

# **RUYTON XI TOWNS PARISH COUNCIL**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE: COUNTRYSIDE WORKING GROUP**

Adopted: 7 March 2023

Next review: March 2024

### **Purpose**

The overall purpose of this informal working group is:

- to identify issues and put together proposals for activities/actions/improvements relating to outdoor spaces and local rights of way for the Parish Council to consider, as a result of prior research and community engagement.
- once agreed by Full Council, to coordinate/lead on Countryside activities

### **Scope**

The scope of this working group will cover matters relating to outdoor spaces within the parish of Ruyton XI Towns including (but not limited to):

- The Cliffe (owned by the Parish Council)
- Mill lane Arboretum (in accordance with maintenance agreement with owners)
- Doctors Meadows playing field (in collaboration with Shropshire Council who lease and manage the field)
- The Spinney (as above)
- Wildlife meadow and copse on Bridge Inn Field (as above, also known as Queen Elizabeth II Field). The field is managed by Shropshire Council, but the Parish Council has responsibility for the new copse of trees and wildlife meadow.
- Rights of Way within the parish area

### **Delegated powers**

1. Once proposals have been agreed by Full Council, the Countryside Working Group will have the authority to act on and coordinate Countryside activities/actions.
2. Where the land is owned or managed by other parties, e.g. Doctors Meadow Playing Field, the Working group will have the authority to seek the necessary permissions from the landowners, Shropshire Council, etc., as applicable.
3. The Countryside Working Group will have no authority to incur expenditure on behalf of the Parish Council. All expenditure must be agreed in advance by Full Council.

### **Membership**

The Countryside Working Group will be made up of the following Parish Councillors:

- Mervyn Eyles
- Trevor Allison
- David Spicer
- Rob Hamlett
- Luke Penton

Members of the local community will also be able to join the working group.

Council representatives and leadership of the working group will be reviewed and agreed at the Annual Council Meeting.

## **Responsibilities**

1. To develop an understanding of issues and needs relating to the countryside in the parish area.
2. To engage the local community on possible actions to address identified issues and needs to establish levels of interest and preferences for specific proposals (in accordance with the Parish Council's approved Community Engagement Policy, and Communications, Press, and Social Media Policy).
3. Research each project, look for case studies/good examples, obtain necessary permissions, and engage support from elsewhere (e.g. Shropshire Council).
4. To prepare proposals for the consideration of Full Council, including any expenditure.
5. Once agreed by Full Council, the Working Group will coordinate/lead on Countryside Working Group activities, including the preparation of any risk assessments.
6. To liaise and collaborate with other working groups, e.g. the Planning Working Group and Climate Emergency Working Group, as well as the locally elected member, and other relevant bodies to ensure countryside matters are considered by these other groups.

## **Engagement with community and others**

The Countryside Working Group will:

1. Engage with landowners and lessees at an early stage.
2. Seek community support for the projects/actions.
3. Seek keen members of the community to join the Working Group.
4. Seek community champions for specific projects with the aim being that each project has at least one PC rep and one member of the community working on it.
5. Invite experts/groups/organisations to Working Group meetings where relevant.

## **Meetings and quorum**

1. The Countryside Working Group will meet as required, but will conduct business relating to routine matters via email/Zoom/Teams.
2. As all decisions on proposals will be made by Full Council in an open and transparent manner, Countryside Working Group meetings will not need to be open to the public, and no meeting notices or agendas will need to be published.
3. Whilst meeting notes may be helpful, formal minutes will not be required, and the clerk may, but will not be required to attend such meetings. A record of all Parish Council decisions relating to the Countryside Working Group will be recorded in the minutes of the Full Council as usual.
4. No formal quorum is required, however it is recommended that at least 3 members are present during Countryside Working Group meetings.
5. Non-councillor members of the Countryside Working Group will have voting rights at working group meetings.