

Weston & Basford Parish Council

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, or of a Councillor who has been specifically designated by the Council for this purpose.
- 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.
- 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.

2. Statutory Annual Meetings

- 2.1. If the Annual Meeting is in an election year it must be held within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office. If it is not an election year then the annual meeting will take place on an appropriate day in May.
- 2.2. If the outgoing Chairman is available then he/she will preside until a new Chairman has been elected. The first business of the Annual Meeting will be
 - a) To elect a Chairman of the Council
 - b) To receive the Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.
 - c) In the ordinary year of election of the Council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reason of insufficient nominations.
 - d) To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office and written undertakings to comply with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.
 - e) To elect a Vice-Chairman of the Council.
 - f) To appoint committees and sub-committees.
 - g) To appoint representatives to outside bodies.
- 2.3. The retiring Chairman will report on the activities of the Council for the preceding year.

3. Committees

The Council may at its Annual Meeting appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as are necessary clearly defining roles of the committees and any delegated powers. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman ex-officio shall be members of every committee.

3.1. Planning Committee

The Council shall appoint a Planning Committee comprising four members. Each member shall represent a separate geographical area of the Parish.

- a) The Planning Committee shall have delegated powers to make representation on planning applications received from the Local Planning Authority within the timescale specified.
- b) The Planning 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. The Chairman of the Committee shall in the case of equality of votes have a second or casting vote.

3.2. Finance Committee

The Council shall appoint a Finance Committee comprising three members. The purpose of the Committee shall be to monitor and carry out internal audit of the Parish Council's accounts.

4. Meetings

- 4.1. Meetings will be held in appropriate, accessible accommodation. Unless no other accommodation is available the meetings will not be held in premises used for the supply of alcohol. Smoking is not permitted at any meeting of the Council.
- 4.2. In addition to the Statutory Annual Meeting at least ten other statutory meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times and at such place as the Council may direct and Councillors will be advised of the meetings by the issue of a summons and agenda delivered by post or by hand. The agenda may be delivered by email provided the Council has previously agreed to this. In any case the agenda must be issued at least three clear business days before the meeting.
- 4.3. Public notices will be posted in conspicuous places informing members of the public of the venue, time, date and business to be transacted at the meeting. The notice will be posted at least three clear working days before the meeting.
- 4.4. 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.

- 4.5. Members of the public may speak at Council meetings at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting.
- 4.6. The agenda for the meeting will be agreed by the Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman as appropriate.
- 4.7. The agenda will always include an item to enable Councillors to declare interests. If a member has a personal interest as defined by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 14th March 2002 then he/she shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the nature and extent of that interest as required. If a member who has declared a personal interest then considers the interest to be prejudicial, he/she can speak during the public speaking time and then must withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item to which the interest relates._
- 4.8. An opportunity for public questions will be included as an agenda item for each meeting.
- 4.9. The Council may only take decisions on items clearly specified on the agenda; if agreed by the chairman, any urgent items which are not on the agenda may be discussed, but no decision may be made, at that meeting.
- 4.10. 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 chairs the meeting will assume the duties of the Chairman for the meeting.
- 4.11. The order of business, unless the Council otherwise decides on the grounds of urgency, shall be as follows:-
 - (a) To read and consider the Minutes; provided that if a copy has been circulated to each member not later than the day of issue of the summons to attend the meeting, the Minutes shall be taken as read
 - (b) After consideration to approve the signature of the Minutes by the person presiding as a correct record.
 - (c) To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.

4.12. Disorderly Conduct

All members must behave in a manner required by the Code of Conduct which was adopted by the council on 14th March 2002 a copy of which is annexed to these Standing Orders.

4.13. Discussions and Resolutions affecting Employees of the Council

If at a meeting there arises any question relating to the appointment, conduct, promotion, dismissal, salary or conditions of service, of any person employed by the Council, it shall not be considered until the Council has decided whether or not the public shall be excluded.

5. Quorum of the Council

- 5.1.** The quorum for the Council will be one third of the total Councillor places but in any case not fewer than 4. If there be insufficient members present then no business will be transacted and a fresh notice will be issued to reconvene the meeting at a later date.
- 5.2.** If at any time during the meeting it ceases to be quorate the number of Councillors present, not counting those debarred by reason of prejudicial interest, falls below the required quorum then the meeting will be adjourned and any further business carried forward to the (meeting when next convened) next meeting or such other day as the Chairman may decide.

6. Voting

- 6.1.** Voting at the meeting shall be by a show of hands unless a majority of Councillors wants a ballot. Only the proposer and seconder will be recorded in the minutes unless a Councillor requests that their vote is noted. 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.
- 6.2.** In cases of equal votes the Chairman (or other person presiding) will have a second or casting vote.

7. Minutes

- 7.1.** A minute 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.

8. Planning Applications

The Clerk shall, as soon as it is received, enter in a book kept for the purpose the following particulars of every planning application notified to the Council:-

- a) the date on which it was received;
- b) the name of the applicant;
- c) the place to which it relates;

- d) The Clerk shall refer every planning application received to the Chairman of the Planning Committee or in the Chairman's absence to the Vice-Chairman within 48 hours of receipt.

9. Finance

The financial management of the Council shall be conducted in accordance with the Financial Regulations adopted by the Council from time to time

10. Clerk to the Council

10.1. The Council may appoint a number of employees to assist it in the performance of its duties. The Council will appoint a Clerk to the Council which will be on an employed basis, unless the Clerk is a member of the Council, acting in an unpaid capacity.

10.2. The Clerk will act as the Proper Officer of the Council, and he/she will:

- a) receive the Declarations of Acceptance of Office and notices disclosing interests;
- b) Sign documents on behalf of the Council and issue agendas and notices of meetings;
- c) receive and distribute plans and documents on behalf of the Council; and
- d) advise the bank of any changes to mandates with the bank.

11. Freedom of Information

11.1. 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.