues or issues that will have an impact on planning, the committee is authorised to make written representations or to elect a member to attend the hearing at which the proposal will be considered.
- c) To make written representation or to elect a member to attend a hearing when an application is subject to appeal.
- d) To monitor the general environment of the parish and report to the local planning authorities any potential planning breaches.
- e) In conjunction with the Responsible Financial Officer, to consider and monitor the adopted Thurston Neighbourhood Plan.
- f) In conjunction with the Responsible Financial Officer, to consider and respond to any section 106 and/or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) agreements in relation to developments within the parish.
- g) In conjunction with the Responsible Financial Officer, to review the Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP) to ensure that it identifies and prioritises the infrastructure needs of the community and future spending decisions.
- h) To identify, research and review gaps in infrastructure.
- i) To elicit and enable public support for its views about infrastructure and the role of the parish council in the development of a safe and sustainable community.

- j) To approve requests for developer presentations, and agree date, time, location as per the adopted Pre-Application Protocol. All communication will be via the Proper Officer.
- k) To comment on street naming where requested so to do by the local planning authority.
- l) To attend planning training sessions as offered by the planning authority and to read all relevant documentation to ensure that the Committee is aware of current legislation and regulations.
- m) To comment on licenses when requested so to do.
- n) When appropriate, seek expert opinion and guidance from other parties.
- o) To appoint sub-committees and/or working groups for specific purposes as required and determine their terms of reference.

EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Committee:

The Emergency Planning Committee is appointed by, and solely responsible to Thurston Parish Council. The committee's duties are defined and agreed by full council, which may vote, at any time, to modify the committee's powers.

Membership:

The Committee will consist of no fewer than seven parish councillors. Membership and Chair shall be appointed to the committee at the Annual Council Meeting of the parish council for a term of 12 months. Any member of the committee can preside by agreement in the chair's absence. A quorum will be five members. The chair of the parish council will have automatic membership and full voting rights if in attendance.

Records of Proceedings:

The committee will prepare recommendations which will be circulated to all councillors and taken to full council. The Deputy Clerk will ensure all clerking duties are available for the committee to function. Written minutes will be taken to record the committee's decisions and will be received at the next committee meeting and tabled as an appendix at the next relevant full council meeting.

Responsibilities:

The committee is responsible for producing a directory to assist in the parish in case of an emergency. Summarized versions along with relevant website links will be added to the parish website.

Within the directory it will:

- a) Identify temporary accommodation together with equipment and personnel within the parish that may be available during an emergency and work in partnership with District and County Council Emergency Planning teams to ensure this information is available to all.
- b) Liaise with other village groups as appropriate with regard to dealing with emergencies.
- c) Undertake a review of the effectiveness of the directory – as appropriate – following any emergency situation.
- d) Map out those areas that have become prone to flooding over the course of the previous year.
- e) Carry out an annual review of the status of the grit bins within the village.
- f) Review the documentation for inclusion on the parish website/Village Information Booklet.
- g) Any other issues as requested by the full council.

ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Purpose of Committee:

The Environment & Biodiversity Committee is a committee of the council and is responsible for the preservation and enhancement of the local environment and interests of the local community within its powers and duties.

The committee's duties are defined and agreed by full council, which may vote, at any time, to modify the committee's powers. The Environment & Biodiversity Committee is defined as a committee pursuant to Standing Orders Section 4. The committee is appointed by, and solely responsible to Thurston Parish Council.

Meetings:

Meetings will be scheduled by the Proper Officer for the local authority year. Three clear days' notice of the meeting should be given, this does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting.

Membership:

The committee will consist of no fewer than eight parish councillors. Membership and Chair shall be appointed to the committee at the Annual Council Meeting of the parish council for a term of 12 months. Any member of the committee can preside by agreement in the chair's absence. A quorum will be five members.

Records of Proceedings:

The committee will meet on a bi-monthly basis. Written minutes will be taken to record the committee's decisions and will be formally signed at the next relevant Environment & Biodiversity Committee Meeting.

A synoptic report, summarizing decisions and actions taken by the committee including any recommendations within its remit, will be received at the next parish council meeting for consideration.

