

# **Aldbourn Parish Council: Procedure for Large Projects**

## **1. Definition and Aims**

Any project with anticipated costs exceeding £20,000 must follow this policy but the full council may agree to apply this policy to specific projects below this limit.

The aim is to ensure basic good governance/management of the project. The committee/working party responsible for the project must follow this process.

## **2. The 'Project Statement'**

As well as maintaining minutes of meetings, a 'project statement' document must also be maintained. This will set out:

- A short paragraph providing a vision for the project – what the project is trying to do and why.
- A summary of previous visions for the project (summarizing how the aims of the project has changed over time).
- At which step the project currently is (see section 3 for a list of steps).
- What consultations have been done and who the stakeholders (interested parties) are.
- A plan and budget information (includes fundraising/grant information).
- An implementation schedule.
- Where useful, it will clarify what it is not doing.

This statement should not exceed 3 sides of A4. The latest copy must be distributed to all parish councillors.

This will result in:

- a documented (traceable) progression from the desires of parishioners through to the fine details of the project.
- a useful summary of the project (i) for reference by councillors, (ii) to share with the public, justifying what has been done, (iii) providing information for grant applications.
- avoidance of projects meandering (changing from one direction to another depending on who happens to attend meetings).
- avoidance of ad-hoc short-term solutions that prove to be costly in the long run.
- a defence against allegations that one or more councillors are acting in their own personal interest.
- avoidance of projects conflicting with others being done within the area.

### **3. The Project Steps**

- 1) These steps refer to progress within the large projects policy. The project statement's plan information may set out project-specific steps.
- 2) Create an initial 'Project Statement', formalize the vision of the project.
- 3) Co-opt non-councillors onto the working party. (Co-option can be done any time from this step, as appropriate.)
- 4) Consult the Village Strategy (if it exists) to determine how the project fits in with the general aims of the Parish Council.
- 5) Identify what public opinion on relevant issues already exists. This must include but is not limited to the current Parish Plan and consider what opportunities there are to solve other, seemingly-unrelated, parish issues at the same time.
- 6) Identify all stakeholders. Hold a consultation exercise with them.
- 7) Update the project statement.
- 8) Get agreement from full council to progress further.
- 9) Formulate a single coherent viable project proposal, with major obstacles identified and researched and including an outline plan (with timescales) and fully-costed budget.
  - a) This step may be started with an outline proposal just to stimulate early discussion.
  - b) A number of individually-coherent proposals should then be created. At this stage, these should be the result of imaginative thinking but with few details.
  - c) The merits of these proposals should then be discussed. The proposals should be refined and pruned, combining the best elements of the proposals into a smaller number of better proposals. Meeting minutes must document what proposals were made and on what grounds they were rejected. The surviving better proposals should then include more details.
  - d) Details added to later proposals will include more accurate costings, obtained through consultation with potential suppliers.
  - e) Step 9c is repeated until there is one detailed proposal.
  - f) The final proposal will outline what will be done if particular funding does not come to fruition.
- 10) Hold a public presentation of this proposal. This should be done at one of (i) extraordinary meeting specifically for the project, (ii) stall at a major village event e.g. combined churches fete, (iii) combined with ordinary parish council meeting. Additionally: notification and information (i) in The Dabchick, (ii) on website, (iii) on the village notice board and (iv) in the Post Office.
- 11) Update the project statement in response to public consultation and create actual project proposal and get agreement from full council.
- 12) Identify potential contractors and issue Requests for Quotations to selected contractors.
- 13) Evaluate bids and award contract to winner(s).
- 14) Execute the approved project, maintaining an up-to-date 'Project Statement'.

Once decisions have been made and documented, it is possible to undo them only through a motion at a full council meeting. A basic aim of this process is to avoid projects wandering off course and ensure that they make progress.