

Sourton Parish Council

Terms of Reference for the Complaints Committee

1. The Committee will be known as the Complaints Committee and is a Committee of Sourton Parish Council.
2. The Parish Council's Standing Orders will apply to this Committee.
3. This Committee is not authorised to review complaints relating to employees or councillors.
4. This Committee is only authorised to review and act on complaints that have been referred following the Sourton Parish Council Official 'Complaints Policy'.
5. The Chair and the Clerk to the Council will decide if the Committee is required to meet in line with the Sourton Parish Council Official 'Complaints Policy'.
6. This Committee will meet on an ad-hoc basis as and when required.
7. The Committee will have responsibility for the following:
 - a) The Committee is appointed to review referred complaints and decide a course of action on behalf of the council for administration by the Clerk without delay.
 - b) The Committee will report any action taken to the Full Council
8. There will be 4 members of this Committee.
9. The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed by the Full Council.
10. The Quorum of the Committee will be 3.
11. The membership of the Committee will be reviewed annually at the annual meeting of the Council.
12. The Clerk will provide secretariat services.
13. The minutes of the meeting will go to the next Council meeting for ratification.

Sourton Parish Council

Green Working Group – Terms of Reference

Purpose

This working group has been created to consider all aspects of the of the green areas as an asset of the Parish, to maximise the use and benefit to residents. The Working Group will be led by Councillors, the Clerk can be tasked with providing information and include members of the public. This Working Group has no statutory role and has no formal decision-making powers, but they can explore options and

present these to the council for a decision. This is an excellent means of involving others, particularly young people, in council work.

Membership of Committee

- a) A minimum of three Councillors, any Councillor is entitled to be a member.
- b) The quorum for Working Group meetings shall be at least two Councillors supported by the Clerk.
- c) The Working Group may appoint its own Chairman.
- d) Community representatives, subject to the Working Group's view that their input adds value. Non-Councillors do not have voting rights on any financial matter.

Frequency of Meetings

As and when required.

Scope of Working Party

1. Work in partnership with residents and community to look after and upgrade the green areas of Sourton.
2. Evaluate the council's green plan and make recommendations for the council's approval.
3. Investigate costs and report back to the council.
4. Secure sufficient voluntary and community organisation support to complete objectives.

In delivering these objectives, the Working Group shall have authority to:

- a) Liaise with parishioners.
- b) Through the Clerk seek professional advice such as advice licensing, H&S and financial matters.
- c) Promote the group to the community.
- d) Instruct the Clerk to make applications for grant funding.

Full Council retains overall responsibility:

1. The Working Group must provide regular progress reports to Council.
2. The Working Group does not have authority to agree or sign any contracts or deeds.
3. The Working Group does not have delegated financial authority; however, the Clerk or may liaise with Working Group members on financial matters which fall under the Clerk's delegated authority.
4. The Working Group must acknowledge Sourton PCs duty to provide for all demographics within the community and must not discriminate against protected characteristics.
5. Conflicts of Interest - Working Group members should declare an interest where there is a potential financial or pecuniary benefit to themselves, or their company/organisation arising from the decisions or recommendations of the group.
6. Data Protection – the Working Group's work must comply with the Data Protection Act and member must have regard to Sourton PC's Data Protection Policies. Documents will be subject to requests for public inspection in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

This policy was adopted on	May 2026
Signature Of Chairman	C Mott
Date of next review	May 2027

Sourton Parish Council Reserves Policy

Introduction

1.1 The Parish Council is required by statute to maintain financial reserves sufficient to meet the needs of the organisation and in addition has statutory limitations on how it spends certain receipts which it must ensure are accounted for separately to the council's general funds.

1.2 Whilst there is no statutory minimum (or maximum) level of reserves, the council has no power to hold revenue reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs or specific earmarked purposes.

1.3 The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide, which sets out the 'proper practices' for how the council must maintain its accounts, recommends that the minimum level of general reserves should be between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure. For an authority of the council's size, it states that the higher end (9 to 12 months, or 75-100%) is appropriate.

1.4 The council's Internal Auditors review the council's reserves and their justification annually.

1.5 This policy sets out how the council will manage its reserves.

General Reserve

2.1 The general reserve is not ringfenced (earmarked) for any specific expenditure. Its purposes is to smooth the impact of uneven cashflow or cover unexpected/emergency expenditure. It is not intended to fund on-going expenditure.

2.2 The general reserve will be replenished as part of the budget process in any year where it has been utilised for unexpected/emergency expenditure.

2.3 The council will hold a general reserve of at least 50% of its net revenue expenditure (NRE) this is the difference between its budgeted income and expenditure less any budgeted capital expenditure, expenditure from earmarked reserves and budgeted transfers to reserves.

Earmarked Reserves

3.1 The council may establish ringfenced (earmarked) reserves for any reason where it reasonably believes it may incur

expenditure in the future. The council's current earmarked reserves are detailed below.

Elections Reserve

4.1 This earmarked reserve is to cover the cost of elections.

4.2 The reserve will be held at £1000 for a by-election,

4.3 The last non contested election in 2023 cost £71.10, there is no record of a contested election to base costs on.

4.4 The council may determine to lower the reserve immediately before/after ordinary election years where the likelihood of a by-election is lower.

Asset Maintenance Reserve

4.5 This earmarked reserve is to cover expenditure of Council assets.

4.6 Any overspend within the asset maintenance cost centre will be covered by the reserve at year end.

4.7 There is no specific project for which the council is building the reserve, and it may be utilised to cover expenditure as is required.

