

Agenda item 13

Policy review programme

Introduction

1. Glinton Parish Council (GPC), in common with all parish councils have a number of policies, procedures, statements of intent, code of conduct and other guidance. Collectively they come under the heading of governance. Members will be aware that the most recent annual return gave more prominence to governance and the role and responsibilities of councillors. Members were required to assert that they sound procedures in place BEFORE accepting the financial accounts prepared by the RFO.
2. In the same vein, whilst the Internal Auditor gave a clean audit certificate, he also recommended that the parish council conduct a review of policies and published these on the website. (agenda item 14)
3. Traditionally GPC has “reviewed” Financial Regulations and Standing Orders as part of the agenda of the annual parish meeting. This is important, but other governance documents are rarely reviewed unless a specific issue gives rise to that review.
4. I have conducted a summary review of document titles, (Not a detailed review) and my findings are as follows:

Current position

5. The website has
 - Complaints Policy
 - Council’s publication scheme
 - Statement of intent on community engagement

Elsewhere GPC has

- Financial regulations
- Standing orders
- Statement of intent on Training
- Policy on retention of records
- Policy on recording and the use of social media
- Code of conduct
- Cemetery regulations

Lacking - I can find no record of

- a disciplinary procedure
- grievance procedure
- a financial reserves policy
- terms of reference for the three working groups
- terms of reference for the neighbourhood planning group
- Grant awarding policies

Recommendation

6. Irrespective of the increased attention being paid to governance issues, there is a clear need to keep all governance style documents under review and relevant. Financial Regulations and Standing orders have been kept under review. Subject to the outcome of their review at this annual meeting I will take steps to publish these on the website.

7. I recommend that GPC consider 1 or 2 of the above at each meeting throughout the year starting with those items shown above as non-existent- especially terms of reference of “groups”
 - a. In each case the review process should follow the following basic steps
 - i. Do we have a document or statement already in existence?
 - ii. In any case is there a NALC /CAPALC model document?, if not
 - iii. Are there examples from other local councils?
 - iv. In all of the above scenarios do they need customising for GPC current practices?
 - b. Once reviewed the outcome should be formally adopted by resolution of GPC
 - c. Once adopted the clerk to publish on the website

8. Subject to GPC agreement of this report and the need for review, GPC needs to determine How these reviews are to be undertaken and by whom, possibilities include
 - a. The working groups themselves, in the case of terms of reference
 - b. A separate policy review group
 - c. Clerk to systematically work through them, recognising the additional work involved

John Haste
Clerk & RFO
9th May 2016