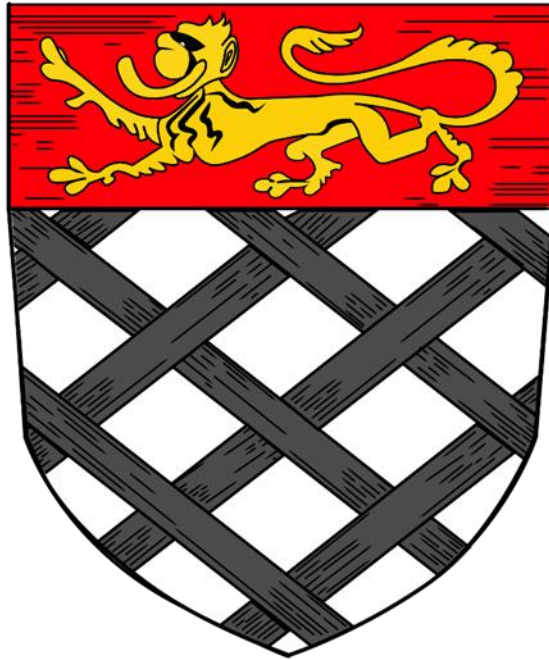


**MEPPERSHALL
PARISH COUNCIL**



WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

As re-adopted at a meeting of Meppershall Parish Council on 8th June 2026

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Organisation	Meppershall Parish Council
Title	MPC Working Group Terms of Reference
Creator	Alessandra Marabese - Clerk
First Adopted	Monday 8 th June 2026
Last Approved	Monday 8 th June 2026
Distribution	Internal and External
Filename	MPC Working Group Terms of Reference v1.0 2026©
Owner	Clerk
Subject	Procedural
Protective Marking	None
Review date	Annually

DOCUMENT AMENDMENT HISTORY

Revision No.	Originator of change	Date of change	Change Description
1.0	Creation	08/06/26	Policy Created

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. To ensure the most effective management of Parish Council business and time, some Parish Council business and issues are reviewed and discussed by Working Groups who then make recommendations to the Council at formal Parish Council Meetings who make final decisions.
- 1.2. The Council reviews Working Groups and their membership at the Statutory Meeting of the Parish Council, held each May.

2. OPERATION OF WORKING GROUPS

- 2.1. The Parish Council and any of its standing committees can set up working groups to carry out tasks as defined by the Council or a committee.
- 2.2. The purpose of working groups formed by councillors and members of the public is to meet to discuss issues, explore options and develop plans and then report back to the council or committee with recommendations. Subsequently, working groups may be tasked to deliver their plans. They have no decision-making powers but simply present the Council or committee with their findings. Their ability to give particular topics that much more time outside agenda-driven meetings can be invaluable.
- 2.3. When setting up a working group, the Council or committee must set clear terms of reference for it regarding objectives, scope and outcome(s). These will be approved by the Council before the Working Group is formed. Once their work has been completed, the Working Group will be disbanded.
- 2.4. The Terms of Reference will include details on whether the Working Group reports to the Council or a committee, and all members of the Working Group will sign it to confirm acceptance.
- 2.5. The Terms of Reference and membership will be published on the Council's website.
- 2.6. The number of councillors able to join a working group will be decided at the time of its formation but it must consist of no fewer than two councillors or one councillor and the Parish Clerk.
- 2.7. The Working Group will notify the Council or committee of the name of the chair once they are appointed after the first meeting.
- 2.8. A quorum for any meeting of a working group will be two members, at least one of whom must be a councillor.
- 2.9. The role of the Council or committee is to consider and question the recommendations put to it by the Working Group before a decision is taken and, in the case of a committee, to be satisfied with them before making any recommendations to the Full Council.
- 2.10. A working group will be accountable to its sponsoring committee unless agreement is made, due to expediency and subject to agreement via email of a majority of members of that sponsoring committee, for recommendations to be made directly to the Full Council.
- 2.11. The Working Group must provide the Council or committee with as much information as possible to ensure it can make an informed decision on its recommendation(s).
- 2.12. A working group will not have a budget. The budget will remain with the Council or sponsoring committee.
- 2.13. The Parish Clerk will provide administrative support for all working groups.

- 2.14. Working Groups do not meet in public therefore the council's Standing Orders are not applicable. However, the Code of Conduct still applies, and declarations of pecuniary and other interests will be required at each meeting.
- 2.15. All working groups will follow all relevant council policies including but not limited to the:
- Freedom of Information
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Code of Conduct Policy
- 2.16. All documents and records produced, and emails shared by working groups will be retained for 7 years in accordance with the council's Retention and Disposal Policy.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

3.1. Purpose and objective

3.1.1. Events

- a. Proposal, planning and organisation of events in conjunction with other village organisations.

3.1.2. Volunteers

- a. Research, develop, and oversee volunteer programs, ensuring that volunteers are recruited, supported, trained, and utilized safely to benefit the community.

3.1.3. Communication

- a. To foster two-way communication with the local community, promoting council services, meetings, and local events.

3.1.4. Social Media

- a. To ensure a positive, professional, and consistent online presence that accurately reflects the parish council.

3.1.5. Budget

- a. To propose budget requirements to Council as part of the annual financial budgeting process.

3.2. Decisions

- 3.2.1. The working group can make recommendations to Full Council, but it is not a decision-making body.

3.3. Membership

- 3.3.1. The Parish Clerk, Community Engagement Officer and any member of Council can be members of the working group.
- 3.3.2. Miss Lucy Standbridge of Iris Media will be invited to join the working group.
- 3.3.3. Other members of the public may be invited to join the working group and or attend working group meetings. Membership will be dynamic and may change in response to the requirement for additional skills and experience.

3.4. Chairmanship

- 3.4.1. At the first meeting of the Working Party a chairman will be elected.
- 3.4.2. The Parish Clerk cannot be elected as the Chairman.

3.5. Meetings

- 3.5.1. Meetings of the working group will be held as and when required at a location agreed by the Working Group.
- 3.5.2. Minutes need only be taken if required.
- 3.5.3. The process is to be managed by a project plan with actions.

3.6. Financial Controls

- 3.6.1. The payment of all expenses will be authorised and paid via the Parish Council bank account.

3.7. Reporting

- 3.7.1. The Clerk or a councillor, who is a member of the Working Group, will report at the Parish Council meetings.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE – VILLAGE LIFE WORKING GROUP

4.1. Purpose and objective

4.1.1. Planning

- a. To review and consider planning applications, appeals, and enforcement notices within the parish boundaries.
- b. To formulate draft recommendations and responses to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
- c. To monitor compliance with the adopted local plans, Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP), and relevant planning policies.

4.1.2. Villag History

- a. Research, collect, and preserve historical documents, photographs, and oral histories related to the village.
- b. Propose ways to make village history accessible to the public (e.g., exhibitions, local publications, or digital archives).#
- c. Advise the Parish Council on the conservation of local heritage assets, such as monuments, memorials, and historic buildings.

4.1.3. Environment & Leisure

- a. Reviewing and recommending action plans for climate change, biodiversity, tree planting, and environmental sustainability.
- b. Monitoring and suggesting improvements for village green spaces, allotments, and children’s play areas.
- c. Helping to develop and promote sports and leisure opportunities for all age groups within the community.
- d. Monitoring and recommending improvements for street furniture (e.g., benches, bus shelters, dog/litter bins) and overall parish cleanliness.

4.1.4. Highways

- a. To review, investigate, and advise the Parish Council on matters relating to highways, road safety, pedestrian infrastructure, and traffic management within the parish boundary.

4.1.5. Budget

- a. To propose budget requirements to Council as part of the annual financial budgeting process.

4.2. Decisions

- 4.2.1. The working group can make recommendations to Full Council, but it is not a decision-making body.

4.3. Membership

- 4.3.1. The Parish Clerk, Mr Hirst and any member of Council can be members of the working group.
- 4.3.2. Other members of the public may be invited to join the working group and or attend working group meetings. Membership will be dynamic and may change in response to the requirement for additional skills and experience.

