



BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

FEN COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Adopted Oct 2018 - Reviewed Nov 2025

Background

Boughton Parish Council (BPC) is the representative body of the legal and beneficial owner of Boughton Fen (the Fen), a registered common, which is classed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a County Wildlife Site (CWS). At the time of the formation of the Parish Council, it was classified by Natural England (NE) as “unsatisfactory declining”. The work of the Fen Committee to date has raised this status by two levels to “unsatisfactory improving”. As the representative body of the landowner BPC is responsible for managing and preserving the Fen at a level that is acceptable as measured by NE. BPC has resolved to appoint a Committee, to be called the Boughton Fen Committee (BFC), to assist it in discharging its legal obligations.

BFC will consist of a maximum of seven persons and comprise a mix of BPC Councillors and a number of non-councillors. The minimum number of BPC Councillors is 2 and the make-up of the BFC must be approved by BPC as must any changes.

Objectives

The primary objective is to improve the Fen so as to achieve the highest possible level attainable for a SSSI as measured by NE and thereafter to maintain that position whilst undertaking such changes to the Fen as are reasonable, sensible and affordable to balance the need to maintain the SSSI classification at a level that is acceptable as measured by NE. The desire is to make the Fen an interesting, educational and enjoyable place for the parishioners of Boughton and the public to visit. BFC will work closely with NE, and other stakeholders, in order to ensure that at all times the right actions are taken.

Operation and Financial Management

Working under the auspices of BPC, BFC will set its own short-term objectives and budgets/forecasts and shall be accountable for ensuring good financial management under the guidance of BPC’s Responsible Financial Office (RFO).

The appointment of BFC will be ratified annually at BPC’s Annual Meeting. BFC will convene an Annual Meeting within 28 days of BPC’s Annual Meeting at which the main business will be to elect a Chairman, to set, and publish, meeting dates, which should be no less frequently than quarterly, for the ensuing year and to accept the annual statement of accounts.

The BFC will meet as required to conduct business with 4 meetings scheduled per year, these meetings are subject to the same processes and running as a BPC Ordinary meeting and the BPC clerk will serve as clerk for the BFC. In the absence of the clerk for a meeting the minutes must be recorded by a member of the BFC and passed to the clerk on completion.

The activity of the BFC will be audited annually by BPC’s internal auditor.

BFC will be quorate when at least three members are present, one of whom must be a BPC Councillor.

A member of the Committee, who at the time of joining the Committee is a BPC Councillor, ceases to be a member of the Committee when they cease to be a BPC Councillor. At the discretion of BPC they can be invited to rejoin the Committee at any time.

Should any member wish not to continue serving the committee, a written resignation should be submitted to the BPC Chairman, or a statement made at last meeting of the Council year.

If the Fen committee chairman is unavailable for a meeting, a committee member as chosen by the members present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.

BFC will appoint a Treasurer to maintain a Statement of Accounts. Copies of accounts will be sent to BPC through its RFO, allowing sufficient time for committee accounts to be included in BPC meeting financial report.

BFC will present an annual budget, for the financial year 1 April to 31 March, to BPC's RFO no later than 31st December preceding the year to which it relates for inclusion in BPC's Annual Budget. A reforecast will be completed by 30th September every year after all quotes have been considered and contractors appointed. A further reforecast will be carried out on completion of all works. A copy of the reforecast will be passed to BPC's RFO for inclusion in BPC figures.

Three signatories, all of whom must be BFC members, will be authorised to sign cheques. Cheques must be signed by at least two persons who must initial the cheque stub to verify its validity. At least one of the 2 authorising signatures for payments must be a Councillor.

All committee members must familiarise themselves with the terms of the Countryside Stewardship Agreement, Management Plan, relevant BPC Policies (eg Health and Safety, Volunteers) and any other management document that may be issued from time to time.

BFC Chairman will present a written report at the Annual Parish Meeting and as required. If they are unable to attend in person then another member of the Committee will attend to present the report.

The Clerk of BPC will be responsible for ensuring that BPC is copied with all correspondence or discussion record from which an important decision is to be, or has been, made.

Public and press will be admitted to all BFC meetings, which must be carried out in accordance with BPC Standing Orders.

Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed at each Council and Committee Annual Meeting and can only be amended by BPC Motion.