Volunteer Group Terms of Reference

Group Objectives

The overall objective of the Volunteer Group is to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan [The Plan} which reflects the wishes of the community and promotes the social, economic and environmental well-being of Peasmarsh. The group therefore needs to :

(a)   provide opportunities to influence local decision making, including the opportunity to develop local planning policies;

(b)   provide opportunities and encourage all residents and businesses within the boundary of Peasmarsh to have their say in producing the plan;

(c)   seek to make the area more sustainable and protect the natural environment;

(d)   establish openness and transparency between all organisations about the proposals for Peasmarsh;

(e)   work in close liaison with Peasmarsh Parish Council'

(f)   conform with the relevant provisions of national neighbourhood planning legislation, exercising any powers which attach to the group as a designated forum;

(g)   ensure that The Plan :

i. is in general conformity with Rother District Council's adopted Local Plan and, in due course, with the emerging Local Plan;

ii. has regard to national planning policy and guidance;

iii. contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, including but not limited to, renewable and green energy, cycling, walking and public transport;

Group Core Functions

The creation of The Plan has to be a democratic, open and transparent process. The core functions of the volunteer group are :

Establishing the strategic direction by :

- setting the vision, values, and objectives of the plan;
- agreeing priorities and targets;
- meeting any statutory duties with the support of Peasmarsh Parish Council;

Ensuring accountability, by:

- appointing the chair of the steering group;
- monitoring progress towards targets;
- engaging fully with stakeholders;

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- setting a budget with the Peasmarsh Parish Council's Treasurer;
- monitoring spending against the budget
- ensuring value for money is obtained;
- ensuring risks to the organisation are managed;

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Responsibilities

The Group will be using public funds in its activities and is, together with its individual members, therefore governed by the seven Nolan principles [see http://peasmarshndp.uk/vault/7principles.pdf]

As a group :

- we will strive to work as a team, actively promoting constructive working relationships;
- we will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other volunteers;
- we will support the chair in its role of always ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and all other times;
- we are prepared to answer queries from other volunteers in relation to delegated functions and consider any concerns expressed;

As individuals :

- we acknowledge that our involvement requires time and energy;
- we will each accept our fair share of responsibilities as suit our particular skills and experience;
- we will try to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend will send apologies;
- we accept that in the interests of open governance our full names will be published on the plan website;

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The overall activity is in the public domain and so the majority of the information used and published will be free from any questions of confidentiality. However, there may be instances where personal data is acquired and in these circumstances :

- we will observe complete confidentiality for personal data;
- we will not share or publish information owned by other organisations without consent;
- we will follow the data protection policies of Peasmarsh Parish Council Conflicts of interest;
- we will record any pecuniary or other business interest; if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time;
- we will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise;

Breach of Code

- if we believe that this code has been breached, it will be raised with the chair and the chair will investigate and seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes in constructive ways;
- if the chair has breached this code then the deputy chair will fulfil the function;