

WARE TOWN COUNCIL

NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE – AGREED BY COUNCIL ON 03.12.18

Ware Town Council has agreed a new committee structure to streamline the work of the Council.

Previous structure

Ware Town Council previously had the following standing committees:

Finance & Resources
Tourism, Leisure & Amenities
Planning

In addition, the Finance & Resources Committee had two sub-committees:

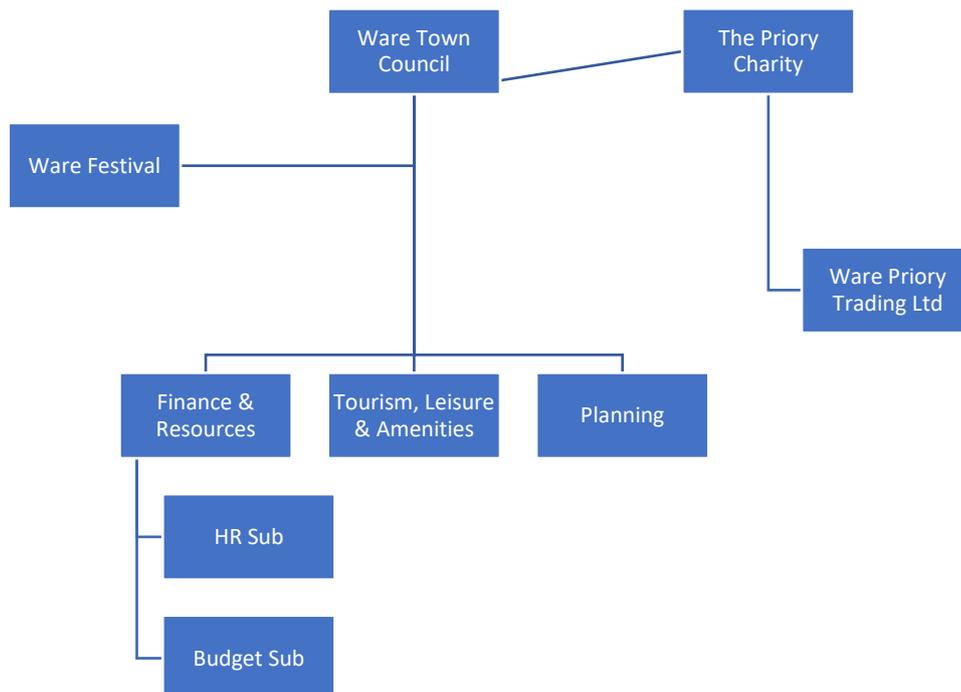
Budget Sub-Committee
Human Resources Sub-Committee

The Town Council meets separately as Trustee of the Priory Charity.
The Priory Charity has a trading subsidiary, Ware Priory Trading Ltd. to carry out non-primary purpose business (office lettings and venue business)

The Town Council meets separately as the Police Liaison Committee

Ware Festival has its own separately constituted committee.
Rock in the Priory has a working group which reported into the Tourism, Leisure & Amenities Committee.

A chart showing the previous committee structure is set out below.



Reason for change:

- For the current year there were 39 meetings on the calendar. This includes meetings of the Priory Charity which usually take place immediately after Town Council meetings. It does not include meetings of the two sub-committees, Ware Priory Trading Ltd or Ware Festival.
- This means there are evening meetings most Mondays except for bank holidays and holiday periods.
- This is a large time commitment for councillors, most of whom are members of two committees.
- If the committee system and calendar of meetings could be streamlined, then this would be less time consuming for councillors, in terms of both attending and preparation for meetings, allowing for more time for careful consideration of the issues.
- It would also save staff resources in preparing papers, attendance and minuting, freeing up staff time to spend on improving the delivery of services.
- This would lead to residents getting better value for money.
- The Planning Committee currently meets every three weeks in order to meet the deadline to respond to planning applications. This equates to 15 meetings per year, more than all other meetings combined. Most of the planning applications considered are small householder applications. There have been several times this year when the Planning Committee has been inquorate.
- The Finance & Resources Committee has a very wide remit and so its meetings tend to be very long, between 2 and 3 hours on average. Conversely, the Tourism, Leisure & Amenities Committee has a narrow remit and meetings are very short, often only an hour.

