

1 COUNCIL MEETINGS

1.1 Chairing meetings

The Chair of the Council or in her /his absence the Deputy Chair shall chair meetings of the Council. In their absence the Council shall select a person to chair the meeting.

Note

This reflects the requirement in Schedule 12. A meeting cannot take place unless a chair is appointed. The clerk should supervise the selection by inviting nominations and putting them to the vote. Where a chair has to be selected, the meeting starts when the selection decision is made. The minutes should record the selection of chair (i.e. 'Cllr X was selected to chair the meeting'.)

1.2 Quorum

No business shall be dealt with unless there is a quorum of 3 members present. If there is no quorum, the meeting must be adjourned immediately.

Note

This reflects the requirement in Schedule 12

1.3 Holding meetings

1.3.1 An annual meeting of the Council shall be held in every year in the month of May. In the year of ordinary elections of parish councillors the annual meeting shall be held within 14 days after the day on which councillors elected take office.

1.3.2 At least 3 other meetings of the Council shall be held in every year. 1.3.3 An extraordinary meeting of the Council may be called at any time by the chair.

1.3.4 Any 2 members may submit a written request signed by them to the Chair to call an extraordinary meeting. In the event of the Chair not calling an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of receiving the request, or refusing to call an extraordinary meeting, the 2 members may call an extraordinary meeting.

1.3.5 Meetings shall be held at a place, date and time fixed by the Council. Meetings shall not be held in premises being used at the time for the supply of alcohol permitted by the Licensing Act 2003 unless no other suitable room is available.

1.3.6 Notice of the time and place of meetings must be fixed in a conspicuous place in the parish at least 3 clear days before the meeting. Where a meeting is called by members of the Council (1.3.4 above), the notice shall be signed by those members and shall specify the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting (the agenda).

1.3.7 All members of the Council shall be given (by post or left at their residence) at least 3 clear days written notice of all meetings of the Council from the Proper Officer specifying the business proposed to be transacted (the agenda).

Note

These are the minimum requirements contained in Schedule 12.

1.4 Order of business for Annual Meetings

14.1 At Annual Meetings business will be dealt with in the following order:

Election of Chair (This will be followed immediately by the Chair's declaration of At Annual Meetings business will be dealt with in the following order:

Election of Chair (This will be followed immediately by the Chair's declaration of acceptance of office)

Election of Deputy Chair

When the Annual Meeting follows Council elections, to note the receipt of declarations of acceptance of office by members

Disclosures of interest by members (and employees) in items on the agenda

Agreeing the minutes of the last meeting and signing them

Receiving any apologies for absence

Announcements from the Chair

To approve any changes to the Standing Orders proposed following the annual review

Deciding the dates, times and place of meetings of the Council for the year

Other business placed on the agenda

Note

The Annual Meeting can be retained as more of a ceremonial meeting or it can deal, in addition to the formal items, with normal business as any ordinary meeting. Items from the list for ordinary meetings can be included as considered appropriate. If ordinary business is conducted it may be sensible to add the facility to change the order of business per 1.5.2 below.

It should be noted that newly elected members cannot act as councillors until they have made their declarations of acceptance of office and undertakings to observe the code of conduct. It is desirable for these to be completed before the commencement of the meeting.

Parish Councils may include other items as they think appropriate.

1.5 Order of business for ordinary meetings

1.5.1 At ordinary meetings, business will usually be dealt with in the following order:

Apologies for Absence

Disclosures of interest by members (and employees) in items on the agenda

Agreeing the minutes of the last meeting and signing them

Receiving any apologies for absence

Public question time

Finance report

Progress Report/Clerks Report

Correspondence

Local Maintenance

Any appointments to sub committees and other bodies

To receive recommendations from sub committees

1.5.2 The order of business may be changed by the meeting by motion put by the Chair.

Note

It is suggested that the first 3 items are always taken first as matters of procedure.

It is suggested that items of public interest for which the public are present are dealt with early in the agenda. This might involve the Chair moving items forward with the approval of the meeting.

It is desirable to make provision for members of the public to ask questions (and make representations) to the Council. This can be by advance notice which enables a response to be made. The Council

is not obliged to respond at the meeting. A more considered reply may be necessary and arrangements will need to be made for this. The Chair will need to

effectively control the question time to allow as many persons as possible within the allocated time scale allowed to put questions.

1.6 Minutes

1.6.1 No discussion shall take place on a motion to agree the minutes other than upon their accuracy.

1.6.2 Any corrections shall be made by moving that the minutes are agreed with the corrections stated.

1.6.3 The minutes must record the names of members present at the meeting and the declarations of interest of any member.