4.4. Chairmanship

- 4.4.1. At the first meeting of the Working Party a chairman will be elected.
- 4.4.2. The Parish Clerk cannot be elected as the Chairman.

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4.7. Reporting

4.7.1. The Clerk or a councillor, who is a member of the Working Group, will report at the Parish Council meetings.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE – GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

5.1. Purpose and objective

5.1.1. Personnel

- a. Making recommendations for the delegation of duties to employees.

5.1.2. Finance

- a. To assist the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and the council in maintaining oversight of financial plans, long-term stability, risk management, and statutory compliance.

5.1.3. Community Safety

- a. Research, gather information, and map local community safety issues (e.g., antisocial behaviour, road safety, crime prevention, home security).
- b. Create mitigation or improvement plans in consultation with the local Community Policing Team or relevant county authorities.
- c. Submit proposals, costings, and research findings as formal reports to the Full Parish Council for ultimate endorsement and implementation

5.1.4. Risk Management

- a. To develop, implement, and review the Council's Risk Management Strategy and associated policies.
- b. To assist in maintaining and updating the Council's formal Risk Register (covering financial, reputational, and health & safety risks).
- c. To ensure compliance with the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) guidelines and statutory requirements

5.1.5. Procedures

- a. Reviewing and updating council policies, procedures.
- b. Ensuring the council complies with statutory requirements, transparency codes, and data protection/accessibility regulations
- c. Investigating specific governance issues (such as community governance reviews) and presenting options to the Full

5.1.6. Legal

- a. Assisting in legal matters, contracts, or consultations under the direction of the council.

5.1.7. Budget

- b. To propose budget requirements to Council as part of the annual financial budgeting process.

5.2. Decisions

- 5.2.1. The working group can make recommendations to Full Council, but it is not a decision-making body.

5.3. Membership

- 5.3.1. The Parish Clerk, and any member of Council can be members of the working group.
- 5.3.2. Other members of the public may be invited to join the working group and or attend working group meetings. Membership will be dynamic and may change in response to the requirement for additional skills and experience.

5.4. Chairmanship

- 5.4.1. At the first meeting of the Working Party a chairman will be elected.
- 5.4.2. The Parish Clerk cannot be elected as the Chairman.

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5.5.3. The process is to be managed by a project plan with actions.

5.6. Financial Controls

5.6.1. The payment of all expenses will be authorised and paid via the Parish Council bank account.

5.7. Reporting

5.7.1. The Clerk or a councillor, who is a member of the Working Group, will report at the Parish Council meetings.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE – SCHOOL LIASON

6.1. Purpose and objective

6.1.1. Task

- a. Gathering information, examining options, and making actionable recommendations back to the full council on potential location of additional classrooms required by Meppershall Academy.

6.1.2. Stakeholder Engagement

- a. Acting as a localized bridge to coordinate communication between the parish, village hall committee, headteachers, and local education authorities.

6.2. Decisions

- 6.2.1. The working group can make recommendations to Full Council, but it is not a decision-making body.

6.3. Membership

- 6.3.1. The Parish Clerk, and any member of Council can be members of the working group.

- 6.3.2. Members of the Village Hall Committee, Meppershall Academy and other members of the public as agreed by the Working Group may be invited to join the working group and or attend working group meetings. Membership will be dynamic and may change in response to the requirement for additional skills and experience.

6.4. Chairmanship

- 6.4.1. At the first meeting of the Working Party a chairman will be elected.

- 6.4.2. The Parish Clerk cannot be elected as the Chairman.

6.5. Meetings

- 6.5.1. Meetings of the working group will be held as and when required at a location agreed by the Working Group.

- 6.5.2. Minutes need only be taken if required.

- 6.5.3. The process is to be managed by a project plan with actions.

6.6. Financial Controls

- 6.6.1. The payment of all expenses will be authorised and paid via the Parish Council bank account.

6.7. Reporting

- 6.7.1. The Clerk or a councillor, who is a member of the Working Group, will report at the Parish Council meetings.