

# Yarnscombe Parish Council

## Standing Orders



Author:	Richard Pengilley	<signature>	
Version:	1.2		
Date:	15 February 2011		

## Document History

Version	Date	Author	Reason for Change
0.1	08/05/2010	Richard Pengilley	First draft.
1.0	28/05/2010	Richard Pengilley	First formal issue. All references to “committee”, “sub-committee” and multiple employees removed.
1.1	17/08/2010	Richard Pengilley	Clarification of status of draft minutes in Section 9.
1.2	15/02/2011	Richard Pengilley	Minor amendment to recording of voting in Section 1. All occurrences of “his” extended to “his/her”.

### Notes

1. Some portions of text in this document are in **bold type**. These portions should not be ignored or substantively amended unless the national legislation out of which they are born changes. The Council should maintain the standing orders in bold type in their current form because these reflect statutory requirements. If the Council wishes to alter slightly the wording of the standing orders in bold type, any such amendments must not have the effect of undermining, overriding or conflicting with statutory requirements.
2. Use of the word “Chairman” (and similar) in this document should not be taken to assume that women are precluded from taking such a role.

## Contents

1 Meetings	5
2 Ordinary Council Meetings	6
3 Proper Officer	7
4 Motions requiring written notice	8
5 Motions not requiring written notice	9
6 Rules of debate	10
7 Code of conduct	11
8 Questions	12
9 Minutes	12
10 Disorderly conduct	12
11 Rescission of previous resolutions	13
12 Voting on appointments	13
13 Expenditure	13
14 Execution and sealing of legal deeds	13
15 Extraordinary meetings	13
16 Advisory committees	14
17 Accounts and Financial Statement	14
18 Estimates/precepts	14
19 Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors	14
20 Inspection of documents	14
21 Unauthorised activities	15
22 Confidential business	15
23 Power of well-being	15
24 Matters affecting council employees	15
25 Freedom of Information Act 2000	16
26 Relations with the press/media	16
27 Liaison with District and County or Unitary Councillors	16

<b>28 Financial matters</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>29 Allegations of breaches of the code of conduct</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>30 Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>31 Standing orders to be given to councillors</b>	<b>18</b>

# 1 Meetings

- a. Meetings of the council shall normally be held at Yarnscombe Victory Hall at 7.30pm on a Wednesday (normally the fourth Wednesday in a month). **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.** Smoking is not permitted at meetings.
- b. **Three clear days' notice of meetings shall be given to councillors and the public. The three days shall not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas or Easter breaks or a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.** The dates and agendas for meetings shall be posted on the village notice board and on the website.
- 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. Minutes of all meetings shall be taken by the Clerk or, in the Clerk's absence, by an alternative approved by the council. **The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present** and those who have tendered apologies for absence.
- e. Subject to standing order 1(c) above, members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. There shall be a Public Participation session near the beginning of the agenda and a Public Feedback session near the end of the agenda. A record of these sessions shall be included in the minutes of the meeting.
- f. In accordance with standing order 1(e) above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or debate.
- g. In accordance with standing order 1(f) above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- h. Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his/her comments to the Chairman.
- i. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Chairman shall direct the order of speaking.
- j. **Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's consent.**
- k. **In accordance with standing order 1(c) above, the press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- l. **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman may in his/her absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman (if any).**
- m. **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.**

- n. **Subject to standing order 1(t) below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors present and voting thereon.**
- o. **The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his/her casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.** (*See also standing orders 2(h) and 2(i) below.*)
- p. **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor before voting takes place, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his/her vote for or against that question.** If at least two councillors present request it, voting on any given question shall be by secret ballot.
- q. **The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors in respect of the entire meeting.**
- r. **An interest arising from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes.** (*See also standing orders 7 and 8 below.*)
- s. **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless a quorum is present, defined as the greater of: (i) at least one third of the whole number of members of the Council; (ii) 3.**
- t. **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** unless and until it becomes quorate again. Any business outstanding because a meeting became inquorate shall be transacted at a following meeting.
- u. Meetings shall not exceed a period of three hours. Any business outstanding thereafter shall be deemed 'lost', although it may be offered for consideration on the agenda of a following meeting.

## 2 Ordinary Council Meetings

*See also standing order 1 above*

- 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 (normally the fourth Wednesday in May).**
- c. **If no other time is fixed, the Annual Meeting of the Council shall take place at 7.00pm.**
- d. **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.**
- e. **The election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.**
- f. **The Chairman of the Council, unless he or she has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his or her successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g. **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he or she 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 or she 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 the case of an equality of votes.
- i. In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he or she shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He or she may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- j. Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council at the Annual Meeting of the Council, the order of business shall be as follows.
  - i. In an election year, delivery by councillors of their declarations of acceptance of office, including deciding when any declarations not available shall be delivered.
  - ii. Reading and confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council.
  - iii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.
  - iv. Receipt of a statement of the Parish Council's accounts for the period ending the previous 31 March.
  - v. Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.
  - vi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.
  - vii. In a year of elections, if a Council's period of eligibility to exercise the power of well-being expired the day before the annual meeting, to review and make arrangements to reaffirm eligibility.
  - viii. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment.
  - ix. Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
  - x. Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.
  - xi. Establishing or reviewing the Council's complaints procedure.
  - xii. Establishing or reviewing the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
  - xiii. Establishing or reviewing the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media.
  - xiv. Setting the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council for the year ahead.
  - xv. Considering resolutions of which written notice has been given.

### 3 Proper Officer

- a. The Council's Proper Officer shall normally be the clerk or, exceptionally, such other employee or person as may be nominated by the Council from time to time. The Proper Officer and the employee appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in standing orders.
- b. The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following.

- i. **Sign and serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council at least three clear days (see item 1(b)) before the meeting.** Alternatively the Proper Officer may serve the summons by electronic mail provided any such e-mail contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.
- ii. **Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least three clear days (see item 1(b)) before a meeting of the Council (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
- iii. Subject to standing orders 4(a)–4(e) below, include in the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least three days before the meeting confirming his/her withdrawal of it.
- iv. **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, in accordance with standing order 3(b)(i) above.**
- v. Publish the minutes of meetings on the village notice board and submit them to the website administrator for publishing on the website.
- vi. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
- vii. **Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.**
- viii. Retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.
- ix. Keep proper records required before and after meetings.
- x. Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.
- xi. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
- xii. Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.
- xiii. Arrange for legal deeds to be signed by two councillors and witnessed (*See also standing orders 14(a) and 14(b).*)
- xiv. Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
- xv. Record every planning application in the parish notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose.
- xvi. Refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
- xvii. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.

## 4 Motions requiring written notice

- a. In accordance with standing order 3(b)(iii) above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least six clear days before the next meeting.

- b. The Proper Officer may, before including a motion in the agenda received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- c. If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer in clear and certain language at least six clear days before the meeting.
- d. If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda.
- e. Having consulted the Chairman or councillors pursuant to standing order 4(d) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.
- f. Notice of every motion received in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be numbered in the order received and shall be entered in a book, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.
- g. Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

## 5 Motions not requiring written notice

- a. Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.
  - i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
  - ii. To approve the absences of councillors.
  - iii. To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
  - iv. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
  - v. To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
  - vi. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
  - vii. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
  - viii. To close or adjourn debate.
  - ix. To refer by formal delegation a matter to an employee.
  - x. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee.
  - xi. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant.
  - xii. To authorise legal deeds to be signed by two councillors and witnessed.  
(See standing orders 14(a) and 14(b) below.)
  - xiii. To authorise the payment of monies up to £250.
  - xiv. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
  - xv. To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
  - xvi. To silence or exclude from the meeting a councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.

- xvii. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.
- xviii. **To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.**
- xix. To adjourn the meeting.
- xx. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.
- xxi. To answer questions from councillors.

## 6 Rules of debate

- a. Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Chairman's direction for reasons of expedience.
- b. Subject to standing orders 4(a)–4(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- c. Subject to standing order 3(b)(iii) above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.
- d. A motion to amend an original or substantive motion shall not be considered unless proper notice has been given after the original or substantive motion has been seconded and notice of such amendment, shall, if required by the Chairman, be reduced to writing and handed to the Chairman who shall determine the order in which they are considered.
- e. A councillor may move amendments to his or her own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.
- f. Any amendment to a motion shall be either:
  - i. to leave out words; or
  - ii. to add words; or
  - iii. to leave out words and add other words.
- g. A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.
- h. Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.
  - i. Subject to Standing Order 6(h) above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.
  - j. Pursuant to standing order 6(h) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a councillor, is limited to one.
- k. If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.
  - l. If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- m. The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding five minutes.

- n. Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion at the very end of debate and immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o. Subject to standing orders 6(m) and 6(n) above, a councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- p. During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.
- q. A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his/her decision shall be final.
- r. With the consent of the seconder and/or of the meeting, a motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer. A councillor shall not speak upon the said motion or amendment unless permission for the withdrawal of the motion or amendment has been refused.
- s. Subject to standing order 6(o) above, when a councillor's motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except:
  - i. to amend the motion;
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;
  - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
  - v. to ask a person to be silent or for him or her to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or subcommittee for consideration;
  - vii. to exclude the public and press;
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting;
  - ix. to suspend any standing order, except those which are mandatory.
- t. In respect of standing order 6(s)(iv) above, the Chairman shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is seconded and put to the vote. The Chairman shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his/her right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.

## 7 Code of conduct

*See also standing orders 1(d)–1(g) above*

*A revised statutory code of conduct is expected to come into force in 2010*

- a. **All councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.**
- b. **If paragraph 12(2) of the code of conduct contained in the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 (SI No. 1159) has been adopted by the Council or pursuant to relevant provisions in a statutory code of conduct in force at the time, councillors may exercise the rights contained in standing order 7(c) below only if members of the public are permitted to (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted.**

- c. **Councillors with a prejudicial interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting may (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must, thereafter, leave the room or chamber.**

## 8 Questions

- a. A councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided five clear days' notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.
- b. Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.
- c. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

## 9 Minutes

- a. If a copy of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting has been circulated to councillors no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting they shall be taken as read.
- b. No discussion of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting shall take place except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes shall be raised in accordance with standing order 5(a)(iv) above.
- c. Minutes, including any amendment to correct their accuracy, 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.
- d. If minutes are published for public viewing, e.g. on a notice board or on the parish website, before they are signed in accordance with standing order 9(c) above, they shall be clearly marked as being draft, such mark to be taken as indicating that the minutes are subject to possible correction of inaccuracies in accordance with standing order 9(b) above.
- e. If the Chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect: "The Chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the ( ) held on [date] in respect of ( ) were a correct record but his/her view was not upheld by the majority of the ( ) and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."
- f. Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, any previous draft minutes or recordings of the meeting shall be destroyed.

## 10 Disorderly conduct

- a. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly.
- b. If, in the opinion of the Chairman, there has been a breach of standing order 10(a) above, the Chairman shall express that opinion and thereafter any councillor (including the Chairman) may move that the person be silenced or excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.

- c. If a resolution made in accordance with standing order 10(b) above, is disobeyed, the Chairman may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce it and/or he or she may adjourn the meeting.

## 11 Rescission of previous resolutions

- a. A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least two councillors of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
- b. When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 11(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

## 12 Voting on appointments

- a. Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.

## 13 Expenditure

- a. Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
- b. **The Council's financial regulations shall be reviewed once a year.**
- c. **The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to an employee.**

## 14 Execution and sealing of legal deeds

*See also standing order 5(a)(xii) above*

- a. A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.
- b. **In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 14(a) above, any two members of the Council may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**  
(The above is applicable to a Council without a common seal.)

## 15 Extraordinary meetings

*See also standing order 1 above*

- 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 to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**

## **16 Advisory committees**

*See also standing order 1 above*

- a. The Council may appoint advisory committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.
- b. Advisory committees and any subcommittees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.

## **17 Accounts and Financial Statement**

- a. All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, which shall be reviewed at least annually.
- b. The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments for the quarter and the balances held at the end of the quarter. This statement should include a comparison with the budget for the financial year. A Financial Statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March shall be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to external audit), including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for formal approval before 30 June.

## **18 Estimates/precepts**

- a. **The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year** at its meeting before the end of February.

## **19 Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors**

- a. Canvassing councillors, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.
- b. This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

## **20 Inspection of documents**

- a. Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his/her official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council shall be available for inspection by councillors.

## **21 Unauthorised activities**

- a. Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council:
  - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
  - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

## **22 Confidential business**

- a. Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware, is of a confidential nature.

