



## STANDING ORDERS

### 1. Councillors

- 1.1. Following election or co-option to the Council, each Councillor will be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders of the Council. They will sign the form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk of the Council.
- 1.2. All Councillors will observe the Code of Conduct at all times when on Council business and no member will act in such a way that will bring the Council into disrepute, behave offensively in meetings or obstruct the Council's business. The Chairman may terminate a meeting with immediate effect should the conduct expected under this clause not be upheld.
- 1.3. The Code of Conduct adopted by the Council will define when a Councillor will declare a personal or prejudicial interest in an item for discussion at a Council meeting. The Councillor will declare that interest and the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.4. In the event of a casual vacancy arising for any reason, it may be filled by co-option as soon as practicable in accordance with the procedures laid out principally under the governance requirements of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and duly notified by the Clerk.
- 1.5. All councillors, the clerk and members of the public who are attending meetings of the parish council, will adopt the highest standards of polite behaviour at all times and in all communications, whether verbal, written or digital.
- 1.6. All Councillors and the Clerk will observe and abide by the standards set out in the Parish Councils' Communication Protocol.

### 2. Annual Meetings

- 2.1. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on the third Tuesday in May each year.
- 2.2. If the outgoing Chairman is available then they will preside until a new Chairman has been elected.
- 2.3. At each AGM the first business shall be:
  - 2.3.1. to elect a Chairman;
  - 2.3.2. to receive the Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not received, to decide when it shall be received;
  - 2.3.3. to decide when any declarations of office which have not been received, as provided by law, shall be received;
  - 2.3.4. to elect a Vice Chairman; and
  - 2.3.5. to appoint Committees and agree the corresponding Chair of each Committee if possible. If no Chair can be appointed at the AGM, this can be held-over until the first Committee Meeting.
- 2.4. In addition to the AGM, there will also be an Annual Parish Meeting (APM) open to the public and held on the third Tuesday of March each year, prior to the Council Meeting, to review progress in the prior 12 months. This will include a report from each Committee Chairman of their year's activity.

### 3. Council Meetings

- 3.1. At a meeting of the Parish Council to which the public are invited will be held in appropriate, accessible accommodation and should not be held in accommodation used for the sale of alcohol.
- 3.2. Parish Council meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of each month, except for August and, if it is deemed appropriate in December, when there will not be a meeting. Notification of meetings will be by a summons and agenda delivered to Councillors by email. In any event, the agenda and supporting documents must be issued at least three clear working days before the meeting.
- 3.3. Public notices will be posted on the Parish Council notice boards and on the Parish Council website, informing members of the public of the venue, time, date and business to be transacted at the meeting. The notices will be posted at least three clear working days before the meeting.
- 3.4. Meetings will be open to the public and press but they may be temporarily excluded from the meeting if the business is regarded as confidential.
- 3.5. Members of the public may not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if they are present at a meeting of the Parish Council or its committees (see section 4 below), but otherwise may:
  - 3.5.1. film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting;
  - 3.5.2. use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or
  - 3.5.3. report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.

