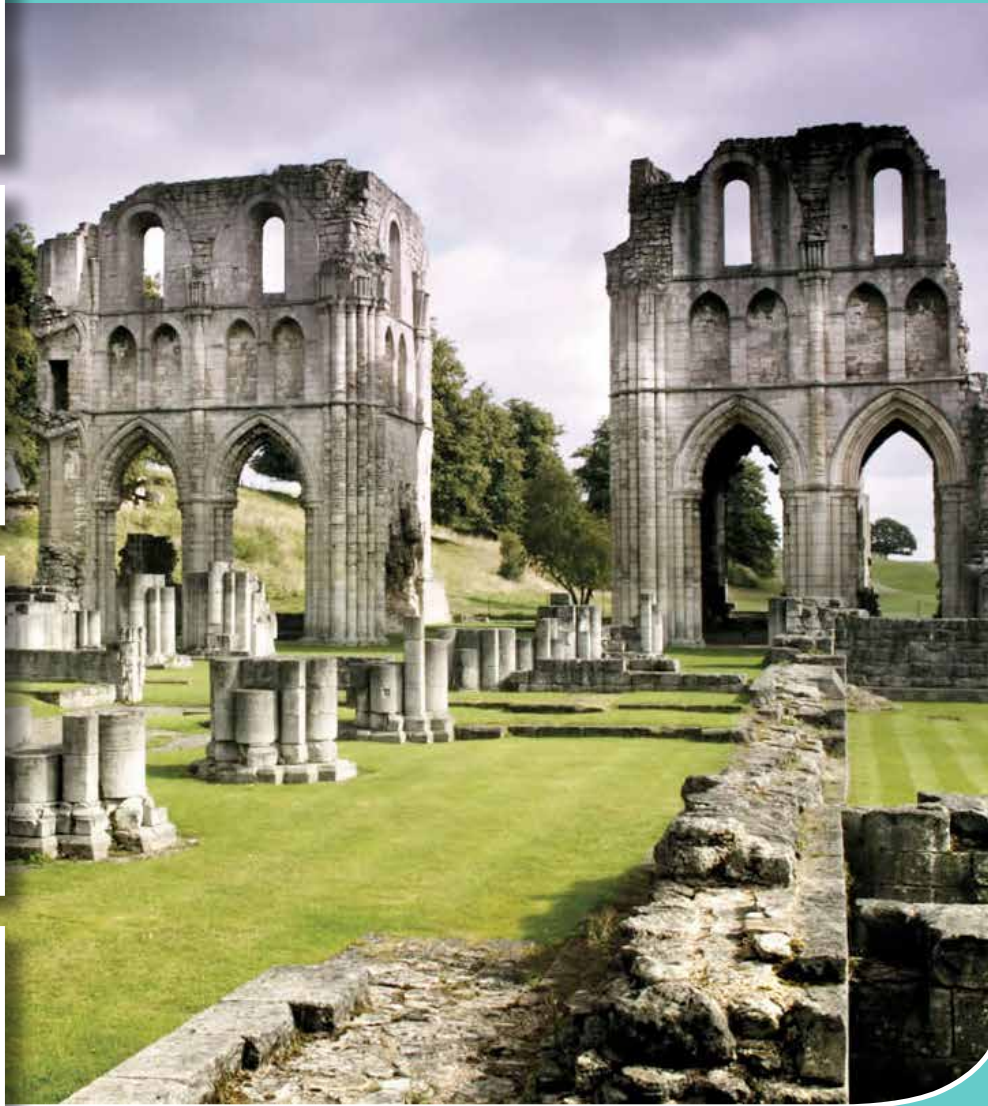




RMBC and town and parish council Joint Working Group 2016 to 2017



Introduction



The principle consultative group between RMBC and the parish and town councils is the Joint Working Group. The group was originally set up in 2006 due to recognition of the benefit to both tiers of local government including: a joint working charter, improving communications, and the offer of training and development opportunities .

Today, the group consists of eight elected representatives from parish and town councils, and relevant RMBC officers. It is chaired by myself as Cabinet Member of Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services and serviced by the Neighbourhood Partnerships Team.

The group meets every six weeks with RMBC officers to constructively solve issues being experienced by parish and town councils. The following is an overview of the work progressed by the joint working group between July 2016 and June 2017.

Councillor Taiba Yasseen

Cabinet Member of Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services

Membership of the RMBC and town and parish council working group 2016 –17



Parish Councillor
Peter Blanksby
Wales Parish Council



Parish Councillor
Richard Swann
Woodsetts Parish Council



Parish Councillor
Clive Jepson
Anston Parish Council



Parish Councillor
John Swift
Treeton Parish Council



Parish Councillor
Paul Martin
Wales Parish Council



Parish Councillor
Peter Thirwall
Wickersley Parish Council



Parish Councillor
Dave Smith
Dinnington Town Council



Parish Councillor
Patricia Wade
Aston Parish Council

Overview July 2016 to June 2017

Road Closures and License Costs The Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene, Highway Network Group Manager, and Inspection and Enforcement Manager provided clarification on procedures for road closures and the costs involved. This has led to improved communication with the parish and town councils and this service.

