

DRAFT DISCUSSION PAPER
(to be considered on Tues 19 May 20)

GREAT EASTON PARISH COUNCIL
ORGANISATION, COMMITTEE STRUCTURES AND VOLUNTEERS

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 and involving the wider community.

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

1.3 This discussion 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 develop wider community involvement in the future.

2.0 CURRENT INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The current responsibilities for Councillors and the Clerk are:

- P Long. Chairman and Village Hall rep.
- P Brittain. Vice Chairman, Planning and Internal Audit
- C Johnston. Tree Warden, Conservation, Grass Cutting and Recreation Field rep
- G Vizma. Street Lighting and Valentine Goodman Charity rep
- L Walsh. Website, Transparency and Communication, Defibrillator rep
- R Wilson. Community Actions, Flood Alleviation and Volunteer Coordination
- D Gibley. Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

2.2. Does this achieve an equitable share of the workload and meet individual expectations?

3.0 CURRENT 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 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.

- **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. Once the Neighbourhood Plan was formally “made”, the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee ceased and monitoring of the Neighbourhood Plan reverted to the Parish Council. One of the recommendations in the Neighbourhood Plan was for sub committees to be formed to progress different aspects. This has not happened. At present the Parish Council has agreed to review progress on an annual basis but there is a danger that current agenda requirements mean that this is not progressed

4.0 INFORMAL SUB COMMITTEES

4.1 Informal sub committees have been formed to manage and progress particular topics, including the Flood Alleviation group, Website planning, the Defibrillator and the Village Gateways. A War Memorial working group to maintain and improve the war memorial surrounds is currently being formed and there is an ongoing requirement for a Brook clearance work party. In all cases it is recommended that there is a Parish Council representative to monitor and report as required.

5.0 INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS/WORK PARTIES

5.1. In addition to the above, each year there are a number of new village tasks identified either on the annual village peregrination, which forms part of the annual village risk assessment process, or arise during the year i.e. notice board maintenance, painting railings etc. It is proposed that a small pool of residents prepared to assist is identified, coordinated by the Parish Council.

6.0 FINANCE AND INSURANCE

6.1 **Finance.** There is a need to budget an adequate sum to fund necessary materials, protective clothing and associated necessities to carry out the agreed tasks.

6.2 **Insurance.** Risk assessments are required for some activities i.e Brook clearance working.

6.3 **Public Liability Insurance.** Listed volunteers working on Parish Council approved work parties are covered by The Parish Council public liability insurance, providing appropriate risk assessments, where needed, have been carried out and implemented.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS.

7.1 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 and Recreation Ground committees is confirmed as working satisfactorily by 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.

d. Individual Volunteers and Work Parties. One Parish Cllr is nominated to coordinate and monitor a roster of Volunteers and to ensure any ongoing work parties are liaising as needed with the Parish Council.

e. Annual review. It is recommended that the individual responsibilities and working of the committee and working parties is reviewed annually.

Prepared by; David Gibley, Parish Clerk.
May 2020