

Aims and Objectives of Parish Council... review

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To review, and amend as necessary, the 'Aims and Objectives of the Parish Council'.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Council adopts the 'Aims and Objectives of the Parish Council', where amended, for the coming year.

BACKGROUND

3. At its meeting in September 2016, the Council **AGREED**:

- 1. "The Parish Council's VISION** *is to improve the Quality of Life for people of the Parish;_building upon the character and community spirit within the Parish, addressing their needs and encouraging all social sectors of the community to develop as an inclusive and vibrant community."*
- 2. The Parish Council's THREE AIMS** *are:*
 - i. To improve the development, appearance, and environment in which we live; ensuring that these changes do not cause future harm.*
 - ii. To be a strong voice on behalf of the local people and businesses, representing their views.*
 - iii. To be well managed; providing sound governance and financial management, and be an exemplar employer".*

The Council then **AGREED** that in order to achieve these AIMS, the Council would look to deliver the following OBJECTIVES.

3. **The Parish Council's OBJECTIVES** *are:*

Aim i: To improve the development, appearance, and environment in which we live; ensuring that these changes do not cause future harm.

- 1.1** *To develop a Neighbourhood Plan; involving local residents, businesses and organisations. At the same September 2016 meeting, the Council AGREED (Minute 10) not to actively proceed with the construction of a Neighbourhood Plan, but to review the position on an annual basis.*
- 1.2** *To develop and support business and economic activity in the parish; including the encouragement of local residents to use local services, and actively support the improvement of broadband and mobile services.*
- 1.3** *To support the work of village and voluntary organisations; through access to BDBC and parish grants, providing practical support where appropriate.*
- 1.4** *To work with BDBC and HCC to provide safe, healthy and timely opportunities for recreation, leisure and education; by adding value to their statutory activities.*
- 1.5** *To promote a safer community through liaison with HCC Highways Dept, local police and the Neighborhood Watch.*
- 1.6** *To improve and maintain public recreation space e.g. village green, Michael's Field, and the local footpath/bridleway network.*

Aim ii: To be a strong voice on behalf of the local people and businesses, representing their views.

- 2.1 *To communicate with our residents, relate their views, needs and aspirations to the appropriate statutory and non-governmental bodies. To work with these organisations to ensure services and future development are responsive to local needs.*
- 2.2 *To increase public involvement through being open, transparent and accountable to our residents by:*
 - a. *providing a public forum at every Parish Council meeting,*
 - b. *facilitating the Annual Parish Meeting,*
 - c. *consulting those affected on planning applications and other matters,*
 - d. *reporting our activities, finances etc. through Noticeboards, the Hannington web site and the Hannington village email network; and seeking feedback.*
- 2.3 *To respond on time to all planning applications and other statutory consultations.*

Aim iii: To be well managed; providing sound governance and financial management, and be an exemplar employer.

- 3.1 *To maintain up-to-date Governance documents e.g. Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Register, etc. that comply with latest guidance and are fit-for-purpose.*
 - 3.2 *To produce and circulate comprehensive and timely Council Agendas, Discussion Papers and Minutes to Cllrs and residents.*
 - 3.3 *To reach sound decisions; taking into account all the information necessary.*
 - 3.3 *To maintain detailed and accurate budget statements and financial records that comply with the Council's Financial Regulations, and to produce timely Final Accounts that are to the satisfaction of the internal and external auditors.*
 - 3.4 *To ensure that the Council complies with Government rules and regulations as to its management e.g. risk management, insurance cover, 'open government and transparency'.*
4. Relationship between the Aims and Objectives etc and the Risk Register.
Whilst the contents of the 'Risk Register' had been discussed, amended, and agreed at its meeting in September 2015, the Parish Council had recognised at that meeting a discussion on risks would have better resonance if the risks were linked to the Aims and Objectives of the Parish Council. In other words, it would be beneficial to identify, "*what risks the Parish Council has in delivering its aims/objectives*", whilst at the same time giving less weight, if any, to a 'risk' that did not, in fact, adversely affect delivery of an aim/objective! To this end, the Clerk had produced a further paper that linked the previously identified risks (Risk Register) to the aims/objectives that had been identified in this report. This 'linked' Risk Register was discussed and agreed at the September 2016 Council meeting, and is re-presented at Agenda item 8.a for its 'annual review'.
5. In arriving at a view on its 'Aims and Objectives', it is helpful to be aware of the roles, responsibilities, powers, and duties of a Parish Council. These were presented to the Sept 2016 Council meeting, and are reproduced at Appendix A.

Chris Pottinger,
Clerk, Hannington Parish Council
5th September 2017

What are the powers, duties and responsibilities of a Local/Parish Council?

The following paragraphs are a summary/extract from the latest edition of NALC's 'Good Councillor's Guide'.

The relevant section in the guide concludes with, "***Of course, your council could always decide to do very little; but local residents might then wonder why the local council exists at all***".

This very point was actually raised by the Council at its meeting in September 2015!

The council has been granted powers by Parliament including the important authority to raise money through taxation (the precept) and a range of powers to spend public money.

The council is an elected body in the first tier of local government. Other tiers, known as principal councils or authorities, have **many legal duties** to deliver services such as education, housing, town and country planning, transport, environmental health and social services.

Local councils have:-

- * **the legal power to take action,**
- * **but they have very few duties** and
- * **[have]greater freedom [than the other tiers] to choose what action to take.**

NALC's conclusion is that "Parish Councils can play a vital part in representing the interests of the communities they serve and improving the quality of life and the local environment. Furthermore they influence other decision makers and **can**, in many cases, deliver services to meet local needs".

Issues that may concern parish councils include the following issues. Whilst the Parish Council does not directly provide these services, it does play a role in, have an influence on, the majority of them (see comments in brackets).

- * **planning,** (Planning Cttee, consideration of planning applications, attendance at BDBC Planning Cttee,)
- * **highways,** (meetings with HCC Highways Dept, potholes, flooding etc)
- * **transport and traffic,** (speeding review, HGVs,Transport)
- * **community safety,** (Neighbourhood Watch)
- * **cemeteries,** (annual grant to Parish Church... ceased with effect from 2017)
- * **playing fields,** (application of legacy to Michael's Field, concerns re H&S)
- * **community centres,** (village hall)
- * **litter,** (residents annual clear-up)
- * **war memorials,** (Wellhead and Millenium Stone)
- * **seats and shelters,** (new seat at White Lane, lost shelter!)

* rights of way (repair of footpath FP107a, bridleways, stile to gates initiative, footpath reps)

* village green (NALC did not include this item.. but I have.)

Some of the larger Local Councils may also concern themselves with housing, street lighting, allotments, etc. Hannington Parish Council does NOT.

Through its 'Devolution Agenda', Central Government is looking to encourage local councils to deliver more services and play a greater part in their communities. NALC suggest examples could include provision of or giving financial support for:-

- an evening bus taking people to the nearest town
- pond clearing
- redecorating the community centre
- a teenagers' drop-in club
- a summer festival (Hannington Country Fair 2017... not managed by HPC)
- equipment for a children's activity group
- transport to hospital,

and for the larger authorities perhaps even the provision of affordable housing to rent.