



Committees & Representation Report

Summary

Due to Councillor resignations there are multiple vacancies upon the Councils various Committees & Representations.

Elections are due in May 2023 and the Terms of Reference and the members of Committees & Representations will need to be reviewed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in line with our Standing Orders.

Recommendations / Considerations

In order to streamline the existing structure of the Council & enable Committees to more easily reach a quorum (3) to consider the following actions:

Dissolve the HR, Finance, Maintenance and Planning Committees & the Platinum Jubilee Project Working Group.

Create a joint HR & Finance Committee – terms of reference to be drafted for the following meeting and four members to be appointed.

Create a joint Planning & Maintenance Committee (incorporating the platinum jubilee project) – terms of reference to be drafted for the following meeting and four members to be appointed

Nominate a further Councillor to sit on the Steering Group Committee.

Nominate a Parish Council representative to act as liaison with the Board of Governors of Water Orton School.

Other options can be explored including keeping existing committee structure and nominating members to fill the following vacancies:

Finance Committee x 1

HR Committee x 2

Platinum Project working group x 1

Steerings Committee x 1

The Board of Governors of Water Orton School x 1

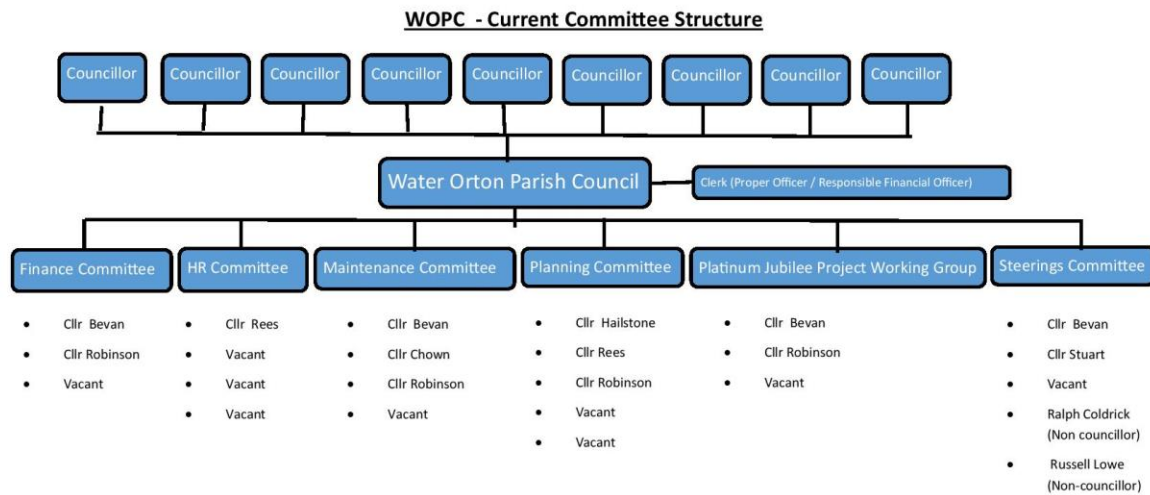
Or increasing the membership numbers of existing committees to ensure it is easier to obtain a quorum

Or dissolving one or more committees and dealing with matters at Full Council



Background

The current structure



Nominated Representatives of Water Orton Parish Council

The Thomas Dole Charity— Cllr Rees

The Board of Governors Water Orton School—Vacant x 2

Site outside village car park NWBC / WOCAG / WOPC—Cllr Bevan & Cllr Robinson

The current structure contains six committees and working groups, with some Councillors sitting upon four committees and the current vacancies mean some committees are not able to reach a quorum.

The workload for the Clerk of preparing and publishing meeting paperwork and attending meetings for the five committees and a monthly full council is not considered realistic within an 18-hour contract considering all of the other duties the post entails.

A proposed structure (pictured overleaf) of 3 committees is considered a more manageable option.

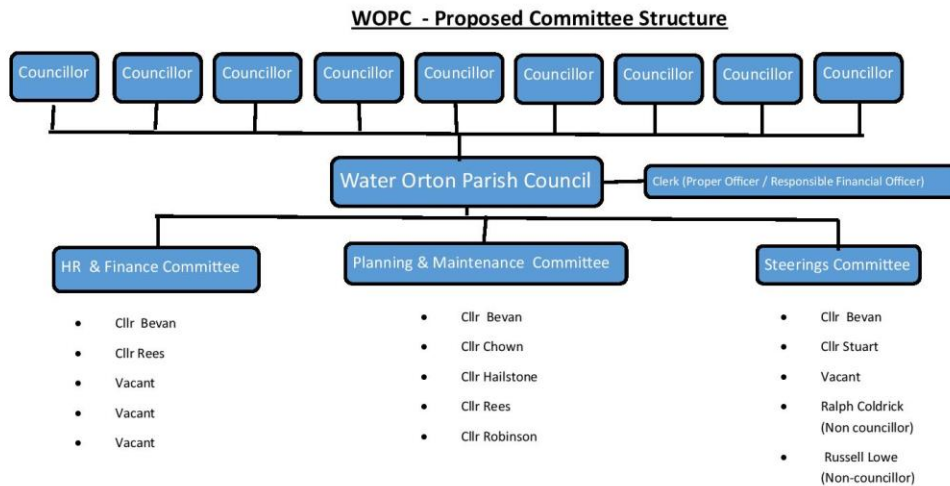
Finance & HR Meetings should be scheduled quarterly for regular budget monitoring & checks of internal controls. An additional meeting is likely be needed over Q3 to review / carry out staff appraisals & to make recommendations to the council regarding budget setting and precept demands for the following financial year. The budget setting and precept demand cannot be delegated to a committee, due to statute this must be decided by full Council.

Planning & Maintenance Committee – this committee is likely to meet monthly to discuss all planning applications and items of general maintenance. This will be useful to ensure all planning applications are considered and that urgent maintenance work can be duly authorised. Council can delegate planning matters to a Committee or to an Officer. Committee can be given a specific budget for maintenance matters and / or projects within their terms of reference which can spent without authorisation from full council. Matters decided under delegated authority must still be reported back to full council at the next meeting.



Full Council – If full council approve a list of regular payments at its annual parish council meeting in May and have delegated authority in place for planning matters & maintenance then full council could potentially meet less often.

Proposed structure:



Nominated Representatives of Water Orton Parish Council

The Thomas Dole Charity— Cllr Rees

The Board of Governors Water Orton School—Vacant x 2

Site outside village car park NWBC / WOCAG / WOPC—Cllr Bevan & Cllr Robinson

Finance and Value for money

The main cost implication are impacts upon Staffing Costs, more Committees require additional hours to be spent preparing meeting paperwork and attending meetings.

May be a financial impact to loss of revenue for Pavilion Hire depending on frequency of meetings.

Risk Management Issues

Failure to have a HR Committee in place can make Staffing Matters difficult to deal with. There is a need for some matters to be dealt with by a smaller number of Councillors for practicality. Terms of reference should be clear so there is no confusion regarding any delegated powers given to a Committee. As there is only a short time until Elections in May 2023, it would not be unreasonable for the Council to consider dissolving all committees and managing its affairs at full council meetings until a structure can be agreed by the elected members at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

It is recommended that the Chair of the Parish Council does not sit on committees in order to remain impartial at Full Council meetings and help to provide an extra layer if any issues arising within the



Committees need to be escalated to full Council (Complaints / grievances etc.) This is particularly pertinent to HR & Finance Committees.

Planning Applications can arrive between full council meetings and it is sensible to have a Committee in place who can meet as and when required. If no planning committee is in place, Council may wish to delegate authority to the Clerk to submit comments on behalf of the Parish Council in order to ensure comments can be made when required.

Committees may wish to refer some matters to the Steerings Committee for consideration (in terms of policies / procedures) the terms of reference will need to be carefully considered to ensure that the responsibilities of committees are distinct and separate to avoid confusion.

At all times the Parish Council reserve the right to bring matters to Full Council without taking them to the relevant Committee.

This report was prepared by the Clerk