

Cotherstone Community Shop Steering Group

A working group of Cotherstone Parish Council

Terms of Reference

Relationship to the Parish Council

1. The Cotherstone Community Shop Steering Group is a working group of Cotherstone Parish Council.
2. The Steering Group has an advisory role to the Parish Council. No powers for decision-making on behalf of the Parish Council are delegated to the Steering Group.
3. The Steering Group will acknowledge its status as a working group of Cotherstone Parish Council in all of its communications, for example with the community, support agencies, the press and potential funders.
4. The Steering Group will be mindful of the principles under which the Parish Council must operate in terms of transparency, openness, diversity and public service, and will respect the need to exercise care in its interactions with the public and press, for example through social media. The Parish Clerk can advise on this as appropriate.

Mandate for Steering Group formation and activities

5. A public meeting on 16 September 2019, attended by 75+ members of public, indicated very nearly unanimous agreement that a Steering Group be formed as soon as possible, to explore the feasibility and development of a community-run shop/post office.
6. A questionnaire survey conducted by the Parish Council during September 2019 (99 responses) also demonstrated a very strong desire to pursue the possibility of a community-run shop/post office.

Membership

7. The Steering Group shall consist of a maximum of 12 members, including at least one representative of the Parish Council. Members of the public who have specific knowledge/expertise can be co-opted by the Steering Group.
8. Three members of the Steering Group will constitute a quorum.
9. A Chairman of the Steering Group shall be elected by its members.

Powers

10. The Steering Group cannot make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council, and any recommendations made by the Steering Group will be subject to approval by the full Council.

Responsibilities / areas of operation

11. To establish the economic viability of a community-run shop/post office
12. To access professional support and advice as appropriate, both from within the community if possible, but also from appropriate organisations such as the Plunkett Foundation, and to seek to learn from the experience of community shops which have been successful (or not)
13. To explore and then present to the community various options for the operation of a community shop, covering:

- 13.1. Premises / locations (including any construction, shopfitting etc)
- 13.2. Services and facilities to be provided
- 13.3. Funding models (capital and revenue)
- 13.4. Legal structures for the enterprise
- 13.5. Staffing issues (volunteers, paid staff etc)
- 13.6. Shop-only or Shop/post office
14. To keep the community apprised of its progress in a timely manner.
15. To prepare a business plan for any recommended option
16. Following the consensus from the community of a particular community enterprise model, to make arrangements for the hand-over of responsibility for that enterprise to an appropriately constituted 'Management Committee' or similar body.

Finances

17. The Steering Group has been allocated a budget by the Parish Council.
18. All expenditure incurred by the Steering Group will be in the name of the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk can advise on practicalities of purchasing, claiming expenses etc.
19. Any item of expenditure over £25 must first be approved by the Parish Clerk.

Meetings

20. Meetings shall be called by the Chairman of the Steering Group as and when deemed necessary.
21. Minutes of all meetings will be recorded by the Parish Clerk or a member of the Steering Group nominated at the meeting.

Reporting to Parish Council

22. Minutes of each Steering Group meeting shall be submitted to the Parish Council within seven days.
23. The Parish Council representative on the Steering Group will deliver a progress report at each Council meeting; if the representative is unable to attend the Council meeting they will nominate another member of the Steering Group to attend and deliver the progress report.

Dissolution

24. The Steering Group will be time-limited and will be dissolved at such time as an appropriately legally constituted 'Management Committee' or similar, is established for the implementation of a community shop, or when the Parish Council decides that a Steering Group is no longer necessary.