

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF CHOPPINGTON PARISH COUNCIL STAFFING AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2018 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL OFFICES**

**THOSE ATTENDING:**

**Cllr H Allsopp  
Cllr E A Barrell  
Cllr K Grimes  
Cllr G Huntley  
Cllr A Iley  
Cllr J Rowell**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr D L Nicholson, Parish Clerk and Ms A Brindley, Deputy Parish Clerk.

In the absence of Cllr P S Vaughan, Cllr E A Barrell took the chair.

**Agenda, Part 1**

**S008/18 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Cllr J Foster (carer responsibility), Cllr P Vaughan (work commitment) and Cllr L Watson (prior engagement). The meeting agreed that these were proper reasons for absence.

**S009/18 2. MEMBERS DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTEREST(S).**

None made.

**S010/18 3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS.**

None received.

**S011/18 4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

The minutes of the previous meeting were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

**S012/18 5. ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

There were no matters arising.

**S013/18 6. SCHEME OF DELEGATION.**

Choppington Parish Council is best described as a community council and the services it delivers are those approved and directed by the community. The budget and precept set each year by the authority is approved by local residents through the Residents Panel.

The Local Government Act 1972, Part VI, S. 101 (1) (b) defines the arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities. Good practice requires local councils to have in place a scheme that identifies committee responsibility in relation to council services and activities and any delegation of responsibility in relation to council expenditure and in relation to other matters. Any scheme needs to be read in conjunction with the council's standing orders, financial regulations and statement of internal controls.

Delegation of authority for budgeted expenditure and service responsibility has previously been considered by the Parish Council which resolved to ask the Parish Clerk to prepare a scheme for consideration by members. That scheme is attached to these minutes as appendix 1. The scheme details the Parish Council's main activity areas identifying where responsibility for governance rests and showing particular delegation of responsibility to the Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

The terms of reference for each committee are contained within the Parish Council's Governance Statement.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. Following discussion the scheme as detailed in Appendix One was adopted by members.**
- 2. Members confirmed delegated authority for all budgeted expenditure not referred to in this report is to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer, in compliance with financial regulation, standing orders and legal requirements.**

**S014/18      7.      REVIEW OF SMALL GRANT SCHEME.**

The Local Government Act 1972, Part VI, S. 101 (1) (b) defines the arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities. Local councils should have in place various schemes and policies, which in their entirety provide a framework to support governance and decision making. These documents should be read in conjunction with standing orders and financial regulations.

The Parish Council has in place a scheme for the awarding of small grants (not normally exceeding £500 in any year to a single

organisation). This scheme identifies criteria against which applications should be assessed and by design directs benefit towards the achievement of the council's strategic purpose.

**RESOLVED: Following discussion the scheme as detailed in Appendix Two was adopted by members.**

**S015/18      8.      POLICY REVIEW.**

The Local Government Act 1972, Part VI, S. 101 (1) (b) defines the arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities. Local councils should have in place policies to ensure the proper working of the council in an open and accountable manner.

Policies should not only reflect the requirements of statute, they should also embrace the 'Nolan principles', which are the basis of the ethical standards expected of public office holders.

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

The Parish Clerk explained that the Parish Council has, since establishment adopted policies to ensure its business is conducted in a proper manner and with due probity. 18 key policies were suggested for review through a workshop process designed to enable all members to participate.

Members welcomed the proposed review and asked that its scope be extended to include consideration of disciplinary procedures.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. Members agreed to review those policies detailed in Appendix Three of these minutes.**
- 2. The methodology of review as detailed in Appendix Three was adopted by members.**

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.20.**

**Chairman.....**

**Date.....**

## **1 Legal Implications**

Local Government Act 1972, Part VI, S. 101 (1) (b) defines the arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities. Local councils should have in place a scheme that identifies committee responsibility in relation to council services and activities and any delegation of responsibility in relation to council expenditure and in relation to other matters. This document should be read in conjunction with the council's standing orders, financial regulations and statement of internal controls.

## **2 Cost Implications**

All financial costs associated with this review are contained in the Parish Council budget for 2018/19.

## **3 Resource Implications**

Staff resources required to undertake this review is identified within the Parish Council work programme for 2018/19.

## **4 Background**

Delegation of authority for budgeted expenditure and service responsibility has previously been considered by the Parish Council which resolved to recommend the Parish Council discharges its functions in relation to its set budget, to its various committees/Parish Clerk/RFO, in accordance to the table contained within this report.

The Local Government Act 1972, Part VI, S. 101 (1) (b) defines the arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities. Cost benefits have been achieved through the adoption of a scheme of delegation and by streamlining the Parish Council's business cycle.

In statute whenever reference is made to the Proper Officer and powers relating to this officer it should be noted that the Parish Clerk is designated as Choppington Parish Council's Proper Officer. Any subsequent delegation made by the Parish Clerk does not reduce the legal responsibility resting in the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer.

The Parish Council establishes an annual budget and within this budget there are a number of activity areas and projects whose development is governed and directed by the Parish Council's committee structure, with identified lead councillors taking a particular interest in promoting certain activities.

