



ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the working group held on Monday 22nd July 2019 at 7pm in Alston Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs: M. Denoual, T. Haldon, A. Holt, C. Johnson (clerk).

Apologies: Cllrs: A. Martin, L. Seaton & Town Hall manager C. Worboys.

Absent: Cllr: M. Hanley

1. Appointment of working group chair

Resolved to appoint Cllr Holt. Proposed by TH and seconded by MD.

2. Name of group and terms of reference – suggestion advisory group on policy and development

Resolved that the name would be Advisory group on Policy and Development.

3. Review and updating of council policies – agree/amend draft Communications Policy and agree calendar to review existing policies

A list of current policies with the date of the last review was circulated. It was agreed that all those last reviewed in 2016 should be checked for relevance and updated as needed, on a quarterly basis. This is to be done by e-mail, amendments submitted and agreed by email for presentation to full council.

The draft Communications policy has been circulated. Agreed to submit amendments to the clerk. **Action.**

4. Website development – identification of issues

The front page needs re-vamping with one issue being that no-one could work out how to update it satisfactorily. Agreed that just information relevant to parish councils should be included. No improvements to the content were suggested.

TH produced some examples of parish council websites from companies, who can set up websites and provide ongoing maintenance on a subscription basis. Agreed that TH would research and cost the most promising. **Action TH.**

5 Raising the profile of the parish council

It was agreed that photos and contact details for councillors should be posted on the website and displayed on the noticeboard in the Town Hall. All members would be asked to use a council e-mail address.

Facebook could be used to put out short, snappy reports that are positive. Some could be taken from the press release, possibly using a timed messaging system. This could feed into the website to keep it up to date. Agreed that the Publicity Officer (CW) should be the moderator and that her word on what was acceptable would be final. **Action CW.**

Recommended that Facebook is used actively to present positive short statements.

6. Continuing professional development

Opportunities are available for councillors to take courses if desired. Information could be included in the welcome pack.

7. Local Council Award Scheme

This could be looked into, as achieving this status would be a positive step. However, it is dependant upon having a certain number of elected, rather than co-opted councillors, which had proved to be a stumbling block in the past.

8. Council membership/induction pack & welcome pack

It was agreed that it would be helpful to new councillors to put together a welcome pack with useful information. Much of the council information is in dropbox and on the council website already, so what is needed is a simple guide as to where to find this information. **Action CJ.**

Experienced councillors if willing could help mentor new members.

CJ will order the Good Councillor guide for new councillors as the office has run out of copies. **Action CJ.**

9. Application form for co-option for councillors

When discussed previously at council meetings the proposal for an application form, based on the one used by Appleby Town Council, was not well received. It was suggested that as the person specs can be intimidating, this section of the application form could be taken out and the application form re-vamped. TH agreed to look at the form before bringing it back to full council. **Action TH.**

Agreed that persons standing for co-option should still be asked to speak, as although this can be intimidating prospective councillors will need to be able to speak up at council meetings.

Recommended that all councillors are asked to sign that they have read the Code of Conduct.

10. Engaging with the community

Already discussed.

11. Date of next meeting

Agreed that meetings should be quarterly, but the next meeting would be in two months time on Monday 23rd September at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.

Signed:

Dated: