

Pucklechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The main purpose of the Steering Group is to act as a working (or discussion) group in carrying out detailed preparatory work on drafting the Neighbourhood Plan for Pucklechurch Parish, so that the Parish Council may progress it to Independent Examination, a successful community referendum, and ultimately to adoption by South Gloucestershire Council as part of its Core Strategy.

The Steering Group will engage with the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of local views. The Group will maximise support for the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.

2. Principles

The Steering Group will undertake the neighbourhood planning process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all members of the community.

All decisions made by the Steering Group shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community and subject to ratification by the Parish Council.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve its purpose, the Steering Group, with the help of consultants will:

- Manage the process of drafting the Neighbourhood Plan for Pucklechurch Parish;
- Produce, monitor and regularly update a project timetable, which will include a consultation and engagement strategy (showing how the public will be involved throughout the process), for adoption by the Parish Council;
- Analyse and collect evidence to support the plan production process, gathering data from a wide range of sources and liaising with relevant authorities and other organisations to ensure that the conclusions reached in the plan are fully evidenced and that the views and comments of all residents are understood;
- Identify sources of funding;
- Regularly report back to the Parish Council with recommendations for any decisions which need to be taken; and
- Agree, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, a final submission version of the Pucklechurch Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan.

4. Membership

The Steering Group will be made up of a cross-section of volunteers from the community, and three Parish Councillors who will be appointed annually at the Annual Council Meeting

in May. The volunteer community members on the Group may change from time to time, depending on the stage reached in the plan process.

5. Decision Making

The Steering Group will have delegated authority from the Parish Council to take decisions but not to incur expenditure on the Council's behalf. The Group will report monthly to the Parish Council setting out progress on its work and the need for any expenditure. The Parish Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.

The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the Parish Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by the Steering Group on the basis that information and data is being gathered for the Council in order to inform the Council's decisions on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Meetings

- Steering Group meetings will take place as and when required, and attendance at meetings may be flexible depending on the stage of the plan process reached and the need for particular input from members or new volunteers. There will be no minimum number of volunteer members required for meetings to be quorate, but one member of the Parish Council must always be present.
- Where possible, all meetings will be held within the Parish. The dates of future meetings will be made publicly available via the Parish Council website.
- It would be advisable if the Steering Group were chaired by a member of the Parish Council.
- The Group will ensure that a record is kept of the discussions held at each meeting, and that notes of meetings are circulated to Steering Group members and to the Parish Council in a timely fashion. Notes of meetings shall be made publicly available on the Parish Council website. The group/project will have a paid administrator for general work such as notifications, meetings, minute taking etcetera.
- The decisions of the Steering Group in making recommendations to the Parish Council will be reached by consensus at Steering Group meetings.

7. Finance

- All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council. Any salaries or payments will be made through the Parish Council.
- The Steering Group will notify the Parish Council of any planned expenditure before it is incurred and make recommendations to the Council for it to be so expended. The steering group will be responsible for overseeing its own finances and for day-to-day budget management.

- Steering Group members and volunteers may claim back any previously agreed expenditure incurred during any Neighbourhood Plan related work.

8. Conduct

- It is expected that all Steering Group members will abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct including declarations of interest.
- Whilst members as individuals may be accountable to their parent organisations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.
- The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:
 - I. Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
 - II. Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief; and
 - III. Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.

9. Changes to the Terms of Reference

These terms of reference may only be amended with the approval of the Parish Council.

10. Dissolution

The Steering Group will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when the Parish Council considers its services to be no longer required.