

Trull Parish Council

Trull Ridge Working Group (TRWG) – Terms of Reference

Remit:

The Working Group exists to research, develop and present the arguments, evidence and case material required for Trull Parish Council's participation in the planning inquiry relating to application **42/24/0030** (construction of 125 dwellings on Trull Ridge).

It will do this by:

- Gathering, analysing and evaluating evidence relevant to the inquiry.
- Supporting TPC in forming its formal submissions, statements and representations to the Planning Inspectorate and Somerset Council.
- Working collaboratively with the legal representatives and professional advisers appointed by TPC.
- Advising the Parish Council accordingly.

The Working Group operates in an advisory capacity only and has no delegated decision-making powers, save for the limited urgent authority set out below.

Time:

- The Working Group shall be constituted for an initial period of 12 months.
- The initial period may be extended by the Parish Council in a full council meeting if required to support the inquiry process.
- These Terms of Reference will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if circumstances require.

Composition:

- The Working Group must include at least two members of the Parish Council.
- The Working Group must include at least two members of the public appointed by TPC.
- The Working Group may co-opt individuals for their expertise and consult external experts as required.
- The Working Group shall elect a Chair from among its Parish Councillor members.
- Administrative support may be provided by the Clerk where appropriate, recognising that Working Groups do not require formal minutes.
- Notes or action records may be kept for internal use but will not be published unless required by law. All members must adhere to the TPC Code of Conduct and relevant confidentiality requirements.

Powers:

The Working Group will:

- Consult parishioners, Somerset Council, legal specialists and planning professionals.
- Gather and analyse evidence, and prepare confidential reports, briefings and recommendations for TPC.

- Assist TPC in preparing inquiry documentation, statements of case and supporting material.
- Report its conclusions and make recommendations to the Parish Council.
- Have no authority to commit TPC to expenditure, enter into contracts, or make decisions on behalf of the Council.
- Submit any recommendation requiring expenditure or formal action to TPC for approval.

Confidentiality:

- Much of the Working Group's work may involve sensitive or legally privileged material.
- All reports to TPC shall be treated as confidential unless TPC determines otherwise.
- Members must not disclose discussions, draft materials or legal advice to third parties without explicit authorisation from TPC.
- The Working Group is authorised to share confidential, sensitive and legally privileged information with the legal representatives and advisers formally appointed by TPC, solely for the purpose of preparing and presenting the Council's case, respecting legal professional privilege and any confidentiality agreements at all times.
- Requests under the Freedom of Information Act will be handled by the Clerk in accordance with statutory requirements.

Communications:

- The Working Group shall not issue public statements, press releases, social media posts or commentary in its own name.
- All public-facing information must be issued exclusively through TPC's approved communication channels, in accordance with the Communications Policy and Communications Protocol.
- Members, may confirm publicly that they are part of the Working Group and describe its general purpose, but must not disclose confidential content, draft work or internal deliberations.

Expenses:

- The Working Group has no budget. Reasonable expenses directly related to its work will be paid by the Parish Council subject to approval.
- Eligible expenses include printing and document production, travel costs, parking fees, and digital storage or shared-workspace services required for evidence handling or collaboration., and meeting room hire (if necessary).
- All claims must be supported by receipts and submitted to the Clerk, who is authorised to reimburse reasonable expenses from TPC's precepted funds in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- Any anticipated exceptional or non-routine expenditure must be approved in advance by TPC.

Data:

- All information collected is to be available to the Parish Council.

Reporting:

- Meetings will be held as required to progress the work efficiently.
- The Working Group will provide written or verbal updates to TPC at full council meetings, or at other times as requested.
- Formal recommendations or reports must be submitted to TPC for approval before any action is taken.

- The Working Group has no requirement to publish an agenda or keep formal minutes; notes or action records may be kept for internal use and will not be published unless required by law.

Urgent Decisions:

- The inquiry for application **42/24/0030** is subject to a fixed statutory timetable, so the Working Group must be able to respond promptly to deadlines, requests for information and procedural requirements.
- Where an urgent decision is required and it is not possible to convene a timely meeting of TPC, delegated authority is granted to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of TPC, the Chair of the TRWG.
- This authority is limited to decisions that are necessary to meet inquiry deadlines; procedural or administrative in nature; required to instruct legal or technical advisers within previously agreed budgets; or required to enable the Working Group to continue without delay.
- It does not permit new or additional expenditure beyond approved budgets, adopting or altering Council policy, issuing public statements, or any decision that would normally require a resolution of the Full Council.

Approved by Trull Parish Council at a full council meeting on **8th June 2026**.