



Buckden Parish Council

Village Maintenance Committee

Type:

Committee

Membership

- The Committee shall have a minimum of 4 Parish Councillors.
- Co-option: Only residents of the Parish may be co-opted on to the committee.
- Non-Councillors shall not, at any time, be more in number than one quarter of the Committee's members.
- The Chair is selected/elected at the Annual Parish Council meeting.
- One member of the Committee will be nominated as the Climate Change Champion

The Parish Council members and residents are appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (i.e. at the first meeting of the Parish Council year). By agreement with the Chair of the Parish Council, in-year vacancies may be filled by co-option and additional Councillors appointed if required.

Quorum and Attendance

- Four members will form a quorum which **must** comprise a majority of Councillors.

It is important that the Committee is quorate to enable decisions to be made; if the Chair or Acting Chair of the Committee believes that the meeting will not be quorate, they can ask other councillors to attend.

- The Clerk or assistant Clerk will attend all meetings.
- The meetings are open to members of the public who may speak at the meeting if they notify the Clerk in advance, as set out on the meeting Agenda, and in line with the guidance notes for the public. The BPC protocol and guidance for members of the public who wish to speak at a Committee meeting will be sent, by the Clerk, to anyone making such a request.
- Public comments at meetings may only be made on the items on the Agenda being considered by the Committee at that meeting.



Purpose

The Committee will, on behalf of the Parish Council, oversee the upkeep and general maintenance of the village, including the cemetery. It will support the Clerk/Assistant Clerk to manage village maintenance by reviewing, and prioritising new and ongoing programmes of work & projects in as sustainable ways as possible.

The Committee will be responsible for working with the Clerk on managing any staffing issues linked to Village Maintenance where these issues are not within the purview of another Group or Committee e.g. Finance AG or Disciplinary, Capability and Grievances Committee or the full Council.

It will act on behalf of the Parish Council on the following broad matters, reporting to the Full Council at its next meeting:

- General Maintenance of the street lights that are the responsibility of the Parish Council.
- Renovation, maintenance or replacement of any objects or areas of importance in the village that are the responsibility of the Parish Council, including, but not limited to: children's playground within the fenced area; zip wire and bouldering wall; lychgate in the cemetery; St Mary's churchyard retaining wall; area opposite the Towers in the High Street; telephone kiosk in the High Street and the defibrillator machines.

In addition, the Committee will:

- Support the Assistant Clerk/Clerk with arrangements on the installation, taking down and general maintenance of the Christmas lights by contractors.
- Support the Clerk to manage maintenance or replacement of bus shelters, salt bins, refuse bins, and Council Noticeboards.
- Prioritise and support the implementation of projects requested by the Parish Council.
- Seek grants on behalf of the Council but if funding is not available from elsewhere, recommend when the proposed project be wholly funded by the Council.
- Work in partnership with Advisory Groups e.g. Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity, Highways & Sustainable Transport and Communications to optimise arrangements where the responsibilities and accountabilities of these advisory groups potentially overlap.
- Delivery of the relevant elements of the BPC Operational Plan (Appendix 1).

In relation to the Cemetery and Churchyard the Committee will:

- Maintain oversight on behalf of the Council and obtain assurance from the clerk/assistant clerk that cemetery records are completed appropriately.
- Maintain oversight on behalf of the Council and obtain assurance from the clerk/assistant clerk that burials and cremations are conducted in line with Regulations.
- With the Assistant Clerk & Clerk, review cemetery regulations periodically (at least every 5 years), publicise cemetery regulations and support action by the Assistant Clerk/Clerk as necessary, to take action when cemetery regulations are breached.
- Maintain oversight on behalf of the Council of maintenance and other works undertaken in the Cemetery and Churchyard by contractors and/or handymen acting on behalf of BPC.



- Keep the Parish Council aware of all work involving Buckden Cemetery and St Mary's Churchyard and oversee any other projects requested by the Parish Council in relation to the Cemetery and Churchyard.
- To receive reports from the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Advisory Group on the implementation and management of the Churchyard Conservation Award Scheme.

In relation to the use of Council resources the Committee will:

- Determine and recommend to the Parish Council the staffing levels necessary to efficiently discharge Village Maintenance work required by the Council and, in relation to that, will periodically review employee workloads and lone working arrangements.
- Consider village maintenance work by employees in relation to services provided by external contractors and recommend efficient and effective arrangements between employees and contractors to discharge the work required by Council.
- Support the Health and Safety of staff employed by the Council by determining and recommending to Council appropriate working spaces, tools and equipment. Where appropriate, the committee will work with the Clerk to arrange for any necessary training for staff relating to village maintenance, so that the Council's duty of care to its employees is met.
- Undertake reviews of working practices and procedures in relation to village maintenance and either recommend to Full Council changes to these when the Committee considers that appropriate and/or necessary or, if appropriate, enact the changes.



Authority

The Committee oversees delivery of activities within its revenue budget and designated Earmarked Reserves to enable Village Maintenance to be carried out efficiently and effectively in a timely manner. The Committee has the authority delegated to it by the Council to make decisions and recommendations on its behalf.

It will report to the next Council meeting any Committee decisions made.

Meeting arrangements

There will be a minimum of 4 meetings a year. A minimum of 3 days clear notice of the date and agenda must be given, this does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.

Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons.

The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.

Reporting

Reports on the work of the Committee will be provided to the full Parish Council on a regular basis and recommendations for action made as required by full Council.

Resources and budget

The Chair of the Committee will be a member of the Finance Advisory Group and will advise on the budgetary requirements for the forthcoming year. The Committee will be responsible for administering the budget set.

For all major expenditure it is the normal practice for three quotes to be obtained and considered. Where the expenditure falls outside budgets agreed annually by full Council, recommendation shall be made to the whole Parish Council for such purchases.

In certain circumstances where it is not practical or possible to obtain three quotes, the Committee may decide to go for one or two quotes only.

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed each year at the first meeting of the Committee following the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Version Control

Date amended	Reason for version change	Amended by
July 2023	Terms of Reference created for new Village Maintenance Advisory Group	Prepared by Cllr C Underwood, Chair Compliance AG and S Ashwell, Chair Village Maintenance AG
June 2024	Annual Review Revision of text in relation to responsibilities for staffing and for Health & Safety	Village Maintenance AG members
August 2024	Further revision to include timings of completion of review of ToR	Chair CAG
November 2024	Revised to reflect change from Advisory Group to Committee	Chair of CAG and members of the Committee
April 2025	Annual review and revision Inclusion of updated Operational Plan actions to be monitored by the AG	Chair of Compliance, Village Maintenance Committee



APPENDIX 1

CAP Priorities for Village Maintenance 2025-26

Village Maintenance Committee to maintain and improve the village infra structure advise on staffing issues related to this	
Achievements this year 24-25	Targets for 25-26
Converted Village Maintenance Advisory Group to Committee to enable timely decision making. Reduced cost and improved quality by in sourcing cemetery grass cutting. The churchyard mapping is in beta phase and will be finished by year end. A new Handyman has been recruited and this together with proactive management of the Handymen has improved the quality of general maintenance in the village. Stability testing has not been carried out.	TARGET 1 Maintain a high-quality and responsive maintenance service. TARGET 2 Support the implementation of green infrastructure, biodiversity and climate change mitigation activities where delivered by the Handymen and outsourced contractors. TARGET 3 Upgrade quality of play equipment for younger children and support the introduction on equipment for older children by VHT TARGET 4 Maintain Cemetery Stability testing programme and initiate Stability Testing programme for St Mary's Churchyard TARGET 5 Consider ways to add greater sense of community to the village. For example: • More information notices e.g plaques on historic properties • Artwork, murals, Identify funding opportunities to enable this.