The Deputy Clerk will be responsible for arranging the recording and distribution of the minutes.

On occasions, the committee may be accorded temporary delegated powers under LGA 1972 s101 with specific items on behalf of the full council under resolution.

Responsibilities:

- a) To make recommendations to the council as necessary to protect the general environment of the parish.
- b) To consider the provision, maintenance and make representation to the relevant authorities matters relating to footpaths within the parish including Rights of Way.
- c) To oversee the implementation of the Tree Management Policy including the programme of scheduled tree surveys and maintenance.
- d) To represent the needs and views of the community with respect to the management, maintenance, use and development of green open spaces in the village.
- e) To suggest and progress ideas for improving the physical environment of the village.

- f) To consider any actions/strategies to be implemented to ensure compliance with the council's duty to maintain, improve and enhance biodiversity.
- g) To research available data and information relevant to biodiversity
- h) To update the action plan to ensure there is a record of all considerations and actions undertaken that will help the council to achieve its duty to maintain, improve and enhance biodiversity.
- i) To prepare recommendations to Full Council of any actions/strategies required.
- j) To recommend to Full Council the measures it considers necessary to be considered in order to enable the council to respond to its position on the climate crisis.
- k) To enable collaborative working across the council and engagement with individuals, community groups and businesses as well as other partners in the district and/or county including young people.
- l) To investigate steps that may be taken by the council and by residents and businesses to help all work together to achieve the county's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon status by 2030 and the parish council's commitment to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and to the preservation of the environment.
- m) To research available data and information on relevant climate emergency impacts and make recommendations that would help to achieve the council's climate and ecological objectives.
- n) To identify and explore support from central and local government in terms of funding, additional powers and policy changes which are needed to achieve climate and ecological objectives.
- o) To make recommendations to council on responses to any consultations on significant policy matters that directly affect Thurston.

OPEN SPACE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Purpose of the committee:

The Open Space and Leisure Committee is a committee of the council and is responsible for the provision, maintenance and future development of open spaces owned, leased or managed by the council. The committee is also responsible for sporting, leisure and recreational facilities provided by the council, and for making recommendations for new and improved services and provision.

The committee's duties are defined and agreed by full council, which may vote, at any time, to modify the committee's powers. The Open Space & Leisure Committee is defined as a committee pursuant to Standing Orders Section 4. The committee is appointed by, and solely responsible to Thurston Parish Council.

Membership:

The committee is to comprise a minimum of eight members of the council with a Chair who will be elected annually at the Annual Meeting of the Council. Five members of the Committee will constitute a quorum.

Meetings:

Meetings to occur on a monthly basis (except for December) and such meetings will be scheduled for the year and called by the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer to the Council. The Deputy Clerk will provide full administrative support for the Committee. Minutes of all meetings will be recorded by the Deputy Clerk, or any member nominated at the meeting. The written minutes, taken to record the committee's decisions, will be received in draft form at the next full council meeting.

Records of Proceedings:

The committee will meet on a bi-monthly basis. Written minutes will be taken to record the committee's decisions and will be formally signed at the next relevant Open Space & Leisure Committee Meeting.

A synoptic report, summarizing decisions and actions taken by the committee including any recommendations within its remit, will be received at the next parish council meeting for consideration.

The Deputy Clerk will be responsible for arranging the recording and distribution of the minutes.

On occasions, the committee may be accorded temporary delegated powers under LGA 1972 s101 with specific items on behalf of the full council under resolution.

Responsibilities:

a) To oversee the management and operation of open spaces and associated equipment contained within the parish.

b) To consider the provision and manage the maintenance and replacement of parish council owned street scene furniture, (including street scene furniture not located on parish council owned land) including bus shelters, litter bins, dog bins, dog bag dispensers, village signs, war memorial, noticeboards and any other such street scene furniture.

c) To keep under review the provision of the sports and recreational facilities for the residents of Thurston at the following locations:

- Play equipment at the Recreation Ground, Church Road
- Recreational Park at New Green Centre
- Recreational Ground at Heath Road
- Public Open Space at New Green (as per the agreement between the New Green Trust and the Parish Council)

d)To oversee the upkeep, maintenance and improvement of the above areas, including seats, signs and litter bins.

e)To ensure monthly inspection sheets are completed and submitted to the Deputy Clerk for the above areas, highlighting remedial action required.

f)To ensure that quarterly (where appropriate) and annual safety inspections are conducted to meet legal requirements for the above spaces.

g)To be responsible for overseeing the Parish Council's Health and Safety Policy in all areas that the Committee manages / oversees.

h)To proactively support the development of events on open spaces and identify opportunities for improvement.

i)To advise the parish council of the impact of proposals by owners or occupiers of land that may affect its recreational and sports facilities.

j)To review and recommend byelaws for the parish council's recreational, leisure and sports facilities.

k)To work in partnership with the Community Policing Team to alleviate anti-social behaviour and vandalism in/on the Parish Council's sports, leisure and recreational facilities.

l)To work in partnership with appropriate funding bodies to improve the parish council's recreational, leisure and sports facilities.

m)To put forward to the parish council, in conjunction with the Policy & Resources Committee, proposals for any improvements, developments or any capital expenditure when requesting funding for the following year.

RECREATION GROUND CHARITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – Charity Number 304946

Purpose of the Committee:

The Committee holds Delegated Powers from the Council in the operation of the Recreation Ground Charity, which covers the recreation ground, car park and sports pavilion on Church Road. The Parish Council is the sole trustee of the Charity.

Membership

The committee is to comprise a minimum of seven members of the parish council with a chair for the committee who will be elected annually at the annual meeting of the Recreation Ground Trust Charity. *Members should note that the chair of the parish council, under charity law, is also the chair of the Trust.* Five members of the committee will constitute a quorum.

Recordings of Proceedings:

All meetings relating to the Charity and its transactions will be taken at meetings specifically called for that purpose. All such meetings will be convened and clerked in accordance with basic Charity Law.

Meetings to occur on a bi-monthly basis subject to any matters that may require attention or discussion. Such meetings will be scheduled for the year and called by the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer to the Council.

The Deputy Clerk will provide full administrative support for the committee. Minutes of all meetings will be recorded by the Deputy Clerk, or any member nominated at the meeting.

Six monthly reports will be provided to the Recreation Ground Trust meetings called by the Parish Clerk in accordance with the council's duties as Sole Trustee. An annual report, including financial statements, will be submitted to the Annual Trust meeting called in May. At this meeting, the trust will approve the budget to be set for the forthcoming year, following recommendations from the management committee.

The Council's Standing Orders on the rules of debate (except those relating to standing and to speaking more than once) and the Standing Order on interest of members in contracts and other matters will apply to this committee.

If the numbers of the councillors present (not including those debarred by reason of a declared interest) falls below the required quorum the meeting shall be adjourned, and any such business not transacted shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the chair shall arrange.

Responsibilities of the committee with regards to the Recreation Ground, Church Road:

- a. To keep under review the provision of the sports and recreational facilities for the residents of Thurston at the Recreation Ground on Church Road.
- b. To oversee the upkeep, maintenance and improvement of the above area, including ownership/responsibility signs and sports pavilion.
- c. To provide written recommendations to the parish council as Sole Trustee on all matters affecting the maintenance of the area, including 3rd party assets located on the recreation ground.

- d. To ensure monthly inspection sheets are completed and submitted to the Deputy Clerk for the area, highlighting remedial action required.
- e. To review and set the level of the annual fees for use of the sports pavilion on the Recreation Field on Church Road.
- f. To prepare and monitor the budget to be set for the forthcoming year (as approved by the Recreation Ground Trust).
- g. To maintain and administer separate accounts for the Thurston Recreation Ground Charity No. 304946 for the Pavilion on Church Road.
- h. To manage use of the recreation ground on Church Road which shall include the granting of licences for regular use.
- i. To prepare an annual report to summarise the work undertaken in the exercising of its delegated powers for consideration by the Parish Council as Sole Trustee to the Recreation Ground Trust.