

Queenborough Town Council

Town Council Representation on Outside Bodies

1. Introduction

1.1 Queenborough Town Council has Town Council Representatives on a variety of outside bodies within the local area. Representation may be for a number of reasons such as.

- ∂ The work of the outside body or group directly affecting Town Council business, services, land or property;
- ∂ The body or group specifically requesting a Town Council representative;
- ∂ It being considered key that the Town Council is aware of, and where appropriate involved in, the work the body or group is undertaking due to its impact on the town, its residents or visitors;
- ∂ The body or group being an opportunity to liaise with other external companies or authorities in the interest of the town, its residents or visitors;
- ∂ The Town Council having a financial interest or commitment with the body or group and/or its function.

1.2 The outside bodies generally fall in to one of the following categories.

- ∂ A local voluntary community group or organisation.
- ∂ A local charity.
- ∂ A larger association that has an impact on the business of the Town Council or town.
- ∂ A liaison meeting with other companies or local authorities.
- ∂ A management committee/society managing either Town Council-owned land or properties, or that the Town Council is in some way financially connected with.

2. The Role of the Town Council Representative

2.1 A Town Council representative represents the Town Council as a whole, rather than acting in personal capacity. This means that the representative must always act in accordance with Town Council policies and procedures, the member's Code of Conduct and bear in mind the limitations of the Town Council as a corporate body.

2.2 The representative allows its outside body to gain access to the expertise and knowledge of the Town Council and also ensures that the Town Council is kept up to date with the actions and future plans of the body. The aim is that all interested parties are working together and communicating effectively for the benefit of Queenborough and Rushenden, its residents and visitors.

2.3 The representative may choose to be an active participant in the work of the outside body if they wish to e.g. carrying out project work, attending events and other voluntary duties. This is providing doing so does not contravene any Town Council policies or conflict with the member's Code of Conduct. The representative will also need to be mindful of how their participation is recorded/promoted as a Town Council

representative, as this is likely to be read as the Town Council being in support of the project/activity. Representatives should speak with the Town Clerk as soon as possible if they are at all unsure of anything concerning this.

At the same time, there is no expectation from the Town Council that the representative become more directly involved with the outside body, beyond their role as Town Council representative.

2.4 The representative should attend as many meetings of an outside body as they are reasonably able and send apologies if they are not able to attend. The representative may ask another Town Councillor to observe the meeting for them if the outside body is willing.

2.5 Town Council representatives will be appointed at each Annual Meeting of the Council, usually held in May.

2.6 Where another councillor that is not the appointed Town Council representative wishes to liaise or work with the outside body, it will be courteous to inform the representative beforehand. Similarly, outside bodies wishing to make contact with other councillors regarding working alongside the body is advised to do so through, or in consultation with the appointed representative. This is recommended even if the other councillor/s are doing so in an individual capacity rather than as a town councillor.

3. Limitations

3.1 It is vital that the representative and the body itself understand the limitations of the Council representative.

3.2 A Town Council representative cannot commit Town Council resources or support, whether financial or 'in kind', to an outside body. If anything of this nature is requested it should be brought back to the Town Council, through the Clerk, for consideration.

3.3 Administrative support by Town Council staff is not available to outside bodies nor to Town Council representatives on outside bodies. Town Council representatives are responsible for carrying out the administration to support their own role.

3.4 An exception to the above is at liaison or management committee meetings where Town Council Clerk may be present.

3.5 Any request for a Town Councillor to act as a representative on an external group shall be handled in accordance with this policy, save for where it can be clearly evidenced that the councillor is attending the group in their personal capacity and not representing the Town Council as a councillor. If there are concerns surrounding arrangements of this nature, these should be discussed with the Town Clerk in the first instance.

3.6 Where a councillor is appointed to be the representative of Queenborough Town Council on an outside group or body, should that councillor find themselves being offered a position within that group or body where there is a perceived or potential conflict of interest in serving the Town Council and/or the views of the outside group or body e.g. a Directorship, that councillor shall immediately advise the Town Council and relinquish their role as the council's representative on that group or body and a new councillor shall be appointed in their place

4. Reporting

4.1 In order for both the outside body and Town Council to benefit from the representation it is important that regular updates are reported back to the Town Council by the representative.

The methods considered most effective for reporting back are;

∂ Minutes of meetings.

Any minutes of meetings received by a representative should be sent to Town Clerk for forwarding on to all Town Councillors. This is a very effective and efficient way of keeping the Town Council updated and also allows other members to pose any questions to the representative that they may have. Minutes of the outside body's meeting will only be shared where the body is in agreement with this. If the representative has any concerns sharing the content of the minutes outside of the group, they should raise this with the Town Clerk.

∂ Update reports to a Full Council or Committee meeting.

If the representative feels there is a matter that needs to be considered by Full Council or a Committee then in the first instance the Town Clerk should be approached. If it is then agreed that a report is made to Full Council or one of its Committees then Town Clerk will liaise with the representative to arrange this.

∂ Verbal updates to a Full Council meeting.

Full Council agendas will include a standard agenda item providing the opportunity for any verbal updates from Town Council representatives on outside bodies. No decisions will be made as a result of these updates, although Full Council may ask for an update report to be submitted at a later meeting (as above). It is vital that updates made do not include any information that should not be in the public domain; if a councillor is uncertain, they should speak with the outside body first or failing that, the Town Clerk.

∂ Email Updates.

Representatives may forward the Town Clerk any email updates with a request for this to be circulated to all Town Councillors. This is a quick and easy way to feedback current information from an outside body, requiring minimal Clerk input.

5. Change of Representation

5.1 An outside body is free to reject a specific Town Council representative on the understanding that the replacement will be nominated by Town Council, not by the outside body. Repeated non-attendance at meetings without good reason is an example of valid grounds to reject a specific Town Council representative.

5.2 An outside body is free to inform the Town Council at any time that Town Council representatives are no longer required, if its constitution so allows.

5.3 A representative wishing to stand down from their role should first inform the outside body itself and then the Town Clerk, in writing. The Town Clerk will contact all councillors by email with a view to agreeing a replacement. Where consensus cannot

be reached by email, a report will then be taken to the next available Full Council meeting to appoint a replacement. Where possible/required, the Town Clerk will invite other councillors to substitute on this body until a representative can be formally appointed by Full Council.