

Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee (draft 3)

Nash Mills Parish Council is the elected body representing the local community. An important part of the Parish Council's work is to consider and make comments on planning applications to Dacorum Borough Council. The Parish Council has no powers to grant or refuse planning permission itself, however, as a statutory consultee, the Parish Council has the power to comment on proposals, and the local authority has a duty to consider the Parish Council's views.

1. Authority

The Planning Committee is appointed by, and is solely responsible to Nash Mills Parish Council. The Committee's duties are defined and agreed by the main council, which may vote, at any time, to modify the Committee's powers. The Committee will meet on the second Monday of each month following the main council meeting at 8pm.

2. Membership

The Committee will consist of no fewer than four elected parish councillors, and a Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be elected each year at the Annual Parish Council meeting. A quorum will be a minimum of three elected Members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the full council will have automatic membership of the Committee.

3. Records of Proceedings

The Committee will meet monthly to prepare responses to all routine planning matters. Written minutes will be taken to record the Committee's decisions and will be circulated to all Councillors. The Parish Clerk will be responsible for arranging the recording and distribution of the meetings. All decisions will be relayed to the relevant planning officer by the Clerk. The minutes will be published and available to the public.

4. Responsibilities

The Committee has full delegated powers to make a Council decision regarding representation to Dacorum Borough Council regarding all planning applications in the Parish, unless on vote the planning committee decides that the application should be passed to full Council due to its size, controversial nature or effect on the parish. Its responsibilities are:

- (a) To consider and respond to all planning applications
- (b) To comment on licenses when required
- (c) To comment on street naming where requested.

5. Procedure

On receipt of a copy of an application for planning approval from the Planning Authority the Clerk shall make this available to all members of the Planning Committee.

Members of the Committee will review the application and if necessary will declare any interest. For the purposes of the planning committee a member will be regarded as having a personal interest if they know an applicant that they 'might' have a cup of coffee with'.

If a site visit is deemed necessary by the Committee to consider either the proposed site or the impact on neighbouring properties and/or the surrounding area then the Chair (or in his/her absence the Vice-Chair) will designate two members and will ask the Clerk to contact both the applicant and the owners/occupiers of adjoining properties to arrange this. These members will then report their findings to the Committee. In the interests of both parties no site visits will be made by a lone member.

At the planning committee meeting. Members who have not declared an interest will review the application and in particular consider:

- The nature and extent of the application as revealed by the plans accompanying the application.
- The previous planning history if any.
- What impact, if any, the application will have on adjoining properties and on the immediate neighbourhood.
- Whether the proposed application is in character with the adjoining properties and the surrounding area.
- The potential precedent that may be created.
- The comments, if any, made by adjoining residents.

Following a 'free' discussion on the merits of an application. The committee will vote on whether to 'agree' to the proposal or raise 'objections'. Objections will be noted and listed by the Clerk in her response to the Planning Authority. The decision made by the Committee at this meeting will be final and will reflect the opinion of the Parish Council. If individual councillors wish to make separate comments to the Planning Authority then they must make it clear that they do so as private individuals.

In the event of the Parish Council raising objection/s to a planning application a member should attend the relevant Development Control meeting and speak on behalf of the Parish Council to reiterate the objection in person. There will be a time limit of 3 minutes for the Parish Councillor to speak and this speech must represent the views agreed at the Parish Council Planning Meeting.

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