



# Ashington Parish Council

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## **OPEN SPACES and ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Open Spaces and Environment Committee is constituted as a Standing Committee of Ashington Parish Council.

The purpose of the committee is to oversee the provision, maintenance and management of the parish Open Space areas, encompassing 4 principal objectives. To –

- Maintain parish owned public space.
- Support the Planning Committee to ensure new development is sustainable, designed to protect and enhance the landscape, reduce flood risk, and promote biodiversity.
- Conserve and enhance the heritage assets of the village.
- Protect the green and rural nature of the parish and its rural links to the countryside.

The committee duties are defined and agreed by the full council, which may vote, at any time, to modify the committee's duties.

### **1. Membership of the Open Spaces and Environment Committee**

- a. Membership of the committee will be decided at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May each year.
- b. The committee shall consist of 4 members of the parish council.
- c. The Chair (and Vice-Chair if required) of the committee will be elected by the committee membership at its first meeting after the Annual Parish Council Meeting.
- d. The committee shall be subject to a quorum of three of its members. Substitute members (who must be councillors) are permitted if the meeting will be inquorate, providing statutory notice has been given, and in consultation with the Clerk.
- e. All members will have voting rights.
- f. All councillors not elected to the Open Spaces and Environment Committee may attend and participate in the public session of the meeting but shall not be entitled to vote.

## **2. Meetings**

- a. All meetings of the Open Spaces and Environment Committee will be convened in accordance with the parish council's Standing Orders.
- b. Meetings to be convened as per the schedule of meeting dates agreed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.
- c. Extraordinary meetings may be arranged as necessary.
- d. Meetings will be minuted by the Clerk / RFO or a member of the committee.
- e. Minutes to be presented to the next available ordinary meeting of the council.

## **3. Delegated Powers and Responsibilities**

The Open Spaces and Environment Committee has the delegated authority of Ashington Parish Council:

- a. To authorise expenditure up to £500 for routine maintenance and repairs requiring "immediate" attention.
- b. To authorise expenditure on Green Initiatives projects in accordance with the annual budget figure.
- c. All expenditure at a. and b. will be reported at the next ordinary council meeting.

The committee may decide not to exercise delegated responsibility and may instead make recommendations to full council.

## **4. Maintenance of parish owned public space**

### **Play areas and skatepark**

- a. To ensure an inspections schedule is in place in compliance with any legal guidelines and ensuring best practice. To include –
  - Routine in house inspections
  - An independent annual inspection
- b. To receive the annual inspection report, to review it with the Playground Inspectors and create a schedule of works, to be addressed either by the –
  - Playground Inspectors or
  - Council maintenance contractor or
  - Clerk to obtain external quotes if repairs / replacement required.
- c. To ensure a maintenance schedule is in place, including –
  - Cleaning of equipment
  - Routine maintenance of any specific items of equipment if identified as requiring this
- d. To review the companies / contractors used every 3 years

### **Open Space areas**

To include all parish owned Open Spaces, including land, ponds, woodland and the Parish Yard site.

- a. To ensure a land inspection schedule is in place.
- b. To receive the land inspection reports, review them and create a schedule of works, to be addressed either by the –
  - Council maintenance contractor or
  - Clerk to obtain external quotes if repairs / replacement required.
- c. To ensure a maintenance schedule is in place.

- d. To identify and implement as appropriate an external inspection process for –
  - Trees
  - Ponds

#### **Fixed assets**

To include bus shelters, benches, bins, notice boards

- a. To ensure an inspections schedule is in place
- b. To ensure a maintenance schedule is in place, including
  - Cleaning of equipment
  - Maintenance / repair as necessary

#### **Parish council landscape maintenance contractor**

Areas under contract to include all parish owned Open Spaces, including land, ponds, woodland and the Parish Yard site.

- a. To review the contract on an annual basis and present any amendments to full council for approval –
  - Identify if there are any additional areas of work required.
  - Ensure any new Open Spaces land acquired from developers is added to the scope of works.
  - Request contractor submits following year's quotation for works by November in each year, to be passed to the Finance Committee for budgetary purposes.
- b. To ensure a schedule is in place for the clerk to liaise with the contractor on a regular basis for an update on works carried out and any issues arising for their attention.
- c. To review the contractor used every 3 years.
- d. To ensure there is a contingency plan in place should the contractor be unavailable.

#### **Green Initiatives**

To identify opportunities to protect and enhance the environment.

- a. Continue existing projects such as hanging baskets
- b. Identify new projects
- c. Identify community engagement opportunities
- d. Identify funding and revenue streams available
- e. Engage with organisations / district and county councils regarding opportunities on non-parish and parish owned land.