## 5 Main activities and delegation of responsibility.

Note: The terms of reference for each committee are contained within the Parish Council's Governance Statement.

1. **Administrative Costs.** Authority for all budgeted expenditure is delegated to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer, with reference to standing orders, financial regulations, internal control and statute.
2. **Allotment management** and development is governed through the Allotment Committee with day to day responsibilities delegated to the Parish Clerk.
3. **Budget and Contract Preparation.** The budget process is governed by the Parish Council and gives guidance to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer who has(have) delegated authority to prepare draft documents. Authority is delegated to the Parish Clerk to finalise contracts within the set budget and in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee to negotiate new contracts on behalf of the Parish Council. All actions are subject to standing orders, financial regulation and statute. The Staffing and Policy Development Committee is the responsible committee for staffing matters, and budgetary responsibility relating to employee costs is the responsibility of the Finance Committee.
4. **Community Information.** Authority delegated to the Parish Clerk with (when required) consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.
5. **Community Services.** Member's responsibility for community services is generally discharged through the Community Development and Environment Committee with day to day responsibilities delegated to the Parish Clerk.
6. **Data Protection.** The Parish Clerk is appointed as the Parish Council's Data Protection Officer.
7. **Employee and Staffing.** The Staffing and Policy Development Committee is the responsible committee and gives consideration to all staffing matters, with budgetary responsibility relating to 'Employee Costs' being the responsibility of the Finance Committee. Internal control measures relating to the recording of staff hours and staff deployment is undertaken by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council or another recognised substitute). Overall responsibility for the management of staff is delegated to the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer.
8. **Fees and Charges.** Authority for all budgeted expenditure is delegated to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer with 'exceptional' expenditure requiring consultation with the Chairman of the Council and Chair of the Finance Committee, or in their absence the Vice Chair of Council and Vice Chair of the Finance Committee.
9. **Financial Delegation(s) and Internal Controls.** In general financial authority rests with the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer. In terms of additional delegation reference needs to be made to the Parish Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Governance and Internal Control statements.

- 10. General Expenditure.** Except where otherwise indicated, authority is delegated to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer for all budgeted expenditure, in adherence to the various requirements defined in the Parish Council's financial regulations, standing orders, statute and in compliance with internal controls.
- 11. Governance and oversight.** The responsible committees are the Staffing and Policy Development Committee with matters relating to financial governance being referred to the Finance Committee
- 12. Health and Safety.** Responsibilities for health and safety are identified within the policies of the Parish Council.
- 13. Legal/professional support.** The Parish Clerk as Proper Officer has authority to commission legal/professional support when required to support the function of the Parish Council.
- 14. Healthy Activity** is promoted and governed through the Community and Environment Committee.
- 15. Heritage.** Lead Councillor(s) appointed by Community and Environment Committee.
- 16. Local Business Interests** are governed through the Community and Environment Committee.
- 17. Members Expenses.** The responsible committee is the Staffing Committee with authority for all budgeted expenditure being delegated to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer.
- 18. Partnership development** is governed by consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council and by referral to council/committee when required.
- 19. Planning Matters.** In general, consideration of comments arising from planning applications made to Northumberland County Council are delegated to the Parish Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council, who will refer 'significant' applications to the Parish Council for wider consideration when required. The significance of a particular application is judged by consideration of its impact on the local community. The Parish Clerk has delegated powers (in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee) to prepare objections if time constraints do not allow committee referral. The Parish Clerk or Deputy and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee are authorised to represent the views of the Parish Council to meetings of the principal authority.
- 20. Project Delivery.** Governed through the Parish Council and its various committees with specific delegation of authority in relation to delivery and required expenditure to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer.
- 21. Remembrance Day and Parish Services** are overseen by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council who have the authority to refer particular issues to the Community Development and Environment Committee.
- 22. Residents/Community Issues.** All issues relating to community development are governed through the Community and Environment Committee.

- 23. Risk Management.** The Parish Clerk is required to assess and manage risk and the Authority will, through its various committees and its annual consideration of a statement of risk govern risk and discharge its statutory obligation.
- 24. Safeguarding.** Responsibilities relating to safeguarding are identified within the policies of the Parish Council.
- 25. Small Grant Scheme** is administered by the Deputy Parish Clerk with decisions in relation to individual grants being referred for consideration by members attending meetings of the Parish Council, Community and Environment Committee, Finance Committee or by delegation to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer in consultation with members.
- 26. Training.** The Parish Clerk is tasked to prepare a training plan for staff and members. The Parish Clerk has delegated powers (in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Parish Council) in relation to the approval of attendance by members/staff on training courses and conferences within the approved budget.
- 27. Youth Services and Sport Delivery.** Lead Councillor(s) appointed by Community and Environment Committee.

**D L Nicholson JP**  
**Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer**  
**24 October 2018**

**Scheme to be employed when considering applications for small grants.**  
**(Adopted by Staffing and Policy Committee 24 October 2018)**

**Appendix Two**

**1 Legal Implications**

The Local Government Act 1972, Part VI, S. 101 (1) (b) defines the arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities. Local councils should have in place various schemes and policies, which in their entirety provide a framework to support governance and decision making. These documents should be read in conjunction with standing orders and financial regulations.

**2 Cost Implications**

All financial costs associated with this review are contained in the Parish Council budget for 2018/19.

**3 Resource Implications**

Staff resources required to undertake this review is identified within the Parish Council work programme for 2018/19.

**4 Background**

A well constructed council will have in place a scheme for the awarding of small grants (not normally exceeding £500 in any year to a single organisation). Such a scheme should identify criteria against which applications should be assessed and by design direct benefit towards the achievement of the council's strategic purpose.

**5 Action required.**

Members are requested to examine the attached criteria for grant application (Annex 1) and comment on any changes that might be required.

**D L Nicholson JP**  
**Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer**  
**24 October 2018**



**1. Who can apply.**

The scheme is open to community organisations based within the Parish or to such organisations outside the Parish, which are local and serve residents of the Parish.

**2. Characteristics of a community organisation.**

- a. Voluntary membership
- b. Open to members of community
- c. With members living within the boundaries of the Parish
- d. Public access to annual accounts
- e. Recognised governance structure
- f. Must have bank account in name of organisation, or an ability to demonstrate the probity of the management of their funds.
- g. Voluntary in character

**3. Application (judged on following criteria).**

1. Show contribution to the Parish Community
2. Show specific outcomes
3. Cost effectiveness/value for money
4. How sustainability has been addressed

**4. Applications.**

Applications must be made in writing (on a letter head or with a minute reference), on behalf of the organisation and not an individual, and are expected to contain the following information:

1. Full details of purpose of the grant and an outline of the cost of individual components within the grant.
2. Indication of predicted completion time of the project once the grant has been awarded
3. minute etc
4. Named lead contact within the organisation
5. How long organisation has been in existence
6. Full disclosure of other income/funding towards suggested project

Additional information that might be requested would include copy of latest bank statement and organisations constitution, for example.

**5. Exclusions.**

Applications that will be excluded will include:

1. Activities that should be subject to 'mainstream' funding
2. For the purposes of promoting private organisations

3. Activities that are profit making
4. Projects designed to support religious or political activities.
  
5. To pay salary expenses for applicant organisations

**6. Outcomes.**

1. To demonstrate real benefit to the community
2. Contribution to the achievement of the council's strategic objectives

**7. Conditions of Grant.**

1. Feedback is required from organisation
2. To take part in publicity
3. Open accounting of how the grant has been spent is required and this will include the submission of accounts/receipts as required by the Parish Clerk.
4. Expenditure of grant in line with application is the responsibility of the organisation but approval of expenditure lies with the Parish Council.
5. Grants over £1000 will be paid in stages, moving from one stage to the next requires approval from Parish Council.

Grants will be withdrawn (or be required to be repaid) if:

1. It is the consensus of the Parish Council that application was based on inaccurate or misleading information
2. Expenditure incurred is outside the remit of the project application
3. The conditions of the grant are infringed

**8. Consideration of Grant.**

Applications will be considered by the next meeting of the Parish Council, or by the Finance or Community Development and Environment Committee, as directed by the Parish Clerk. An assessment form will be completed for each application.

Successful applicants will be advised in writing and requested to display a certificate detailing the award. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback

**D L Nicholson JP**  
**Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer**  
**24 October 2018**

## Policy Review

### 1 Legal Implications

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### 2 Cost Implications

All financial costs associated with this review are contained in the Parish Council budget for 2018/19.

### 3 Resource Implications

Staff resources required to undertake this review is identified within the Parish Council work programme for 2018/19.

### 4 Background

The Parish Council has, since establishment adopted policies to ensure its business is conducted in a proper manner and with proper probity. The annex to this document lists 18 key policies to be considered in this review. The report suggests that a series of workshop reviews are conducted to enable all members to participate in the review process.

### 5 Action Required

- 1 Members are asked to consider this report and to authorise the establishment of review workshops.
- 2 Members are asked to give direction on any other actions they consider will aid the review.

**David L Nicholson**  
**Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer**  
**10 October 2017**

## 19 Key Policies

Annex 1

1. Asset Register
2. Complaints Procedure
3. Data Protection Policy
  - Data Protection Privacy Notice – General June 2018
  - Data Protection Privacy Notice (Recruitment) June 2018
4. Disciplinary Procedures
5. Document Retention and Destruction Policy
6. Emergency Arrangements
7. Equality and Diversity & Equal opportunities
8. Financial Regulations updated August 2017
9. Grant Funding Policy
10. Grievance procedure
11. Health and safety
12. Investment strategy and policy
13. Media Policy
14. Publication Scheme
15. Policy on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings
16. Risk Statement
17. Safeguarding policies
18. Scheme of delegation
19. Standing Orders (including Governance statement, covering terms of reference for the Parish Council, its various committees and working groups; matters that cannot be delegated by the Parish Council; granting of dispensations by Parish Clerk and Members Code of Conduct).

**David L Nicholson**  
**Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer**  
**10 October 2018**