1.6.4 The minutes of a meeting must be circulated to all members as soon as practicable and referred to the next meeting (other than an extraordinary meeting) for agreement and signing by the Chair.

Note

This is a useful provision to prevent discussion going over ground already dealt with. The precise wording of corrections needs to be identified when moving the minutes.

The requirement to record names in the minutes accords with Schedule 12.

The requirement to circulate minutes is included as it should be possible for all parish councils now to produce them in type or electronically.

1.7 Petitions

1.7.1 Petitions may be received at (ordinary) meetings of the Council provided that the petition is received by the clerk no later than mid-day three working days before the day of the meeting and is signed by at least 10 electors within the parish.

1.7.2 Petitions may only be about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the parish.

1.7.3 Petitions will not be received by the Council which are in furtherance of a person's individual circumstances or which are about a matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or government minister.

1.7.4 A petition will not be received by the Council where the issue it concerns has been the subject of a petition in the last six months or a decision of the Council in the last six months.

1.7.5 One signatory to the petition may speak on the petition for no more than 5 minutes.

1.7.6 No discussion shall take place on the petition. A member may move that the petition be referred to the next meeting or to a committee or to another body. Once seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

1.7.7 No more than 5 petitions will be received at a meeting.

Note

Petitions are a way of persons pursuing a particular concern obtaining support and prompting public debate. For Parish Councils, having a process for receiving petitions demonstrates an interest in community concerns and a readiness to listen. The constraints to petitions are intended to prevent abuse of the process.

1.8 Public Question time

1.8.1 Any elector within the parish may put a question to the meeting about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the parish.

1.8.2 An elector seeking a response to a question at the meeting must give the clerk notice of the question at least 5 clear days before the meeting.

1.8.3 Questions will not be received by the Council which are in furtherance of a person's individual circumstances or which are about a matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or government minister.

1.8.4 A question will not be received by the Council where the issue it concerns has been the subject of a decision of the Council in the last 6 months.

1.8.5 An elector putting a question may speak for no more than five minutes.

1.8.6 A maximum of 15 minutes will be allowed for public questions.

1.8.7 No discussion shall take place on any question put. Where practical, the Chair may respond to the question or indicate that a written response will be made.

1.8.8 Where notice of a question has been given, a reply may be given orally at the meeting by the Chair or person nominated by the Chair, or a written reply given to the elector.

1.8 Voting

1.8.1 Subject to any legal requirement all questions to be decided by the Council shall be decided by a majority of the members present and voting.

1.8.2 Members shall vote by show of hands. A member's vote will only be counted if the member is in the room of the meeting at the time the vote is taken.

1.8.3 Immediately after a vote is taken and before the next business is commenced, a member may request that the minutes of the meeting record the way in which the member has voted or that the member abstained from voting. The minutes shall note whether the member voted for or against the question put or whether the member abstained.

1.8.4 Immediately before a vote is taken any member may request that a vote is recorded. When a request is made the Chair or person nominated by the Chair shall call the names of all the members and after each name is called the member shall state whether s/he is voting for or against the question put or abstaining. The record of voting shall be recorded in the minutes.

1.8.5 In the case of an equality of votes the Chair may give a casting vote whether or not

s/he gave a first vote.

Note

These requirements mainly reflect the requirements of schedule 12. The requirement for members to be in the room for a vote to be counted, and the casting vote for election of chair are optional but sensible.

1.9 Procedural motions

1.9.1 Any member at any time may move, between speakers, any of the following motions:

- To proceed to the next business
- To move to the vote
- To refer a matter to a committee
- To adjourn the meeting

If the motion is seconded, it must be put to the vote immediately without discussion.

Note

Optional but useful to aid the flow of business.

1.10 Conduct

1.10.1 A member when speaking must address the Chair.

1.10.2 Members must behave in a way that is conducive to the efficient conduct of business and respect the role of the Chair in the proper management of the meeting.

1.10.3 If a member persistently disregards the ruling of the Chair by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructing business, the Chair may move that the member be not further heard. If the motion is seconded, it must be put to the vote immediately without discussion.

1.10.4 If the member continues to behave improperly after a motion that the member be not further heard, the Chair may move that either the member leaves the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If the motion is seconded, it must be put to the vote immediately without discussion.

1.10.5 If there is a general disturbance at the meeting involving any person present, making the orderly conduct of business impractical, the Chair may adjourn the meeting for as long as s/he considers necessary.

