

Committees and sub-committees going forward

Since starting from one council meeting in May 2016, the Town Council has created a committee structure to enable it to deal efficiently with a huge variety of tasks.

The standing committees that meet monthly are: Finance and General Purposes and Planning. The Staffing Committee meets every 4-6 weeks.

In addition, sub-committees and working groups enable more detailed work and discussion to take place so that formulated proposals can be approved by the relevant committee. Each of the sub-committees and working groups has its own terms of reference and schedule of meetings, all recorded on the website.

The following sub-committees come under the Finance and General Purposes committee: Green and Clean, Town Centre and Regeneration, Events Marketing and Communications and Emergency Planning.

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) comes under the Planning Committee.

On both sub-committees and the NPWG both town councillors and volunteer residents serve. All the committees and sub-committees have made huge achievements and should be congratulated and thanked for their efforts.

However, each committee, sub-committee and working group demands resource from Town Council staff: particularly formulating and circulating agendas, giving advice, taking minutes of meetings and implementing decisions.

Since Christmas, to enable staff to prepare for the elections in May and the possibility of new councillors, the work of some of the sub-committees has been wound down and efforts have been made not to start any new work or projects, beyond those previously agreed by the council and budgeted for.

It should also be recognised that the new council elected in May may wish to carry out its own consultation with residents to set fresh priorities – or the new councillors may agree on differing priorities for the Town Council. The new council should not be limited or tied by the committee structure of the present council as it may need or wish to organise how it works differently to reflect new priorities.

Therefore, it is proposed:

1. That the work and achievements of all committees and sub-committees be noted and those councillors and residents that have served on these groups be thanked for their contributions, particularly those that have served as chairs and vice-chairs.
2. That the meetings of the sub-committees should be paused with immediate effect and that no further meetings of any of the sub-committees will be held until the new council is elected, unless there is a need to convene the Emergency Planning sub-committee.
3. The projects started, commissioned or budgeted for by any of the sub-committees will be continued (see list of current projects and commissioned work). If any further decisions are needed on these projects, they can be made by the parent committee.
4. That the new council will decide if it wishes to reconvene any or all of the sub-committees. It can do this at any point following the elections in May but must make a decision about each sub-committee by the end of 2019. (It may wish to create new committees or sub-committees.)
5. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group must continue and members be appointed at the first opportunity by the new council. The group has a task to complete and the Town Council has an obligation to carry out a Neighbourhood Plan.