**Deleted:** (In the Precinct, at the Welcome Store and at the Recreation Ground)

- 3.6. Members of the public may speak at Council meetings during public participation and also at other times but only at the discretion of the Chairman, which shall not be unreasonably refused.
- 3.7. The agenda for Council Meetings will be agreed by the Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chair. All Councillors ~~may, with the agreement of the Clerk, add items to the agenda providing one week's notice is given before the date of the meeting.~~ The agenda will always include an item to enable Councillors to declare interests.
- 3.8. An opportunity for public questions, comments and participation will be made available at the commencement of each meeting.
- 3.9. The Council may only take decisions on items clearly specified on the agenda; however, if agreed by the Chairman and under extraordinary circumstances, any urgent items which are not on the agenda may be discussed at that meeting.
- 3.10. The Chairman of the Council will preside at the meeting and will be responsible for the conduct of that meeting. If the Chairman is not present then the Vice Chairman will preside. If they are not present then the first matter on the agenda will be the election of an appropriate Councillor who will Chair the meeting. Whoever is elected to Chair such a meeting will assume the duties of the Chairman for that meeting.
- 3.11. The quorum for the Council will be four Councillors. If there are insufficient members present then no business will be transacted nor decisions made.
- 3.12. If at any time during the meeting it ceases to be quorate then the meeting will be adjourned and any further business carried forward to the next meeting.
- 3.13. The Council will allow time at each meeting for the County and District Councillors to submit their reports.
- 3.14. Voting at the meeting shall be by a show of hands unless a majority of Councillors present requests a ballot. A Councillor may also request that the Clerk records how each Councillor has voted, including abstentions. Any request of this nature will be made before moving on to the next business.
- 3.15. In cases of equal votes the Chairman (or other person presiding) will have a second or casting vote.
- 3.16. Minutes of the meeting will be kept by the Clerk or other nominated person in the Clerk's absence. The minutes which are circulated will be draft minutes until they are approved by the Parish Council at their next meeting and signed by the person presiding at that meeting.
- 3.17. With regard to planning applications – if there is a personal interest a Councillor will move to the public area to make their statement and then leave the room.

Deleted: and

Deleted: are entitled to

#### 4. Committee Meetings

- 4.1. Committee Meetings shall be held at least quarterly and as soon as possible following the AGM and unless confirmed at the AGM in May, as detailed in section 2 above, committee members may elect a Chairman and, if required a Vice Chairman. Members of the public are invited to attend such meetings and due notice should be given accordingly.
- 4.2. Committee Meetings should be held in a public place and the agenda should be advertised at least 3 clear working days before the meeting. Every attempt would be made to hold these meetings on Council Meeting dates to avoid duplicate room costs.
- 4.3. The Quorum for Committee Meetings shall be three councillors with the clerk in attendance.
- 4.4. In addition to an annual Committee Meeting where members of the public can attend, further working group meetings will inevitably be scheduled to deal with day-to-day matters arising as well as internal planning for events etc.

#### 5. Finance

- 5.1. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is a statutory office and appointed by the Council. The Clerk of the Council will take on this role of managing the Council's financial affairs in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and practices.
- 5.2. The RFO will compile estimates of income and expenditure annually for the Council's consideration. The Full Council will review the budget at a Finance and Precept meeting in November each year and submit to NFDC following the ~~November~~ Parish Council Meeting. During the year the budget will be reviewed ~~quarterly~~ against actual expenditure and income. Variances to the budget will be reviewed and discussed in Council and duly minuted with any significant under or over-spends highlighted with any action required to address any discrepancies.
- 5.3. At a Meeting of the Parish Council to which the public are invited, at the time of the agenda being published all information required to authorise expenditure should be made available to Councillors.

Deleted: December

Deleted: regularly

#### 6. Accounting and Auditing

- 6.1. The RFO will determine all accounting procedures and financial records of the Council in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 6.2. An Internal Auditor will be appointed by the Council to carry out the work required to comply with proper practice as defined in Council regulation. The person appointed will be duly qualified and independent of the operation of the Council
- 6.3. The RFO will complete the annual financial statements of the Council including the Annual Return as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year for submission to the Internal Auditor.
- 6.4. The Finance and Resources Committee shall review the budgets and make its recommendation to the Full Council who will review the Financial Statements each year and ensure that there is an adequate, effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other procedures in line with generally accepted accounting principles and practices. The Parish Council recognises the advice of the internal auditor in that respect.
- 6.5. The RFO will submit the Annual Return to the duly nominated External Auditor by the notified due date, ensuring the return is complete and accurate.

Deleted: .

#### **7. Banking Arrangements and Cheques**

- 7.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the Bank Mandate, will be made by the RFO and approved by the Finance and Resources Committee. They will be regularly reviewed for effectiveness and validity.
- 7.2. The Chair of each Committee and the RFO will be authorised signatories.
- 7.3. All items of expenditure will be authorised by the Council and the payments approved. The RFO will examine invoices and verify and certify the expenditure. Cheques or other form of electronic payment will be completed for all transactions and signed by two authorised signatories, including the RFO, at all times.
- 7.4. Out-of-Pocket and other expenses incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily on behalf of the Council by the Clerk/RFO and by Councillors will be governed by the provisions laid out in the Financial Regulations.

