

DRAFT

GREAT EASTON PARISH COUNCIL ORGANISATION AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The steadily increasing responsibilities expected of Parish Councils, as both County and District Councils continue to devolve responsibilities to Parish Councils, requires the Parish Council to review and formalise the way this is addressed at the local level. The finite number of Councillors, six including the Chairman, means there is a consequent need to share the workload as equally as possible, reflecting the interests and experience of individual Councillors.

1.2 The development and eventual implementation of the current Neighbourhood Plan has also raised the profile of the Parish Council and community expectations. This has contributed to an additional need to review how the Parish Council is operating.

1.3 This paper reviews how the Parish Council is currently working, including the devolved responsibilities to both the Village Hall and the Recreation Field Committees and proposes how the Parish Council should operate in the future. In some respects this is simply the need to formalise current informal structures.

2.0 CURRENT INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The current responsibilities for Councillors and the Clerk are:

- P Long. Chairman and NP
- P Brittain. Vice Chairman, Planning and Internal Audit
- N Clarke . Police Liaison, Community and Heritage
- A Murdock. Tree Warden, Grass Cutting, Village Hall representative
- G Vizma. Street Lighting
- L Walsh. Website, Transparency and Communication, Defibrillator rep
- D Gibley. Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

2.2. There would appear to be scope for readjusting the above responsibilities to achieve a more equitable share of the workload.

3.0 SUB COMMITTEES

3.1 One of the current strengths of the Parish Council is the successful devolved responsibility for both the Village Hall and the Recreation Field to separate active committees; each responsible for managing and maintaining their respective facilities. This devolved responsibility includes, insurance, finance, (including fund raising), health and safety and all aspects of running the facility for the benefit of the local community. At the same time, the Parish Council remains ultimately responsible and the structure needs to ensure the necessary oversight is in place.

3.2 This structure has evolved over the years and it is anticipated that with responsibilities continuing to be devolved from central and local government to parish councils, there will be an increasing need for these tasks to be shared with the local community. The sub committee structure provides a proven model to cope with this increasing workload but there is a need to formalise the structure, without altering the present ethos.

4.0 CURRENT SUB COMMITTEES

4.1 There are three current committees which are effectively sub committees of the Parish Council: the Village Hall Committee, the Recreation Ground Committee and the Neighbourhood Plan Committee.

- **The Village Hall Committee.** The Village Hall is owned by the Parish Council, having acquired the building in 1954. For the record, the building was originally owned by Thomas Mould, who sold it to The Loyal Constitution Lodge of the Independent Order of Oddfellows (Manchester Unity) in 1933. The Parish Council rented the building in 1953 for £25/year and bought the building in 1954 for £650 to be run as a social centre. In 1981 the Parish Council leased the building for 99 years to a management committee – the Village Hall committee - for a peppercorn rent and a full repairing lease .

- **The Recreation Ground, Clarkesdale – Clarke’s Piece.** This field, originally donated by the Clarke family to the village, was leased from HDC for a period of 50 years to the Parish Council, with a sub-lease to the Recreation Ground Committee, both dated 30 May 2012. Both documents were registered with the Land Registry. Since then the Recreation Ground Committee has equipped the field with play equipment, managed and maintained the ground in accordance with the conditions of the lease document.

- **Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee.** This committee was formed in November 2014 for the duration of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The arrangements for implementation following the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan have yet to be considered and agreed. One of the recommendations in the Neighbourhood Plan was for sub committees to be formed to progress different aspects.

5.0 INFORMAL SUB COMMITTEES

5.1 Two informal sub committees currently exist to manage and develop their particular subjects: the Village website and the Defibrillator.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS.

6.1 The following recommendations are made for the consideration of the Parish Council:

A. Individual Responsibilities of Councillors. A review of the current responsibilities is conducted to agree the most equitable allocation reflecting individual skills and interests.

B. Current Sub Committees. The current structure for the Village Hall, Recreation Ground and the Neighbourhood Plan committees is formally agreed between the Parish Council and the respective sub committees, to include:

- **Representation.** There should be at least one Parish Councillor on each sub committee

- **Liaison.** The Parish Council representative should report any major issues to the Parish Council, at least once a year or more often as required.

- **Annual General meeting.** An annual report of the previous year’s activities and any current issues should be presented at the annual meeting of the Parish Council.

- **Accounts.** A copy of the audited accounts, where applicable, should be forwarded to the Parish Council, as part of the annual report.

C. Informal sub committees. It is recommended that the present informal structure for the ad hoc committees continues unchanged i.e. a current Councillor nominated for each ad hoc committee, tasked to provide regular reports to the Parish Council covering the current progress and any aspects requiring Parish Council authority. It is anticipated that these informal ad hoc committees will have a finite duration. If ongoing, consideration should be given to formalising the structure.