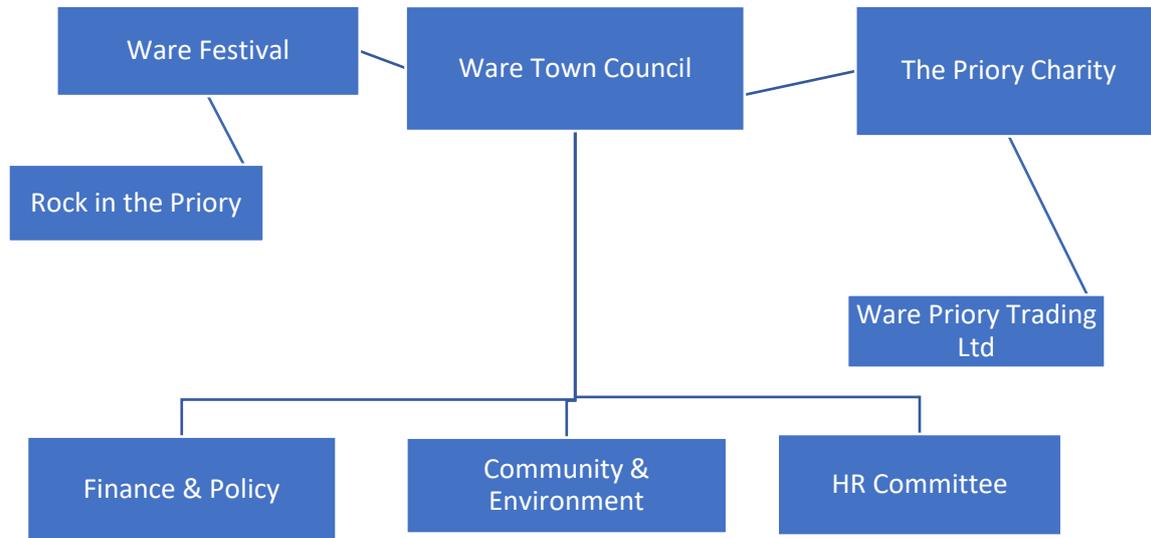
New structure

The Council now has the following standing committees:

Finance & Policy
Community & Environment
Human Resources

The new structure is set out below:

New ware town council committee structure 03.12.18



Their remit is as follows:

Finance & Policy Committee

1. To consider all matters relating to the income and expenditure of the Council including charges and recommendations made by other committees and the best use of the Council's resources.
2. To consider annual estimates of income and expenditure and recommend to the Council the amount of precept to be levied by the Town Council.
3. To review financial reports showing income and expenditure against budget and bank balances held at least quarterly.
4. To review the draft Annual Governance Statement and Annual Return prior to submission to Council.
5. To review annually the scale of charges for Council services prior to consideration of the annual budget.
6. To consider and review all policies for approval by the Council which do not come into the remit of another committee.
7. To consider large scale grants

Community and Environment Committee

1. To organize and encourage events to increase the vibrancy and community spirit of the town.
2. To promote community and other initiatives to improve the economic wellbeing of the town.
3. To encourage the provision of facilities for young people.
4. To consider matters relating to health and wellbeing in the town.
5. To consider grant applications from local organisations.

6. To consider and comment on environmental matters affecting the town.
7. To consider and comment on highway matters affecting the town.
8. To oversee street furniture in the town owned by the town council.
9. To consider all matters relating to the Council as a burial authority.
10. To consider all matters relating to the Council's allotments.

Human Resources Committee

1. To review personnel policies recommended by the Town Clerk and recommend such policies to the Council for adoption.
2. Periodically to review remuneration policy and make recommendations to Council.
3. Note that the remit of the HR Committee will not include the appointment of replacement staff which is delegated to the Town Clerk. The appointment of the Town Clerk will be made by the Council or a separate panel set up for that specific purpose by the Council.
4. To carry out the Town Clerk's appraisal (to be carried out by the Chair of the Committee).
5. To consider the Town Clerk's annual increment.
6. To carry out grievance and disciplinary hearings following investigation if required.
7. To make members available to members of staff who do not wish to raise an issue with the Town Clerk.

Membership

- The Finance & Policy and Community Environment committees should have a minimum of 5 members and a suggested, but not mandatory, maximum of 7 members.
- Membership of the HR Committee will be 4 members as follows – The Mayor, the Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee, the Chair of the Community & Environment Committee and the Leader of the Minority Group. If there is no official minority group, then the fourth member will be nominated by the Full Council at the first Council meeting in each year. Councillors will not be eligible to serve on the HR committee if they have a related party interest or pecuniary interest.
- Membership of the new committees will be decided at the next Council meeting on 21 January 2019.

Planning applications

Town and Parish Councils do not have a statutory obligation to respond to planning applications. The Planning Committee has been discontinued and planning applications will be dealt with as follows:

- A weekly list of all application validated by East Herts Council for each of the Ware Wards will be circulated to Town Councillors.
- The Town Council will not comment on householder applications unless specifically requested by the Ward Councillor, who will be invited to make comments to East Herts Council via their website.

- Any Ward Councillor is free to comment even if the application is not in their ward just as any member of the public can. However, it must be clear that this is an individual comment and not the view of the Town Council.
- For larger applications, ie developments of more than one new dwelling or for new retail or employment developments, an additional Council meeting will be convened so that the Town Council can comment.
- Members of the public wishing to comment on planning applications will be encouraged to comment via the East Herts Council website and to contact their East Herts Councillor.
- Councillors will be encouraged to remind their ward residents to make comments via the East Herts Council website

Budget Process

The Budget Sub-Committee will be discontinued and instead, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee will liaise with officers in the month preceding the budget meeting to produce the draft budget for consideration by the Finance & Policy Committee

Police Liaison

The Police Liaison Committee has been discontinued. Should there be specific items that councillors wish to raise with the police, the police will be invited to attend the next Full Council meeting.

Rock in the Priory

The Rock in the Priory Working Group will now report to the Ware Festival Committee.

Delegated Authority

It is proposed that committees have delegated authority to spend within their agreed budget for the year. This would negate the need for committees to wait for their decisions to be ratified by Full Council before they can be implemented. A proposed scheme of delegation will be put to the Council for consideration in January.

Number of Meetings

The number of meetings each year has been reduced so that councillors have more time to devote to planning and preparation for the meetings they attend. A new calendar of meetings is attached for your information.