#### **8. Investments**

All cash investments under the control of the Council will be in the name of the Council and all certificates or other documents will be retained by the RFO.

#### **9. Contracts and Purchase Orders**

- 9.1. An officer placing an order on behalf of the Council will ensure that good value and appropriate terms are obtained for the transaction.
- 9.2. Where orders are for a value over £1,000, the Council should obtain a minimum of three quotations.
- 9.3. Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £10,000 for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works, the Clerk shall give at least three weeks public notice of such intention in the same manner as public notices of Council Meetings are given.
- 9.4. All quotations exceeding £1,000 (as referred to in 9.2 above) will require approval by the Full Council to authorise the work; while the Council is not obliged to accept the lowest quotation the reasons for accepting the quotation will be recorded; in a situation where a delay in approval may cause risk to the public or to property, approval and authorisation may also be granted with either two of; the Chair, Vice Chair or Committee Chair, after which it will be ratified at Full Council.
- 9.5. In conforming with best practice, all Contractors will produce to the satisfaction of the RFO, all necessary and relevant Insurance and competency documentation.

#### **10. Assets**

The RFO will ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets is maintained by the Council. It will be reviewed at least annually in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets if appropriate.

#### **11. V.A.T.**

The RFO will promptly complete any VAT return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with current and appropriate VAT regulations will be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year.

#### **12. Risk Assessment**

- 12.1. A risk assessment will be undertaken as required of any relevant activities of the Council.
- 12.2. If the Council undertakes a new activity not covered by an existing risk assessment, a specific assessment will be undertaken before any activity commences.
- 12.3. Regular safety reviews will be undertaken as necessary.

#### **13. Insurance**

The Council will review annually the level of insurance cover and ensure it is adequate and appropriate for the activities and assets of the Council.

**14. Freedom of Information**

The Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and has adopted the Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils. The Clerk will ensure the Council conforms to the requirements of the Act allowing public access to the appropriate documents.

**15. Clerk to the Council**

- 15.1. The Council will appoint a Clerk to the Council which will be on an employed basis.
- 15.2. The Clerk will act as the Proper Officer of the Council as detailed in their Employment Contract and Job Description.
- 15.3. The Clerk will act as the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) of the Council.
- 15.4. As an employee of the Council, the Clerk is covered by employment legislation. The Clerk will have a contract of employment stating the terms and conditions under which they are employed. This will effectively be administered by the Chairman of the Staffing Committee acting with the authority of the Council.

15.5. The Clerk will have the use of modest office accommodation provided at the Church Rooms, Deerleap Lane where members of the public are welcome.

Deleted: on most Wednesdays between the hours of 10am until noon.

**16. Committees and Working Groups.**

The Council may set up Committees and other Working Groups, the latter which may include Members of the Public, to undertake work on behalf of the Council. The Full Council will set their Terms of Reference and they will report regularly to the Council.

**17. Emergency Business**

Should it not be appropriate to convene a special meeting then any emergency business will be handled by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and one other Councillor. Actions will be reported promptly to the Council at the earliest opportunity.

**18. Alteration or Reversal of previous decisions**

Decisions of the Council cannot be reversed for 6 months following their approval.

**19. Standing Orders**

- 19.1. These Standing Orders will be considered and reviewed annually around the timing of the AGM by the Clerk and the Chairman and any proposed amendments decided by the Council.
- 19.2. During the course of meetings of the Council, the Chairman's decision as to the interpretation of the Standing Orders will be final.
- 19.3. The Council may resolve to suspend a specific Standing Order, in order to progress the business of a Council Meeting, such decision to be included in the minutes. The suspension of such a Standing Order under these circumstances will be time-limited to that specific Council Meeting.