## **23 Power of well-being**

- a. Before exercising the power to promote well-being, a meeting of the full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.
- b. The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 23(a) above was made and expires on the day before the annual meeting of the Council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections.
- c. After the expiry of its preceding period of eligibility, the Council continues to be an eligible council solely for the purpose of completing any activity undertaken in the exercise of the power to promote well-being which was not completed before the expiry of the Council's preceding period of eligibility referred to in standing order 23(b) above.

## **24 Matters affecting council employees**

- a. If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 1(c) above.
- b. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall keep written records of all meetings relating to their performance, and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters.
- c. The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected.
- d. Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.
- e. Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 24(c) and 24(d) above shall be provided only to the Chairman of the Council.

## 25 Freedom of Information Act 2000

- a. All requests for information held by the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- b. Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the author of the Council's Freedom of Information Act policy. The said author shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 including exercising the powers of the Proper Officer in respect of Freedom of Information requests set out under standing order 3(b)(x) above.

## 26 Relations with the press/media

- a. All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.
- b. In accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media, councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media.

## 27 Liaison with District and County or Unitary Councillors

- a. An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the councillor of the District and County or Unitary Council representing its electoral ward.
- b. Unless the Council otherwise orders, a copy of each letter sent to the District or County or Unitary Council shall be sent to the District or County or Unitary Council councillor representing its electoral ward.

## 28 Financial matters

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
  - i. the accounting records and systems of internal control;
  - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
  - iii. the work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments;
  - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 28(b) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value of less than £60,000.
- b. **Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of [£60,000] shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 28(c) below.**
- c. Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:
  - i. a public notice of intention to place a contract to be placed in a local newspaper;

- ii. a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - iii. tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Proper Officer by a stated date and time;
  - iv. tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Proper Officer and at least one member of the Council;
  - v. tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of the Council.
- d. The Council is not bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.
- e. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with EU procurement rules.**

## 29 Allegations of breaches of the code of conduct

- a. On receipt of a notification that there has been an alleged breach of the code of conduct the Proper Officer shall refer it to the Chairman of the Council.
- b. Where the notification relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of the Council of that fact, who, upon receipt of such notification, shall nominate a person to assume the duties of the Proper Officer set out in the remainder of this standing order, who shall continue to act in respect of that matter as such until the complaint is resolved.
- c. The subject matter of notifications shall be confidential and, insofar as it is possible to do so by law, the Council (including the Proper Officer and the Chairman of the Council) shall take the steps set out below, together with other steps considered necessary, to maintain confidentiality.
  - i. Draft the summonses and agendas in such a way that the identity and subject matter of the complaint are not disclosed.
  - ii. Ensure that any background papers containing the information set out in standing order 29(a) above are not made public.
  - iii. Ensure that the public and press are excluded from meetings as appropriate.
  - iv. Ensure that the minutes of meetings preserve confidentiality.
  - v. Consider any liaison that may be required with the person or body with statutory responsibility for the investigation of the matter.
- d. Standing order 29(c) above should not be taken to prohibit the Council (whether through the Proper Officer or the Chairman of the Council or otherwise) from disclosing information to members and officers of the Council or to other persons where such disclosure is necessary to deal with the complaint or is required by law.
- e. The Chairman of the Council shall have the power to:
  - i. seek documentary and other evidence from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
  - ii. seek and share information relevant to the complaint;

- iii. grant the member involved a financial indemnity in respect of legal costs, which shall be in accordance with the law and subject to approval by a meeting of the full Council.
- f. References in standing order 29 to a notification shall be taken to refer to a communication of any kind which relates to a breach or an alleged breach of the code of conduct by a councillor.

### **30 Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders**

- a. Any or every part of the standing orders, except those which are mandatory by law, may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.
- b. A motion to permanently add to or to vary or to revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders not mandatory by law shall not be carried unless two-thirds of the councillors, rounded up to the nearest whole number, at a meeting of the Council vote in favour of the same.

### **31 Standing orders to be given to councillors**

- a. The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor upon delivery of his/her declaration of acceptance of office.
- b. The Chairman's decision as to the application of standing orders at meetings shall be final.
- c. A councillor's failure to observe standing orders more than three times in one meeting may result in him being excluded from the meeting in accordance with standing orders.