

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – JUNE 10TH 2025

Item 9 - To consider a report on the amalgamation of two of the Parish Council's Advisory Committees.

BACKGROUND

At the Media & Publicity Advisory Committee ("M&P AC") meeting on February 13th 2025 members had a discussion regarding amalgamating the Media & Publicity Advisory Committee into the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee ("5YP AC").

It was felt by the members of the M&P AC that the activities of these two advisory committees had a marked degree of overlap and there would be time and resource benefits from such a move. The members agreed to instruct the Clerk to prepare a report for presentation at a future Council meeting outlining the recommendation, accompanied by a revised set of Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committees.

Members of the 5YP AC held a similar discussion at its meeting on May 1st 2025 and also agreed that amalgamation was a sensible streamlining of the Council's Advisory Committees.

CURRENT POSITION

As requested, I have drafted a revised set of Terms of Reference for the Council's Advisory Committees and these are attached as Appendix A. The revision takes the form of adding the M&P AC's "Aims and Responsibilities" to the existing "Aims and Responsibilities" of the 5YP AC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council approves the amalgamation of the M&P AC into the 5YP AC.
2. That Council approves the attached revision of the Terms of Reference for its (now) four Advisory Committees.

David Rigby

Clerk to Copythorne Parish Council

June 3rd 2025

Copythorne Parish Council

APPENDIX A TO ITEM 9 AT THE JUNE 10TH COUNCIL MEETING

Advisory Committees: Terms of Reference

(Adopted xx/xx/xxxx)

Copythorne Parish Council

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The role of Advisory Committees

The role of Advisory Committees is to progress the Council's day to day service delivery and to develop strategy.

Advisory Committees are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

Under Copythorne Parish Council's Standing Orders Advisory Committees are constituted as follows:

- a. The Council may appoint Advisory Committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.
- b. Advisory Committees are constituted to implement the decisions of the Council as are specifically identified in their Terms of Reference and may only use the resources as delegated by the Council and have no mandate to make decisions on behalf of the Council save as are delegated necessary to act in that capacity.
- c. Advisory Committees must report on activities in the period since the last meeting (or identify that no activities were conducted) to Council at meetings in order that progress against Terms of Reference may be noted and decisions may be ratified.
- d. Advisory Committees or their individual members cannot under any circumstances undertake activities involving other agencies, bodies or individuals which commit the Council to any financial, legal or promotional / advisory functions without reference to the Council and its approval. All communications with external agencies, bodies or individuals should notified to the Clerk to maintain audit trails of any developments.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE: Advisory Committees

A. Finance Advisory Committee

Aim:

The aim of the Finance Advisory Committee is to oversee and advise the Council on all matters relating to Financial and other risk management

Responsible for:

1. Preparing budgets and recommending precepts and submit them to the Council for approval
2. Monitoring quarterly reports - prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer - of income and expenditure against the approved budget and recommend virements between budget lines as required
3. Ensuring that an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's records and control systems is maintained as required by the Accounts and Audit regulations
4. Reviewing and recommend the Council's Financial Regulations annually and to ensure that the Council is observing those regulations
5. Monitoring compliance with laid down internal and external audit and other financial procedures, regulations and statutes
6. Recommending to Council the Annual Return and as part of the process to:-
 - a. Consider the Annual Accounts
 - b. Ensure that the asset register is up to date
 - c. Consider any risk management issues
7. Reviewing the Council's cash (and if applicable investment) reserves so that they may be kept at a level appropriate to financial risk; also identify and earmark reserves for specific projects
8. Regularly reviewing & recommending the Council's Banking, Investment and Insurance arrangements
9. Monitoring and where appropriate recommend purchase of all capital items
10. Assessing and recommending provision for future capital projects
11. Monitoring, reviewing and recommending on all matters relating to the Council's staff levels, emoluments and conditions of service passed to it by the HR Advisory Committee(the Clerk will not participate in discussions related to their own emoluments other than to confirm that funding is available within the Council's budget)
12. Monitoring the Council's financial risk assessments and recommend changes where necessary
13. Establishing, recommending and then implementing a clear policy for grant administration, both incoming and outgoing
14. To examine and where relevant recommend to Council future possible models for Council operations in respect of funding of initiatives and activities, either in partnership with others or in specific task arrangements with the broader Parish community and other partners.
15. Recommending to the Council such delegated powers to the Clerk as though appropriate

Members

- Voting Membership of the Committee shall comprise the Chairman of the Council; the Vice Chair of the Council; and a minimum of two/maximum of three other Councillors elected annually by the Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May
- The Clerk (in their role as Responsible Financial Officer is a non-voting member).
- The voting members of the Finance Advisory Committee will elect a Chairman annually
- Membership of Committees may be changed at any Council meeting.
- Councillors may be co-opted to join during the year if authorised by Council.

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- Due to the nature of items to be discussed, non-councillors will not be invited to join the Finance Advisory Committee.
- Three voting members shall constitute a quorum for meetings.

Meetings

- Are to be held in such locations that are legal and practical for members to attend and that result in minimal financial burden on the Council.
- The Finance Advisory Committee will as a minimum, meet regularly four times a year (usually in the month following a financial quarter end) in order to conduct current business as determined in the Terms of Reference and as instructed by the Council.
- In addition, a fifth meeting will be held in November each year to confirm the recommended budget and requested precept for the following financial year (non-councillor members of the Financial Advisory Committee, if any, will not be permitted to attend this meeting).
- In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (s.100) the public are able to attend and observe meetings of the Finance Advisory Committee but do not have the right to participate (unless invited to do so by the Chairman of the meeting). Dates of meetings will be published on the Council's website.
- Agendas are to be prepared by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Finance Advisory Committee and distributed (with any written reports) to all members of the Council a minimum of five working days prior to any meeting. Any agenda item that could result in a request for action by the Council must be accompanied by a written report. The Clerk is to arrange for a copy of the agenda (and any supporting papers) to be added to the Council's website at the same time.
- The Clerk (or in his absence from the meeting an appointed member of the Finance Advisory Committee) is - within five working days of the meeting - to forward to the Chairman of the Finance Advisory Committee notes of the meeting for approval. The approved notes are to be distributed to all members of the Council within seven working days of the meeting. A copy is also to be published on the Council's website at the same time.

Decisions and Delegated Powers

- The Finance Advisory Committee is constituted to implement the decisions of the Council as specifically identified in its Terms of Reference and may only use resources as delegated by the Council. The Finance Advisory Committee has no mandate to make decisions on behalf of the Council

Reporting to Council

- The Chair of the Finance Advisory Committee must submit to the Clerk of the Council any report arising from its meetings that includes recommendations to Council in accordance with Standing Order 9 ("Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer").
- Clear and concise recommendations are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the motions to the Council to ensure that the intention of the resolution is conveyed to the members for them to vote.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE: Advisory Committees

B. Five Year Plan Advisory Committee (incorporating the Aims and Responsibilities of the Media & Publicity Advisory Committee (from June 2025))

Aim:

The aim of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee is to advise, oversee and make recommendations to the Council on all matters relating to the preparation, delivery and continued updating of the Copythorne Parish Council Five Year Plan.

Additional Aim relating to Media & Publicity:

The aim of the Media and Publicity Advisory Committee is to establish clear, easy to use, channels of communication in relation to members of the public, other agencies, fellow members, the press and Council staff. Together with supporting the Council's aims to provide information on important matters affecting the community and to encourage suggestions and feedback from interested individuals and groups.

Responsible for:

1. Acting as the custodian of the Copythorne Parish Council Five Year Plan on behalf of the Council.
2. Managing the process to undertake consultation and development activities both within the Council and the broader community of the Parish to secure possible items of inclusion in the Plan.
3. Developing criteria, including any constraining issues against which to measure any suggested inclusion and report them to the Council for approval.
4. Devising a draft Plan of an annual basis (i.e. always rolling one year forward on a five year timescale) and liaise with the Finance Advisory Committee on the potential cost/precept implications prior to submission to the Council for consideration, and approval for final publication for comment to our community.
5. Creating 'tools' to monitor progress on implementation of projects/activities/services within the Plan priorities.
6. Creating a project management structure to oversee projects identified for action within the Plan in any one year.
7. To continue the initial process of developing a "Copythorne Parish Design Statement" through discussions with NFNPA and NFDC (and other local parish councils) on the most appropriate way to progress and to also consider how to engage and involve the residents of the parish with the process, initially by means of a public consultation.
8. To develop our Parish Environmental Policy' in collaboration with the initiatives from both NFDC and HCC as well any other localised initiatives and central government drivers.
9. To continue to monitor the provision of Community Transport within the Parish and, if appropriate and applicable, to continue any required development work on a Parish Community Transport Strategy.
10. To examine and where relevant recommend to Council future possible models for Parish Council operations in respect of funding of initiatives and activities, either in partnership with others or in specific task arrangements with the broader Parish community and other partners.
11. Where appropriate, amend the Plan to reflect any legislative or other changes which impact on the work of the Council in the maintenance and development of its Plan and submit those changes to the Council for approval.

Additional responsibilities relating to Media & Publicity

1. Reviewing and recommending policies to the Council with regard to media and publicity activities.
2. Responsible for promoting the activities of the Council with the general public and the media.
3. Regularly reviewing our existing methods of communication (currently Parish Newsletter; Stanley's Own newsletter; website; noticeboards; Facebook; Telephone boxes) to include distribution sites for Parish Newsletter (additions, deletions) and making recommendations to Council.

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4. Consider and make recommendations to Council regarding Council use of Social Media.
5. Consider and make cost effective recommendations to Council to improve and increase range of methods for council getting its message across.
6. To keep all methods of communication under regular review.
7. Review the use of Parish Noticeboards, working in conjunction with the 5YPAC to present a recommendation for their siting.

Members

- Voting Membership of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee shall comprise a minimum of four/maximum of five Councillors elected annually by the Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May.
- The Clerk (in their role as Responsible Financial Officer is a non-voting member).
- The voting members of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee will elect a Chairman annually.
- Membership of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee may be changed at any Council meeting.
- Councillors may be co-opted to join during the year if authorised by Council.
- Non-Councillors may be invited to join the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee. These persons do not have a right to vote or to move or second a motion.
- Three voting members shall constitute a quorum for meetings.

Meetings

- Are to be held in such locations that are legal and practical for members to attend and that result in minimal financial burden on the Council.
- The Five Year Plan Advisory Committee will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the plan, combined with designated meetings to deliver aspects of the approved Plan's development - e.g. current cycle of consultation and drafting - as needed.
- In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (s.100) the public are able to attend and observe meetings of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee but do not have the right to participate (unless invited to do so by the Chairman of the meeting). Dates of meetings will be published on the Council's website.
- Agendas are to be prepared by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee and distributed (with any written reports) to all members of the Council a minimum of five working days prior to any meeting. Any agenda item that could result in a request for action by the Council must be accompanied by a written report. The Clerk is to arrange for a copy of the agenda (and any supporting papers) to be added to the Council's website at the same time.
- The Clerk (or in his absence from the meeting an appointed member of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee) is - within five working days of the meeting - to forward to the Chairman of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee notes of the meeting for approval. The approved notes are to be distributed to all members of the Council within seven working days of the meeting. A copy is also to be published on the Council's website at the same time.

Decisions and Delegated Powers

- The Five Year Plan Advisory Committee is constituted to implement the decisions of the Council as specifically identified in its Terms of Reference and may only use resources as delegated by the Council. The Five Year Plan Advisory Committee has no mandate to make decisions on behalf of the Council

Reporting to Council

- The Chair of the Five Year Plan Advisory Committee must submit to the Clerk of the Council any report arising from its meetings that includes recommendations to Council in accordance with Standing Order 9 ("Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer").
- Clear and concise recommendations are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the motions to the Council to ensure that the intention of the resolution is conveyed to the members for them to vote

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TERMS OF REFERENCE : Advisory Committees

C. Flooding Advisory Committee

Aim

The aim of the Flooding Advisory Committee is to advise, oversee and make recommendations to the Council on flooding issues within the Parish of Copythorne, working in conjunction with the appropriate authorities to identify and mitigate flooding issues.

