

Findon Parish Council Working Group Policy (Including Public Participation)

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the framework for Working Groups (WG) including members of the public. These groups are advisory only and do not make decisions.

2. Membership

Working Groups may include councillors, members of the public, and subject matter experts. Membership is approved by the Parish Council and reviewed periodically.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Parish Councillors:

- Provide leadership and strategic direction aligned with Council priorities
- Act as liaison between the WG and full Council
- Support governance, legal, and financial compliance
- Support preparation of reports and recommendations

Members of the public:

- Contribute expertise, local knowledge and ideas
- Attend meetings and participate constructively
- Respect Council procedures, confidentiality, and policies
- Support evidence gathering and community engagement where appropriate

Lead Councillor:

- Set and support WG meetings (face to face or via Teams)
- Facilitate balanced discussion and ensure all voices are heard
- Keep meetings focused and within scope
- Ensure outputs are clearly recorded and reported

Clerk/Proper Officer:

- Provide procedural, legal, and governance advice as requested
- Ensure compliance with Standing Orders, legislation, and GDPR
- Maintain records, agendas, and documentation as needed
- Act as point of contact for data protection and safeguarding concerns

4. Terms of Reference

WG to define its scope, duration, reporting arrangements and membership, and review as necessary.

5. Meetings

Meetings are informal and do not make decisions.

Recommendations must be reported to full Council.

6. Code of Conduct

Members must act respectfully, declare interests, and avoid bringing the Council into disrepute.

7. Confidentiality

Sensitive information must not be disclosed or shared beyond the group.

8. GDPR Responsibilities

Members must only process necessary personal data, store it securely, and report breaches immediately.

9. Equality and Inclusion

Participation must be fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

10. Health and Safety

Risks must be assessed and managed during any activities or site visits.

11. Expenses

Expenses must be agreed in advance and comply with Council policies.

12. Review and Dissolution

The Council may review or dissolve WGs at any time.

13. Safeguarding

Members must report concerns, avoid inappropriate situations, and follow safeguarding procedures.

14. Social Media

Members must not represent the Council or publish inappropriate or confidential content.

15. GDPR Privacy Notice

Personal data is processed for Council purposes, stored securely, and individuals have rights under UK GDPR.

16. Declaration

Members must confirm they understand and agree to the policy.