

Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council

Countryside Working Group – Terms of Reference

Adopted : October 2024
May 2025

Next Review Date :

Function

The group has a primary role in collating information and providing key input to the Parish Council on all matters concerning designated outdoor spaces and rights of way in the parish. Designated outdoor spaces comprise –

- The Cliffe designated Local Nature Reserve (owned by Parish Council - maintained under contract by Shropshire Council)
- Doctors Meadow playing field (leased and maintained by Shropshire Council)
- The Spinney (leased by Shropshire Council and maintained by Parish Council)
- Queen Elizabeth II Field (owned and maintained by Shropshire Council with the exception of the wildflower meadow area and new copse of trees maintained by Parish Council)
- Marches Meadow play area (owned and maintained by Shropshire Council)
- Birch Grove play area (owned and maintained by Shropshire Council)

Councillor members of the group may be asked to represent the Parish Council in interactions with other Public and Private organisations involved with outdoor spaces and rights of way.

The group will assist in the monitoring and maintenance of outdoor spaces and rights of way. It will also monitor the effectiveness of any projects implemented.

Responsibilities

- To collect and collate concerns and suggestions regarding the outdoor spaces and rights of way. These include (but are not limited to) the areas of maintenance, planting, bio-diversity, mis-use and accessibility.
- To produce proposals on countryside improvements either through direct Parish Council action or by lobbying the appropriate County or National Authority. Regard should be given to the needs of all categories of user and where appropriate categories should be prioritised according to the current Highway Code.

- To advise the Parish Council of budget amounts necessary to be included in the following years' budget for addressing proposed improvements to facilities and maintenance of designated outdoor areas and rights of way.
- To monitor maintenance of designated outdoor spaces performed by Shropshire Council and liaise with them on questions of timing and quality.
- To collaborate with Shropshire Council to produce proposals which integrate the Cliffe Local Nature Reserve and the Nesscliffe Hills Countryside Heritage Site
- To monitor condition of rights of way and stiles and ensure concerns are raised with appropriate authorities and landowners.
- To engage with the community according to The Parish Council's Community Engagement Policy
- To liaise with any volunteer groups who want to be involved in the preservation of the countryside environment and the encouragement of bio-diversity.

Members

The working group shall be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the parish council. The Councillor members will be confirmed/appointed. The working group can be dissolved by the parish council at any time.

The working group must appoint one Councillor member who is the Chair/Convener of the group. This person will have the responsibility of reporting back to the full Parish Council. The group may devise other internal means of operation as are most suited to its function and allocate other necessary roles for its members.

Members of the local community who are interested in this topic may be invited to join the working group. Any such co-opted member will be considered to have left the group if they fail to attend more than three consecutive meetings.

Members of the working group are expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the council's Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work policies.

Current Members

- Rob Hamlett (Chair)
- Trevor Allison
- Nick Kynaston

Delegated Powers

The Working Group has no delegated power to make decisions nor to incur expenditure. These powers are retained by the Full Council.

The Working Group is assigned the Responsibilities listed on this Terms of Reference. Any new roles in co-ordinating activities or implementing projects must be authorised in advance by the Parish Council.

The Working Group must comply with the Ruyton XI Towns Communications, Press and Social Media Policy. Any formal communication with the public must be through the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer and , if necessary, agreed by Full Council.

Meetings

The Working Group will meet as often as needed but at least twice in the council year.

Meetings may be in person or through teleconferencing. Site/supplier visits may also be required.

Meetings do not require minutes (although these may be produced if they assist management within the group) but a written report must be submitted to the Parish Clerk for any month where a meeting has occurred.

Meetings do not have a quorum however any proposals or representations made to the full council must have the support of the majority of all Working Group members