Responsible for

1. Annually reviewing Copythorne Parish Council's Flood Plan and submitting it to the Council for adoption.
2. Ensuring that the Council has as much historic information as possible in its records and make this information available for viewing on a dedicated section of the Council's website; ensuring that all information freely available for viewing meets GDPR requirements.
3. All flooding issues within the Parish that are not the result of private drainage/sewerage related maintenance issues. This would generally concentrate the Flooding Advisory Committee's activities to land and ordinary watercourses within the vicinity of designated main rivers.
4. Ensuring advice is available through such media as the Council's newsletter, website and noticeboards, to inform property and land owners of their obligation, rights and responsibilities.
5. Ensuring that members of the Flooding Advisory Committee, details of whom can be found on the Council's website at: <https://www.copythorne.org.uk/committee-representation/#working> are, within the limits of them being non-expert members of the local community, available to contact for assistance. For information, signposting and advice on non-emergency flooding matters contact should always initially, where possible, be made to the Clerk to the Council.
6. Working and liaising with all appropriate and competent authorities to ensure regular inspection of main rivers and critical watercourses.
7. Providing a schedule of works for the Parish Lengthsman to potentially mitigate the risk of flooding and submitting it to the Council for approval.
8. In accordance with GDPR principles, maintaining a database to be updated annually of parishioners who wish to be informed specifically on flooding related matters. This database and the GDPR consent forms will be held by the Clerk to the Council.

Members

- Voting Membership of the Flooding Advisory Committee shall comprise a minimum of four/maximum of five Councillors elected at the Annual Parish Council Meeting each May.
- The voting members of the Flooding Advisory Committee will elect a Chairman annually.
- Membership of the Flooding Advisory Committee may be changed at any Council meeting.
- Councillors may be co-opted to join during the year if authorised by Council.
- Non-Councillors may be invited to join the Flooding Advisory Committee. These persons do not have a right to vote or to move or second a motion.
- Three voting members shall constitute a quorum for meetings.

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Meetings

- Are to be held in such locations that are legal and practical for members to attend and that result in minimal financial burden on the Council.
- The Flooding Advisory Committee will meet on a quarterly basis but can also be convened to deal with flooding incidents or specific matters as necessary.
- In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (s.100) the public are able to attend and observe meetings of the Flooding Advisory Committee but do not have the right to participate (unless invited to do so by the Chairman of the meeting). Dates of meetings will be published on the Council's website.
- Agendas are to be prepared by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Flooding Advisory Committee and distributed (with any written reports) to all members of the Council a minimum of five working days prior to any meeting. Any agenda item that could result in a request for action by the Council must be accompanied by a written report. The Clerk is to arrange for a copy of the agenda (and any supporting papers) to be added to the Council's website at the same time.
- The Clerk (or in his absence from the meeting an appointed member of the Flooding Advisory Committee) is - within five working days of the meeting - to forward to the Chairman of the Flooding Advisory Committee notes of the meeting for approval. The approved notes are to be distributed to all members of the Council within seven working days of the meeting. A copy is also to be published on the Council's website at the same time.

Decisions and Delegated Powers

- The Flooding Advisory Committee is constituted to implement the decisions of the Council as specifically identified in its Terms of Reference and may only use resources as delegated by the Council. The Flooding Advisory Committee has no mandate to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

Reporting to Council

- The Chair of the Flooding Advisory Committee must submit to the Clerk of the Council any report arising from its meetings that includes recommendations to Council in accordance with Standing Order 9 ("Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer").
- Clear and concise recommendations are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the motions to the Council to ensure that the intention of the resolution is conveyed to the members for them to vote.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE : Advisory Committees

D. Media and Publicity Advisory Committee

Aim:

The aim of the Media and Publicity Advisory Committee is to establish clear, easy to use, channels of communication in relation to members of the public, other agencies, fellow members, the press and Council staff. Together with supporting the Council's aims to provide information on important matters affecting the community and to encourage suggestions and feedback from interested individuals and groups.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE: Advisory Committees

D. Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee

Aim:

The aim of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee is to advise, oversee and make recommendations to the Council on all staffing matters and all policies (other than those related to financial matters) that the Council consider necessary for its proper governance.

