

Wanborough Parish Council

Standing Orders

1. Rules of Debate at Meetings

- a. Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b. No discussion shall take place upon the Minutes except upon their accuracy. Corrections to the Minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Chairman.
- c. The ruling of the Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- d. Members shall address the Chairman.
- e. If two or more members speak together, the Chairman shall call upon one of them to speak and the others shall wait.
- f. Whenever the Chairman rises during a debate all other members shall be seated and silent.
- g. Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated.

2. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings

- a. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b. If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c. If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting

3. Meetings in General

All meetings (full council, committee and sub committee) will follow the following procedures:-

- a. Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.
- b. The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.
- c. Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- d. A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- e. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- f. Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior written consent.

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- g. The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- h. Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council.
- i. The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
- j. Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting
- k. The Chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.
- l. Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request must be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- m. A Councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter
- n. Four Councillors shall constitute a quorum.
- o. If a meeting of full council becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted. If a meeting for a committee or sub committee becomes inquorate, business may be discussed and recommendations can be put forward to full council for consideration.
- p. The minutes of the meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:-
 - The time and place of the meeting
 - The names of councillors present and absent
 - Interests that have been declared by Councillors
 - Whether a Councillor left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered.
 - If there was a public participation session
 - The resolutions made.

4. Committee and sub-committees

- a. The Council may at the Annual Meeting appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as are necessary, but subject to any statutory provision in that behalf: -
 - shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting, and
 - may at any time dissolve or alter the membership of a committee.
- b. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be members of every committee.
- c. Every committee shall at its first meeting before proceeding to any other business, elect a Chairman and may elect a Vice-Chairman who shall hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

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- d. The Chairman of a committee or the Chairman of the council may summon a special meeting of that committee at any time. A special meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than a quarter of the members of the committee. The summons shall set out the business to be considered at the special meeting and no other business shall be transacted at that meeting.
- e. The Standing Orders shall apply to all committee and sub-committee meetings.
- f. Voting at Committee and Sub Committee meetings, the Chairman of committees and sub-committees shall have a second or casting vote.
- g. Committees and Sub Committees may include non-councillors as their members, unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council, however non-councillors have no voting rights.
- h. Terms of Reference for each committee and sub committee will be agreed at the annual meeting of the council in May each year.
- i. Any Council member shall, unless the Council otherwise orders, be entitled to be present as a spectator at the meetings of any committee or sub-committee of which he/she is not a member.

5. Ordinary Council Meetings

- a. In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office
- b. In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.
- c. The annual meeting of the council shall take place at 7.30pm
- d. In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held on the following months, May, July and September.
- e. The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.
- f. The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.
- g. The Vice-Chairman of the Council, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.
- h. In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in case of an equality of votes.
- i. Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:
 - In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office.
 - Appointment of members to existing committees
 - Appointment of members to new committees
 - Review and adoption of appropriate Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
 - Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and

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including the next annual meeting of full council

6. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and subcommittees

- a. The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.
- b. If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.

7. Previous Resolutions

- a. A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least three members of the Council.
- b. When a special resolution has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months
- c. The order shall not apply to rescinding resolutions moved in pursuance of the report of recommendations of a committee.

8. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

- a. A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
- b. No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of notice or the day of the meeting.
- c. If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- d. Subject to standing order 8 (c) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

9. Handling of confidential or sensitive information

- a. The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reason would not be in the public interest.
- b. Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reason would not be in the public interest.

10. Draft minutes

- a. There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of the preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy.
- b. The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendments made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

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11. Code of Conduct and dispensations

- a. All Councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council
- b. Unless a Councillor has been granted a dispensation, a Councillor shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. The Councillor may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she had the interest.
- c. Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- d. A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final.
- e. A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13 (d) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:-
 - Without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or
 - Granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or
 - It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

12. Code of Conduct complaints

- a. Upon notification by the Unitary Council that a Councillor has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him/her. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

13. Proper Officer

- a. The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the Clerk, (ii) other staff member nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b. The Proper Officer shall:-
 - At least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee, and a sub-committee serve on councillors a summons, by e-mail confirming the time and place (see standing order 3 (b))
 - Give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or meeting of a committee, or a sub-committee
 - Convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his/her office.
 - Receive and retain copies of bylaws made by the local authority
 - Retain acceptance of office forms from councillors
 - Retain a copy of every Councillor's register of interest.

14. Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

- a. The council shall appoint appropriate staff member to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

15. Accounts and Accounting Statements

- a. All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council's financial regulations.

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- b. The RFO shall supply to each councillor at full council meetings:-
 - The council's receipts and payments for each month
 - A cash flow statement showing spend vs budget
- c. The year end accounting statement shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the council for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual return shall be presented to the council by the following month of May.

16. Financial Controls and Procurement

- a. The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the RFO.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.

17. Requests for information

- a. Requests for information held by the council shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

18. Relations with the press/media

- a. The public and press shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees
- b. The Council can decide to exclude the public and media when the item being discussed is of a confidential matter.
- c. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Chairman may after warning, order that he/she be removed from the meeting.

19. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

- a. A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b. Subject to standing order 22 (a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

20. Communicating with Borough Council, and Borough Councillors

- a. A notice of meeting shall be sent to the Borough Councillor for the Ridgeway Ward.

21. Standing Orders generally

- a. Any part of the Standing Orders except those that are statutory may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business
- b. A motion permanently to vary or revoke a Standing Order shall when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
- c. A printed copy of the standing orders shall be given to each member by the Clerk upon delivery to him/her of the member's declaration of acceptance of office.