IT Replacement Reserve

4.8 This earmarked reserve is to replace the IT equipment owned by the Parish Council

4.9 The council will not increase the reserve each year unless spent.

4.10 There is no specific target level for the reserve.

Tree Inspection Reserve

4.11 This earmarked reserve is to cover the cost of the tree inspections the Council requires every three years.

4.12 The council will increase the reserve by £200 each year on a 3-year cycle.

Defibrillator Reserve

4.13 This reserve is being built to allow the replacement of parts for the defibrillator such as batteries and pads.

4.14 Any unspent events budget will be transferred to the reserve at the end of the financial year.

Events Reserves

4.15 This earmarked reserve is to preserve a funding pot for events that was funded by grants.

4.16 Any unspent events budget will be transferred to the reserve at the end of the financial year.

4.17 There is no specific project for which the council is building the reserve, and it may be utilised to cover expenditure as is required.

Sourton Show Reserve

4.18 This is safeguarding the shows funds of £2,240.61 until the Parish Council, or a local organisation want to revive the show,

4.19 No new funds will be added to this reserve

Review and Variation to Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by Sourton Parish Council as part of setting the council budget.

Where it determines there is justification for doing so, the Council may make decisions which are at variance to this policy.

Sourton Parish Council Events Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding children and vulnerable persons at Sourton Parish Council events.

Definitions

A person is defined as a child, legally, until their eighteenth birthday. They remain the responsibility of their parents/carers/guardians, even if that person is not present at the event.

A vulnerable adult/person could be considered as a person who is, or maybe in need of care services because of mental or physical disability, age or illness or they are not able to take care of themselves or are unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation.

Who is the policy for?

This policy applies to Councillors, Sourton Parish Council staff organizing events, and volunteers assisting Parish Council events.

Aim of the policy

The aim of the policy is to provide procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse, and protecting children, vulnerable adults, volunteers, and staff.

Responsibilities:

Sourton Parish Council (SPC) takes safeguarding seriously whilst recognizing safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

SPC is responsible for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults/persons attending its events.

SPC will:

- Ensure its staff, volunteers and Councillors are clear about their individual behaviour and responsibilities regarding the safety and enjoyment of visitors particularly children and vulnerable adults through its event briefings.
- Make sure the event areas are safe and promote an enjoyable experience.
- Ensure that all suspicions and or allegations of abuse will be properly investigated and dealt with appropriately and quickly and referred to the relevant agencies.
- SPC will ensure all volunteers, Councillors and Staff are aware of signs and symptoms of possible safeguarding issues for example where children/young adults are frequently unaccompanied at events.
- SPC will ensure all volunteers, Councillors and Staff are aware of its safeguarding procedures at events. This is the Parish Clerk's responsibility at each event.
- All volunteers, Councillors and Staff have a responsibility to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour and to report lapses in these standards to the Parish Clerk.
- All volunteers, Councillors and Staff should maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm.

Sourton Parish Council (SPC) wishes to protect its staff, volunteers, and Councillors from any unfair allegations at the same time as empowering them to be able to help safeguard children and vulnerable adults, so it advises them to:

- Approach any children or vulnerable adult in apparent distress and offer help but they should not be alone when this is done and should be clearly visible in the public space. Try to ensure a DBS checked member of staff/volunteer/councillor is present at the time and notify the Parish Clerk as soon as possible.

- Seek assistance from other volunteers and Councillors in any situation involving children or vulnerable adults so 1:1 contact is minimized.
- Be aware of the danger from others and explore situations that seem suspicious.
- Be aware of unaccompanied children.
- Report any suspicion of inappropriate conduct immediately to the Parish Clerk.

Any safeguarding concerns at events should be documented.

Staffing committee terms of reference

The staffing committee is a committee of Sourton Parish Council.

Membership

The committee shall consist of 3 members of Sourton Parish Council, as agreed and minuted in a Sourton Parish Council meeting. There should be a further 3 members identified to act as an “Appeal Committee” should it ever be required.

Appointment of sub-committee

Sourton Parish Council shall at their annual meeting in May determine the members of the committee.

Casual Vacancies

Sourton Parish Council from among their members shall fill casual vacancies occurring in membership of the committee.

Frequency of Meetings

The committee shall meet as often as required, meeting frequency to be decided by request of full Council, the Clerk or the committee. A quorum at each meeting shall be 2 members.

Record of Meetings

The committee shall ensure that an agreed written record of each of their meetings is forwarded to Sourton Parish Council for the next normal meeting.

Attendance

It is expected that all members of the committee attend all meetings.

Functions of the Committee

- To decide upon the arrangements for the appointment and appraisal of staff, including reviewing and updating contracts.
- To review and update where necessary the contract of employment and job description for any staff role, prior to any new appointment, and at least one every five years even if there is no new appointment required.
- To discuss and agree the process for any new appointment, including job description, shortlisting criteria and interview dates. Normally all correspondence with candidates and referees should be by the Clerk, but in the Clerk's absence this should be by a member of the committee who has been appointed to that role by full Council.
- To recommend to full Council, after interview and due consideration, suitable candidates for appointment. Decision on appointment is made by full Council.
- To appoint two members to carry out annual staff appraisals, and report to the next full meeting if there are any issues, or that there are not.
- To consider remuneration levels for staff, including any changes to pay grades, if required. To make recommendations to full Council for approval where there are financial implications. Note – any nationally agreed annual increase as announced by SLCC/NALC will be automatically awarded to staff.
- To deal with any matters that are raised under Sourton Parish Council's own specific policies and any applicable national legislation such as grievance, health and safety as it applies to staff, any Code of Conduct matters that apply to staff, any staffing disputes, or other staffing related issues.