Responsible for - Personnel:-

1. Reviewing Council staffing structures and make recommendations as appropriate to the Council.
2. Establishing and review annually contracts of employment, job descriptions and person specifications for all staff and make recommendations as appropriate to the Council.
3. Establishing and review annually staff salaries (and where used, pay scales) and terms of conditions and make recommendations as appropriate to Council.
4. Recruitment panels will normally include four members of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee in the case of appointment to the Parish Clerk; and two members of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee plus the Clerk for all other posts; recommending appointments to the Council for approval.
5. Arranging and executing of new employment contracts and changes to contracts once approved by the Council.
6. Establishing and reviewing performance management (including probationary and annual appraisals) processes and reporting on the outcome of them to the Council.
7. Recommending and managing staff and councillor training programmes to the Council as appropriate.
8. Keeping under review staff working conditions and staff health & safety matters.
9. Monitoring and addressing regular or sustained staff absence.
10. To make recommendations on staffing related expenditure.
11. Considering any appeal against a decision in respect of pay and make recommendations as appropriate to the Council.
12. Considering grievance or disciplinary matters (and any appeals) and make recommendations as appropriate to the Council.
13. Overseeing any process leading to dismissal of Council staff including redundancy.
14. To ensure the Council complies with all legislative requirements relating to the employment of staff.
15. To review all Council policies that relate to staff employment on an annual basis and make recommendations to the Council on any changes felt appropriate.

Responsible for – Governance:-

1. Identifying policies where the Council is mandated to take action or may take action on the basis of best practice.
2. Define and develop policies in areas required by the Council
3. Recommend policies to the Council for adoption

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4. Review policies in light of legal changes and best practice.
5. To continue to develop standard systems and documentation for the conduct of our business, such as: internal management procedures and standardised letters / communications with the community on a variety of matters such as for writing to landowners regarding culvert and overgrowth clearance etc.
6. To monitor and if appropriate, devise solutions to ensure appropriate action is taken to enable all the administrative functions of the Parish Council continue to be undertaken within the available resources as the footprint and activity of the Parish Council widens.

Members

- Voting Membership of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee shall comprise a minimum of four/maximum of five Councillors elected at the Annual Parish Council Meeting each May.
- The voting members of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee will elect a Chairman annually.
- Membership of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee may be changed at any Council meeting.
- Councillors may be co-opted to join during the year if authorised by Council.
- Due to the nature of items to be discussed, non-councillors will not be invited to join the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee.
- Three voting members shall constitute a quorum for meetings.

Meetings

- Are to be held in such locations that are legal and practical for members to attend and that result in minimal financial burden on the Council.
- The Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee will meet on a half yearly basis and additionally as required to deal with matters within its remit or when requested to do by the Council.
- In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (s.100) the public are able to attend and observe meetings of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee but do not have the right to participate (unless invited to do so by the Chairman of the meeting). Dates of meetings will be published on the Council's website.
- Agendas are to be prepared by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee and distributed (with any written reports) to all members of the Council a minimum of five working days prior to any meeting. Any agenda item that could result in a request for action by the Council must be accompanied by a written report. The Clerk is to arrange for a copy of the agenda (and any supporting papers) to be added to the Council's website at the same time.
- The Clerk (or in his absence from the meeting an appointed member of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee) is - within five working days of the meeting - to forward to the Chairman of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee notes of the meeting for approval. The approved notes are to be distributed to all members of the Council within seven working days of the meeting. A copy is also to be published on the Council's website at the same time.

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Decisions and Delegated Powers

- The Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee is constituted to implement the decisions of the Council as specifically identified in its Terms of Reference and may only use resources as delegated by the Council. The Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee has no mandate to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

Reporting to Council

- The Chair of the Personnel and Governance Advisory Committee must submit to the Clerk of the Council any report arising from its meetings that includes recommendations to Council in accordance with Standing Order 9 ("Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer").
- Clear and concise recommendations are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the motions to the Council to ensure that the intentions of the resolution is conveyed to the members for them to vote.