Planning Objections and procedures Clarification on procedures with regards to objections to planning applications have been pursued with the Head of Service for Planning and Building Control at the Joint Working Group meetings. Two Introduction to Planning sessions have taken place giving opportunities for all parish and town councils to take part. The sessions were delivered by the Local Planning Authority with the Chair of the Planning Board and the Planning Lawyer. The sessions were very well received by attendees.

Licence applications and consultations The Business Regulation Manager provided clarification on premises licensing and the application process – this led to resuming consultation service with local councils concerning licence applications for their areas.

Rate Support Grant The Strategic Director for Adult Care and Housing, and the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service have clarified the situation concerning the phasing out of the support grant and provided an offer of support to local councils for budgeting for the next financial year.





Community Asset Transfer The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment, and the Corporate Property Manager clarified the current procedures for transferring assets the Council's current position with overcoming service issues being experienced by some of the parish councils.

Police Locality working Chief Inspector South Yorkshire Police provided confirmation on commitment to working with local councils and to improve communication concerning commitment to events and activities organised by local councils. Parish and town councils have since been contacted for a list of their activities and events were they would like police presence and have been given up-to-date police contact list for their areas.

Boundary Review The Democratic Services Manager and Principal Policy and Partnership Officer delivered an update on the Local Government Boundary Commission's ward boundary review and details on how the local councils can have a say in the consultation process. This information was circulated to the parish and town council network.

Neighbourhood working review The Strategic Director for Adult Services and Neighbourhoods provided an outline of the proposals for neighbourhood working.

Focus group work Through the Joint Working Group, a number of parishes have come together to meet in the South of the Borough to look at ways to enhanced enforcement with regards to litter, dog fouling, and traffic offences. The group liaises with RMBC and South Yorkshire Police on a regular basis.

Training and development for parish and town councils

All town and parish councils based within the Rotherham Borough have had the opportunity to attend a range of quality training and information awareness sessions over the past year. The sessions have been requested by members of the Joint Working Group and local councils from the wider network and have provided a forum for learning, networking and building relations. Provided free of charge, there has been no cost to the parish and town councils. All sessions were delivered by RMBC specialist services, these being: Planning Policy Team, Legal Services, and the Emergency and Safety Team. Planning Aid England supported the network conference held last November.

The following has taken place over the past year:

Rotherham Local Council training and development sessions 16/17

Date	Session	Provider	No. of Attendees	No of L.C.s Represented	Venue
October 2016	Introduction to Planning	Planning Policy Team plus Planning Board	33	16	The Garden Room, Clifton Park
November 2016	Neighbourhood Planning (Network meeting)	Planning Aid/ Planning Policy Team/ Neighbourhood Partnerships	20	11	Laughton en le Morthen Village Hall
November 2016	Certified Basic Health and Safety at Work	Emergency Safety Team	20	7	Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Thurcroft
February 2017	Code of Conduct	Legal Services and Standards Committee	20	9	The Lyric, Dinnington
February 2017	Certified Basic Health and Safety at work	Emergency Safety Team	10		Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Thurcroft
March 2017	Introduction to Planning	Planning Policy Team and Planning Board	15	8	The Garden Room, Town Hall
April 2017	Certified Fire Safety and Fire Extinguisher training	Emergency Safety Team	14	8	Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Thurcroft
June 2017	Risk Assessments, and Slips, Trips and Falls	Emergency Safety Team	7	7	Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Thurcroft
June 2017	Code of Conduct	Legal Services and Standards Committee	10	6	Riverside House

Feedback

- A total of 20 Local Councils have accessed one or more of the training sessions.
- Parish Councillors, Clerks, team members, and volunteers have attended one or more of the training sessions.
- Feedback has been very positive from attendees:

“Enjoyed the learning experience”

“Really good that parishes and RMBC had the opportunity to meet”

“Thank you for organising this session and it can be used as part of the induction for parish councillors”

“A good start in building bridges between parish councils and RMBC”





What Next?

Accountability of the RMBC and Joint Working Group (JWG) and improving communication to the wider parish and town council network

The Joint Working Group is looking at a variety of ways to improve communication with the wider network of parish councils. It is in touch with a number of areas to identify good practice in improving ways of working. The JWG will continue to: address issues being experienced by parish and town councils, host regular networking events, and continue training and development programmes. In addition, other methods of communication in the pipeline are:

- Webpage development
- Regular News bulletins
- Improving the mechanism for the town and parish councils to feed into the JWG

For further information please contact:

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