

Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

Name

The name of the organisation shall be the Stanwick Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group.

Purpose

The purpose of the Steering Group shall be to support the parish council to carry out the following tasks:

- Investigate and identify support for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- To produce a sound Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the civil Parish of Stanwick. The plan will define the planning policy priorities identified by the community taking into account all representations made during the plan-making process and having regard to all relevant existing plans and evidence.
- Identify sources of funding.
- Take responsibility for planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure on the Plan and report back to the parish council on these matters.
- Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the Plan as effective as possible.
- Identify ways of involving the whole community and gather the views and opinions of as many groups and organisations in the community as possible.
- Determine the types of survey and information gathering to be used.
- Be responsible for the analysis of the survey, the production and distribution of the final report.
- Identify priorities and timescale for local action in the Action Plan, including the lead organisations and potential sources of project funding.
- Regularly report back to the parish council on progress, issues arising and outcomes from the exercise. See role of the Bridging Co-ordinator under Roles and Relationships.

Membership

The Steering Group will be made up from interested members of the community and parish councillors.

Roles

At the first meeting, the Steering Group will elect a chairperson, a secretary, and a Finance Co-ordinator.

Wherever possible the Steering Group will also elect a Communication's Co-ordinator, a Volunteer Co-ordinator and a Bridging Coordinator. (For details, see Roles & Relationships)

Wherever possible all other members should have a specific role, to be agreed by the Steering Group. (For details see Roles & Relationships.)

Roles & Relationships

The Parish Council role and responsibilities:

- Parish Council insurance will cover the previously agreed activities of the Steering Group and volunteers, but steering group officers, in liaison with the parish clerk, need to ensure that terms of the insurance are not breached.
- The parish council will provide the opportunity for the endorsement of regular reports via its meeting agenda.
- Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 (Schedule 9, Section 61F) Stanwick Parish Council is the qualifying body for the preparation of an NDP for the civil parish of Stanwick.
- As the qualifying body, the Parish Council remains ultimately responsible for the creation and submission of the NDP for scrutiny and approval

The Steering Groups role and responsibilities:

- A Bridging Co-ordinator may be appointed to liaise between the Steering Group and the parish council, or alternatively parish councillors who are also members of the Steering Group will act as liaison officers between the 2 bodies.
- The Steering Group, either via an appointed officer or via its parish council members will provide a regular report to the parish council, for endorsement.
- It is expected that all Steering Group members abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council Code of Conduct including declarations of interest.

The role and responsibilities of working groups

- Working Groups will carry out duties specified by the full Steering Group, which may include:-
 - Data Gathering
 - Consultations
 - Making recommendations
- The make-up and purpose of working groups will be regularly reviewed by the full Steering Group.

Meetings

The Steering Group shall normally meet monthly (but every two months as a minimum), or as may be required.

At least three clear days' notice of meetings shall be sent to members via the communication method agreed with, and appropriate to, each individual member.

Whenever possible, notices of meetings should detail the matters to be discussed.

The secretary shall keep a record of meetings, and circulate notes to Steering Group members and the Parish Council in a timely fashion.

The latter will publicise the notes via their usual methods.

It is recommended that an annual rolling schedule of meetings is set in place, preferably at the first meeting of the Steering Group and made available to the public via notice boards/websites.

All meetings should be held in public and be open to the public.

Copies of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct will be available at all NP meetings.

Working groups

The Steering Group may establish such working groups as it considers necessary to carry out the functions specified by the Steering Group.

Each working group should have a lead person.

Finance

All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the parish council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Development Plan purposes only.

Notification of all planned expenditure will be given to the parish council before actual costs are incurred.

The Finance Officer shall keep a clear record of expenditure supported by receipted invoices and will regularly review and update the budget in liaison with the parish clerk.

The Finance Co-ordinator in partnership with the parish clerk, will draw up and agree with the Steering Group procedures for volunteers who wish to claim expenses.

The Finance Co-ordinator will report back to the Steering Group and the parish council on planned and actual expenditure for the project.

Invoices will be made out in the name of the parish council who will pay them at their next scheduled parish council meeting.

Members of the community who are involved as volunteers with any of the working groups may claim back any previously agreed expenditure that was necessarily incurred during the process of producing the Neighbourhood Development Plan. This could include postage and stationery, telephone calls, travel cost.

Dissolving the Steering Group

At the conclusion of the Neighbourhood Development Plan project the parish council and Steering Group should discuss the future working of the Steering Group. If the Steering Group wishes to dissolve it must notify the parish council

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference may only be altered or revoked in a convened meeting of Stanwick Parish Council.

Steering Group Code of Conduct

Selflessness

Members of the Steering Group may find that there is an overlap with their personal or professional life and interests. However, in working on the NDP, Members shall serve only the public interest and shall never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person. At all times Members shall act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them as a co-opted Member of a Parish Council Advisory Committee.

Declarations of Interest

All Members of the Steering Group must declare any and all personal or professional interests that may be perceived as being relevant to any actions, conclusions or recommendations being made by the Steering Group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of interest in land (directly or indirectly) or a business or indeed any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group. Declared interests will be referred to the Clerk of the Parish Council for a determination on whether they constitute a conflict of interest.

Integrity, Honesty and Respect

In working on the NDP, Members of the Steering Group shall consider all their actions carefully to avoid placing themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned and shall on all occasions avoid improper behaviour or the appearance of improper behaviour.

Members of the Steering Group will treat other Members with respect and dignity, allowing everyone to air their views without prejudice and interruption.

Objectivity (in decision making)

Members will make all decisions and recommendations on merit, approaching each with an open mind, listening to the views of others and assessing the information

presented carefully. They must then reach their own conclusions on issues and act accordingly. Failure to do so may expose the plan to challenge on the basis of flawed decision making processes.

Accountability

Everything the Steering Group does must be able to stand the test of scrutiny by the public, the media, other stakeholders, and the courts. Members of the Steering Group are accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they develop the NDP. Members are therefore expected to co-operate fully and honestly with any appropriate scrutiny.

Openness

Stanwick Parish Council strives to maintain an atmosphere of openness throughout the Council to promote confidence of the public, stakeholders, staff and regulators. Members of the NDP Steering Group will be as open as possible about their actions and recommendations, and should be prepared to give reasons for actions taken, conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

Adoption

These terms of Reference were adopted by Stanwick Parish Council 22nd January 2015

Version 1 (January 2015)