

Great Tey Parish Council

ADVISORY WORKING GROUP: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose:

The Advisory Working Group ("the Working Group") has been established by Great Tey Parish Council to encourage community participation and support the work of the Council.

The Working Group exists to assist the Council by considering matters referred to it, undertaking research, engaging with the community where appropriate, and making recommendations for consideration by Full Council.

The Council recognises the valuable knowledge, skills and experience that local residents can bring to parish business and wishes to encourage meaningful community involvement.

The Working Group has also been established to retain the expertise and enthusiasm of residents who have expressed an interest in serving the community whilst the Council considers future governance arrangements.

Appointment to the Working Group does not constitute election or co-option to the Parish Council and creates no expectation or entitlement to future appointment as a Parish Councillor.

2. Legal Status:

The Working Group is an advisory body established by resolution of Great Tey Parish Council.

It is not a committee or sub-committee constituted under the Local Government Act 1972 and has no delegated decision-making powers.

The Working Group exists solely to provide advice, information and recommendations.

All decisions remain the responsibility of Full Council.

3. Objectives:

The Working Group may:

- Consider matters referred to it by Full Council.
- Undertake research.
- Gather information.
- Assist with community engagement and consultation.
- Support grant-funded and community projects.
- Develop proposals for consideration by the Council.
- Assist with project planning.
- Provide local knowledge and practical experience.
- Promote positive engagement between the Council and residents.

4. Membership:

Membership shall be determined by resolution of Full Council.

The Working Group may comprise:

- Parish Councillors.
- Residents appointed in an advisory capacity.
- Other individuals where their knowledge or expertise is considered beneficial.

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Membership may be reviewed, amended or withdrawn by Full Council at any time.

Advisory Members:

- are not Parish Councillors;
 - are not members of the Council;
 - shall not hold voting rights on any matter determined by the Council;
 - shall not represent themselves as elected or co-opted members of Great Tey Parish Council.
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5. Role of Advisory Members:

Advisory Members are appointed to:

- contribute ideas and experience;
- assist with research;
- support community engagement;
- assist with projects;
- make recommendations through the Working Group.

Advisory Members shall not:

- make decisions on behalf of the Council;
 - vote on Council business;
 - authorise expenditure;
 - instruct contractors;
 - supervise Council staff;
 - enter contracts;
 - commit the Council to any action;
 - make representations on behalf of the Council unless authorised by Full Council.
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6. Chair Position:

The Chair shall be appointed from amongst the Parish Councillor members.

The Chair shall:

- convene meetings;
 - facilitate discussion;
 - ensure recommendations are reported to Full Council.
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7. Meetings:

Meetings shall be held as required.

As the Working Group is advisory only:

- meetings are informal;
- they are not meetings of the Council;
- they are not subject to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960;
- formal agendas and minutes are not required.

A summary of discussions, actions and recommendations may be prepared to assist reporting to Full Council.

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8. Recommendations:

The Working Group shall endeavour to reach recommendations by consensus.

Recommendations shall be submitted to Full Council.

No recommendation shall take effect unless approved by Full Council.

9. Financial Authority:

The Working Group has no authority to:

- incur expenditure;
- authorise purchases;
- apply for grants in the Council's name;
- enter into contracts;
- commit Council resources;
- authorise payments.

All financial decisions remain the responsibility of Full Council.

10. Standards of Conduct:

All members shall:

- act with honesty and integrity;
- treat others with courtesy and respect;
- promote equality, diversity and inclusion;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- declare any personal or financial interests relevant to the business being discussed;
- respect differing opinions;
- act in a manner that maintains public confidence in the Council.

Failure to comply with these standards may result in removal from the Working Group by resolution of Full Council.

11. Confidentiality:

Members may have access to confidential or exempt information.

Members shall:

- maintain confidentiality;
 - not disclose confidential information without authority;
 - comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
 - protect personal data;
 - securely return or destroy confidential information when requested.
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12. Council Email Accounts:

To support effective communication and good information governance, Advisory Members will be provided with an official Great Tey Parish Council email account.

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The email account:

- remains the property of the Council;
- is provided solely for Working Group business;
- must not be used for personal correspondence;
- shall be withdrawn when membership ceases.

Email addresses shall clearly identify the holder as an Advisory Working Group Member and must not imply that the individual is a Parish Councillor.

Examples include:

- firstname.lastname.advisory@greattey-pc.gov.uk
- advisory.firstname.lastname@greattey-pc.gov.uk

Email addresses shall not include:

- "Cllr"
- "Councillor"
- "Member" (where this could imply Council membership)

All correspondence shall accurately reflect the advisory nature of the role.

13. Email Signature:

Advisory Members shall use the Council's approved email signature.

For example:

Jane Smith

Advisory Working Group Member
Great Tey Parish Council

"The Advisory Working Group acts solely in an advisory capacity. Members are not elected or co-opted Parish Councillors and have no authority to make decisions or commitments on behalf of Great Tey Parish Council."

14. Access to Council Information:

Advisory Members may receive access to documents and information that the Council considers necessary for the purposes of the Working Group.

Access shall be limited to information relevant to the work of the Group.

Advisory Members shall not normally receive:

- confidential staffing information;
- exempt reports under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972;
- legal advice unless specifically authorised;
- banking information;
- payroll records;
- personal information unrelated to the Working Group.

The Council reserves the right to amend or withdraw access at any time.

15. Communications:

Advisory Members shall not:

- issue press releases;
- communicate with the media on behalf of the Council;
- publish statements representing the Council's views;
- use social media on behalf of the Council unless authorised.

Public communications relating to Council business shall be referred to the Parish Clerk or Chairman unless otherwise authorised.

16. Officer Support:

The Parish Clerk may provide administrative support where appropriate.

The Clerk shall advise the Working Group on governance and procedural matters where necessary.

17. Dissolution:

The Council may dissolve the Working Group at any time.

Membership shall cease upon:

- resignation;
- removal by Full Council;
- dissolution of the Working Group.

Council email accounts and access to Council systems shall be withdrawn immediately upon cessation of membership.

18. Review:

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually by Full Council.

Amendments shall require approval by resolution of the Council.

Current Advisory Group Members:

Parish Councillor Members:

- Cllr T. Frances
 - Cllr R. Bartleet
 - Cllr R. Frost
 - Cllr A. Warnes
 - Cllr C. Hill
 - Cllr Y. Marriott
 - Cllr N. Goodman
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Great Tey Parish Council

Advisory Members:

- Ugo Simonelli
 - Peter Etherden
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Member Declaration:

I acknowledge that I have read and understood these Terms of Reference.

I understand that:

- I am not an elected or co-opted Parish Councillor (unless appointed as such by the Council).
- I have no delegated authority to act on behalf of Great Tey Parish Council.
- I have no voting rights in relation to Council decisions.
- I will maintain confidentiality where required.
- I will comply with the Council's Data Protection, ICT and Email Policies.
- I will use any Council-issued email account solely for Council business.
- I will immediately return or delete Council information upon leaving the Working Group if requested.

Name Signature:

Date: