



## **MARCHWOOD PARISH COUNCIL**

### **OPERATING FRAMEWORK**

This statement summarises how Marchwood Parish Council operates. It is designed as a quick reference point for members of the public, and an “aide memoire” for officers and Councillors.

It is a summary only. Further information can be obtained from the Parish Clerk, and/or by consulting the Parish Council’s Standing Orders

#### **The full Council**

The Council is made up of 11 Councillors elected every 4 years (2007, 2011 etc). If a vacancy occurs during the 4 years, an election will be held if 10 residents call for one, otherwise the remaining Councillors can co-opt someone on to the Council.

The full Council is ultimately responsible for all the functions and decisions of the Council.

#### **Committees**

The Council has appointed Standing Committees to carry out some of its functions. These are:

- Amenities
- Planning and
- Policy & Resources

Committees have the power to appoint sub-committees, working parties or advisory groups for specific purposes who report back to the Committee.

Each Committee has its own Terms of Reference. These are a set of powers given to it by full Council. Each Committee is able to take decisions within the limits given to it. Anything falling beyond those limits must be referred to full Council.

In general, Committees are responsible for advising on, monitoring and reviewing their areas of responsibility, and working up proposals for the future. They cannot change existing Council policy or decisions. If they think such a change is desirable, they must refer the matter to the full Council, with a recommendation.

A full copy of the terms of reference of each Committee is available from the Parish Clerk.

The Clerk [or his/her Deputy] will attend all meetings and will be able to advise Councillors generally, including on whether a decision can be taken by the Committee or whether it needs to be referred to the full Council.

## **Councillors**

Councillors are democratically accountable to the residents of the Parish. Their over-riding duty is to the whole community.

Councillors have to follow a Code of Conduct, setting out the behaviour expected of them while acting in their official capacity.

Councillors cannot make decisions individually. They cannot undertake action on behalf of the Council unless authorised to do so by the Council or a Committee (or Sub-Committee).

When communicating with the public about a Council matter, Councillors should make it clear whether on they are speaking or writing on behalf of the Council, or as an individual.

## **Meetings of Council and Committees**

Council and Committee meetings are held approximately every 2 weeks. They are open to the public, except when confidential items are discussed. Minutes of meetings are published on the Council's website, or can be obtained from the Parish Clerk.

Minutes are not a verbatim record of a meeting. However, any decisions the meeting makes are recorded.

## **The Parish Clerk**

The Parish Clerk is the Chief Officer of the Council. His/her main role is to carry out the wishes of the Council, manage and oversee the delivery of its services, and advise on constitutional matters. He/she is also responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

## **Financial matters**

The Council and Committees have capital and revenue budgets they can spend to carry out their duties. The budget for each Committee is approved annually by the full Council, usually in November for the forthcoming financial year. Committees can incur or approve expenditure only within their budget. *(Except in case of extreme urgency, any other expenditure must be approved by the full Council).*

### **Relationship between Clerk, other officers and Councillors**

A close working relationship between Councillors and the Parish Clerk and any other officers the Council may employ is important, and they should treat each other with mutual respect (the Councillors' Code of Conduct in any event requires Councillors to treat others with respect). However, the relationships should not become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question Councillors' or the Clerk's ability to deal impartially with others.

Approved and adopted 11<sup>th</sup> October 2010.