

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Governance Report

Author Responsible Financial Officer

Meeting date 8 May 2019

1. Review of policies

Whilst some of the Parish Council's policies have been adopted during the 2018/19 council year, it would seem appropriate to align the review of the majority of policies with the Annual Meeting of the Council, held in May each year.

The policies which are to be reviewed can be accessed through the links in the list below. Should any councillor wish to receive a printed copy of any or of all the policies, then the Clerk can assist.

- [Standing Orders](#) (last reviewed September 2018)
- [Financial Regulations](#) (last reviewed April 2018)
- [Code of Conduct](#) (last reviewed June 2017)
- [Equality Policy](#) (last reviewed September 2018)
- [Document Retention and Disposal Policy](#) (last reviewed May 2018)
- [Grant Awarding Policy](#) (last reviewed September 2018)
- [Grievance Policy](#) (last reviewed September 2018)
- [Disciplinary Policy](#) (last reviewed September 2018)
- [Information and Data Protection Policy](#) (approved May 2018)
- [Planning Applications Policy](#) (approved March 2018)
- [Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy](#) (approved May 2018)
- [Training and Development Policy](#) (approved September 2018)
- [Scheme of Delegation](#) (approved May 2018)
- [Publication Scheme](#) (approved September 2018)
- [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#) (approved May 2018)

2. Review of personnel/employment matters working group

In May 2018 the Council resolved that Cllrs Birkett, Hunter and Watson form a working group to deal with any personnel/employment matters.

3. Contracts and other arrangements

Grass Cutting – Cemetery	One-year contract for 2018 awarded to AR Toward. Council agreed in January 2019 to extend this, as per the contract, for 2019 season.
Grass Cutting – Cotherstone Greens and Klondike Allotments	One-year contract for 2018 awarded to AR Toward. Council agreed in January 2019 to extend this, as per the contract, for 2019 season.
Hearse House	Let for storage to Cotherstone Village Hall and R Goldsbrough
Allotments	11 allotments at Klondike – fully let 8 allotments at The Close – fully let Currently there are five people on the waiting list

Cotherstone Village Hall	The Parish Council has been making an annual contribution towards village hall running costs
Play@Cotherstone	The Parish Council has been making an annual contribution towards running costs associated with operating the play area
Northern Powergrid	The Parish Council receives a small income each year in respect of two wayleaves
Cotherstone Cemetery	The Parish Council owns and manages the Cemetery, has Cemetery Rules and charges schedule and works with local funeral directors and stonemasons as necessary

4. Representation on or work with external bodies

Neighbourhood Plan	The Cotherstone Neighbourhood Plan group is an informal working group to which Cllrs Hunter and Birkett were appointed as Parish Council representatives
Cotherstone Village Hall	Cllr Thorn has been the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall committee
Cotherstone School	Peter Webb is the representative for the Parish Council
County Durham Association of Local Councils	No representatives currently appointed

5. Subscriptions to other bodies

The Parish Council subscription to County Durham Association of Local Councils for 2018/19 was £100.96; the subscription for 2019/20 will be £102.29.

A 19% share of the Clerk's 2019/20 subscription of £175 to the Society for Local Council Clerks is suggested, equating to £33.25 (compared with a 28% share in 2018/19, of £41.16).

6. Section 137 expenditure

Parish Council expenditure must be strictly in line with the powers the Parish Council has (eg. to provide allotments, to provide entertainment, to acquire or maintain land for public recreation), however, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 a Parish Council may spend every year up to a specified amount on anything which, in the opinion of the parish council is in the interests of the parish, or any part of it or is in the interests of all or some of its inhabitants (not individuals).

Expenditure during 2018/19 under this heading was £25.00 paid to The Poppy Appeal in respect of a poppy wreath for Armistice Day.

7. Schedule of ordinary meetings

Should the Parish Council wish to continue meeting on the second Wednesday of the month, with no meeting held in August or December, the schedule of meetings would be as follows:

Wednesday 12 June 2019

Wednesday 10 July 2019

Wednesday 11 September 2019

Wednesday 9 October 2019

Wednesday 13 November 2019

Wednesday 8 January 2020

Wednesday 12 February 2020

Wednesday 11 March 2020

Wednesday 8 April 2020

Wednesday 13 May 2020 (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)

All meetings to start at 7pm and to be held in Cotherstone Village Hall.

Recommendations

1. To resolve on any revisions or amendments to Parish Council policies.
2. To review the membership of the personnel/employment matters working group.
3. To review contracts and other arrangements with other local authorities, non-for-profit bodies and businesses
4. To review representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back
5. To review the council's/staff subscriptions to other bodies
6. To review of expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972
7. To determine the time and place of ordinary meetings of the council up to and including the next annual meeting