

Open Spaces Committee TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Remit

- The Open Spaces Committee is established by Goring-on-Thames Parish Council to oversee the management, maintenance, and development of parish open spaces,
- It has a particular focus on enhancing sporting provision and recreational facilities for young people and teenagers within the village.

2. Membership

- The Committee shall consist of 6 members in total,
- 5 Parish Councillors appointed annually and 1 co-opted member of the public who is an elector of the Parish of Goring-on-Thames
- Members will be appointed by the Parish Council at the Annual Council Meeting in May. A Chair will be elected at the first meeting of the year after this by the Open Spaces Committee. They may also appoint a Vice Chair
- Any 3 members of the committee will be needed for quoracy
- The Open Spaces Spaces Committee will, at appropriate times, form Project Work Groups (PWG) to fully evaluate ideas and proposals and develop recommendations for the Committee to vote on.
- Project Work Groups should be set up by the Committee as it feels is appropriate, to develop proposals and plans for a particular recreational initiative (e.g. Sheepcot Pavilion, Bike Tracks and Teenage facilities). Each PWG should have at least two Councillors who would be responsible for managing and helping each PWG, alongside 1 - 3 Members of Public as appropriate.
- The number of Members of Public co-opted will be decided by vote by the Committee at the formation of each specific working group.

3. Objectives

The Committee will:

- Maintain safe, accessible, and attractive open spaces for all residents.
- Improve and expand sporting and recreational facilities within Goring-on-Thames.
- Provide inclusive spaces and opportunities that engage teenagers and young people.
- Promote healthy lifestyles through outdoor recreation.
- Provide appropriate signage
- Protect and enhance the natural environment and rural character of the parish, including areas along the River Thames.

4. Scope

The Committee is authorised to:

- Oversee the parish's Open Spaces – currently Sheepcot Recreation Ground, Gardiner Recreation Ground, Rectory Gardens, Ferry Lane Open Space and Bourdillon Field
- Develop proposals for new or improved sporting facilities (e.g. pitches, multi-use games areas, youth shelters, bike tracks, outdoor fitness equipment).
- Identify opportunities to better serve teenagers, including safe and appropriate informal gathering spaces.
- Support and liaise with local sports clubs, schools, and youth organisations.
- Ensure open spaces are managed in an environmentally sustainable manner appropriate to a riverside rural parish.
- Create varied Working Groups to develop specific proposals for projects
- The Committee's remit may be expanded to include any future Open Spaces that come under the Parish Council's management
- Rights of way and paths remain in the remit of the Travel and Transport committee; the Open Spaces Committee will collaborate when appropriate

5. Delegated Authority

- The Committee has delegated powers to progress Invitations to Tender and Planning Permissions for each Council approved Parish Open Spaces project. Financial approval for all projects remains at Full Council
- The Committee has delegated powers to design and conduct community engagement and consultation exercises on matters within its remit
- The Committee has delegated powers to identify, develop, and submit grant applications in support of council-approved projects.

6. Meetings

- Meetings will be held at least quarterly, with additional meetings arranged as required.
- A quorum shall be three members
- Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and will be open to the public where appropriate, clerked by a member of the clerking team.

7. Reporting

- The Committee will report to Full Council following each meeting of the Committee.
- Minutes and any recommendations will be submitted for approval where required.

8. Finance

- The Committee will operate within budgets set by the Parish Council.
- It will seek best value for money and prioritise projects that improve sporting and youth facilities.
- The Committee may identify and recommend external funding opportunities, including grants and partnerships.

9. Community Engagement

- The Committee will actively seek input from all residents, particularly young people, on the design and use of facilities.
- Engagement may include surveys, social media, liaison with local schools, and public consultation events.
- The Committee will consider and respond to feedback, complaints, and suggestions from residents in conjunction with the Clerk and the Communication Working Group.

10. Transition

- The new committee formally acknowledges and closes out its predecessors, the Sheepcot Committee and the Playgrounds Committee, taking on their live business and outstanding actions. The chairs of predecessor committees will prepare a summative concluding report to be shared at the first meeting of the new Open Spaces Committee.

11. Review

- These Terms of Reference were approved at a meeting of the Council on 8 June 2026 and will be reviewed annually.

Signed: 

Dated: 8 June 2026

T E Thurston
Chair of the Council