

Council Representation on Outside Bodies

Introduction

Deal Town Council has 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 affects council business, services, and property.
- The body or group has specifically requested a council representative.
- It being considered key that the council is aware of 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 stakeholders or authorities in the interest of the town, its residents, or visitors.
- The council having a financial interest or commitment within the body or group and/or its function.

The role of the Council representative

- A Town Council representative on an outside body is exactly that: they represent the Council as a body rather than acting in a personal capacity. This means that the appointed Councillor must always act in accordance with Council policies and procedures, the Member's Code of Conduct, and bear in mind the limitations of the Council as a corporate body.
- The Town Council representatives allow those bodies to tap into the expertise and knowledge of the Council and councillors' links with other public sector organisations, such as the County and District Councils and the Police.
- Town Council representatives should attend as many meetings of an outside body as they are reasonably able and send apologies if they are not able to attend a meeting.
- Councillors have an important role to fulfil in supporting and advising outside bodies. However, this can give rise to conflicts of interest, particularly where the organisation is seeking or receiving funding from the council. Councillors must always be clear about their roles and alert to potential conflicts of interest in order to ensure transparency and public confidence in local democracy.
- Councillors appointed to serve on outside bodies should be mindful of their legal obligations regarding disclosure of confidential information and in case of doubt should seek advice from the Town Clerk. Councillors are not at liberty to divulge any Deal Town Council matters of a confidential nature to any individuals or outside body irrespective of their representative role.
- Councillors should not commit Council resources or support, whether financial or 'in kind', to an outside body but should bring all such requests back to Council in writing from the Outside Body for consideration.

Reporting

- In order for both the outside body and council to benefit from the representation it is important that regular updates are reported back to council by the Councillor. This should be done by the Councillor providing quarterly reports to Full Council meetings.
- Any minutes of meetings received by the representative should be sent to the Town Clerk for forwarding on to all councillors (unless they are considered confidential).
- Updates to Full Council and/or committee meetings – if the representative feels there is a matter that needs to be considered by Full Council, then they must submit a report to the Town Clerk for consideration.
- Email updates – representatives should forward the Town Clerk any email updates from the outside body, for forwarding to Councillors.
- The Council expects its representatives to be kept informed of all meetings of outside bodies in a timely fashion and expects that all paperwork will be shared with them.

Appointment and Administration

- Under the Council's Constitution, appointments to outside bodies will be made annually at the Annual General meeting of the Council or when required.
- It is recommended that the appointed Councillor should have a particular interest in or possess knowledge of the responsibilities of the outside body.
- Following Council decision, the Town Clerk will write to the outside body/group and advise them of Deal Town Council's representative and provide them with the direct Councillor contact details. The Councillor will not attend any of the organisation's meetings until the organisation has confirmed to the Town Clerk they agree to the Councillor appointment.
- Any outside body is free to reject a specific Council representative on the understanding that their replacement will be nominated by Council, not by the outside body. Repeated non-attendance at meetings without good reason offers valid grounds to reject a specific Council representative.
- All outside bodies and groups are free to inform the Council at any time that Council representatives are no longer required, if their constitution so allows.
- A representative wishing to stand down from their role should first inform the Town Clerk and then the outside body. A replacement representative will be decided at the next meeting of Full Council.
- Administrative support by 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.

General Advice to Councillor Representatives on Outside Bodies

- Do not vote on any matters unless the council has requested you to vote on their behalf.
- Ensure that you know the legal status of the organisation - read their constitution.
- Make any general declarations of interest at the first board meeting.
- Act with integrity and make reasonable enquiries.
- Discuss any new activities with relevant Deal Town Council officers.
- Take advice from the Monitoring Officer, and the Town Clerk as appropriate.

Reviewed: F/C 23.04.24

Agreed: