

Wadhurst Parish Council

Standing Orders

Meetings

1. The Parish Council shall hold not less than eight meetings in a year, of which one shall be the Annual Meeting.
2. In an election year, the Annual Meeting must be held within 14 days of Members taking office. In a non-election year, the Annual Meeting will be held with the regular Council Meeting in May. Other Council Meetings shall be held on days fixed by the Council.
3. The Chairman may convene an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council at any time. Two Members may sign a requisition that the Council be convened for an Extraordinary Meeting; if the Chairman either refuses or neglects to do so for seven days, then any two Members may convene a Meeting.
4. All Council and Committee Meetings (including meetings of sub-committees) shall be open to the public unless there is a resolution to exclude the public due to the confidential nature of the business to be considered.
5. Matters relating to staffing shall not be considered until Members have considered whether the public should be excluded under Standing Order 4.
6. During a total time limit of 15 minutes, the public will be given an opportunity to make representations at Meetings. Members with a prejudicial interest may address the Council or Committee (including meetings of sub-committees) during the public session in accordance with section 12(2) of the Code of Conduct.
7. At Full Council and Committee Meetings the public may make representations about any item.
8. The public can only make representations during the public forum but the Chairman of the Full Council or the Chairman of a Committee may seek clarification on an item from the public during a meeting.
9. In the absence or inability of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman at a Meeting, the Meeting shall appoint one of their number to take the Chair. The person presiding shall have all powers and authority of the Chairman in relation to the Meeting.

Notices

10. The Council's Proper Officer shall electronically serve on councillors a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee at least three clear days before the meeting provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer. Should any Councillor not wish to receive an electronically served summons it shall, within the same timeframe, be left at, or sent by post to, the usual residence of the Councillor.
11. Any Member who intends to bring forward any business at a Meeting should advise the Clerk six clear days at least before a Meeting.

Chairman

12. The Parish Council shall elect a Chairman from one of their number at the Annual Meeting. If it is decided by a simple majority of those present and voting that the person nominated has interests involving any organisation or business whose interest may conflict with those of the Parish Council, their nomination must be withdrawn. The Chairman may resign Chairmanship by writing to the Council via the Clerk. A Chairman may not hold office for more than three consecutive years.
13. A casual vacancy in the office of Chairman shall be filled by the Council and the person elected shall retire from office when the vacating Chairman would have retired.

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Vice-Chairman

14. The Parish Council shall elect a Vice-Chairman from one of their number at the Annual Meeting. If it is decided by a simple majority of those present and voting that the person nominated has interests involving any organisation or business whose interest may conflict with those of the Parish Council, their nomination must be withdrawn. The Vice-Chairman may resign Vice-Chairmanship by writing to the Council via the Clerk. The Vice-Chairman shall, in the absence or during the inability of the Chairman, have the powers and authority of the Chairman.

Members

15. Every Member shall, at the first Meeting after election, sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office. If at the Meeting the Council permits, the Declaration may be signed before or at a later Meeting fixed by the Council. If the Declaration is not signed, the office becomes vacant. Once signed, the member shall be allocated a council e-mail address for use in respect of Council business.
16. A Member may resign office by written notice delivered to the Chairman. A Casual Vacancy shall be filled in accordance with legislation. A person elected or appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall hold office for the remaining term for which the person being replaced was elected.

Committees and sub-committees

17. The Parish Council may appoint Committees (including sub-committees), either wholly or partly of Members of the Council, for the exercise of any powers which in the opinion of the Council can be exercised by Committees.. Committee Members (including sub-committees members) shall not hold office beyond the next Annual Meeting.
18. Each Committee shall be responsible for the production and control of its budget. All budgets must be agreed within Committees before being presented to the Finance Committee for consideration and Full Council for approval.
19. Each Committee (including sub-committees), shall have delegated powers to:
 - Spend funds within their agreed budgets to maintain existing services and assets.
 - To make decisions (not involving expenditure) in accordance with agreed remits and areas of responsibility.Any new projects, services and assets, or expenditure in excess of total committee (including sub-committees), budget, to be approved by the Full Council.
20. Any unbudgeted expenditure to be provided for from reserves requires the approval of the Full Council.
21. If a Committee Member (including members of sub-committees) is unable to attend a Committee Meeting (including sub-committee meetings), they may nominate a substitute Member in consultation with the Committee (including sub-committee) Chairman. The substitute Member will participate and vote at the meeting, subject to any restrictions under the Code of Conduct.
22. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council shall, by virtue of their offices, be Ex-officio Members of all Committees and sub-committees.
23. The Planning Committee shall have full delegated powers to make recommendations on planning and licence applications and footpath diversions, subject to there being a voting quorum of the Committee present.

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Order of Business

24. At the Annual Meeting the first business shall be:
- To elect a Chairman
 - To receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
 - In an election year:
 - To fill any casual vacancies
 - To receive Members' Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
 - To elect a Vice-Chairman.
 - To receive the Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
 - To elect Committees (including sub-committees), and Committee (including sub-committees), Chairmen.
 - To appoint Council representatives to outside bodies.
25. The order of business at a Meeting shall be decided by the Chairman. Any business may be taken out of the order specified on the Agenda if the Chairman so directs.

Rules of Debate

26. Members shall address the Chairman who shall decide who is to speak first and all questions of order which may arise.
27. If it is moved and seconded that a Meeting be closed, a debate adjourned or that the Council proceed to the next business, the question shall immediately be put to the Meeting without further discussion.

Rescission of Previous Resolution

- 28(a) No resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall be reversed within six months unless by a motion notified under Standing Order 9 and signed by seven Members.
- (b) When any such motion has been disposed of by the Council under Standing Order 26(a), no similar resolution shall be moved within a further six months.

Quorum

29. Five members shall constitute a quorum of the Full Council and Planning Committee. A quorum for the remaining committees (including sub-committees), shall be three.
30. If a quorum is not present when the Council meets or if during a Meeting the number of Members present and not debarred by reason of a declared interest falls below a quorum, the business not transacted at that Meeting shall be transacted at the next Meeting or on such other day as the Chairman may determine.

Voting

31. Every motion at a Meeting of the Council shall be decided by a majority of votes of Members present and voting. In case of an equal division of votes, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
32. Members shall vote by show of hands, or at the request of at least two Members, by signed ballot.
33. If a Member so requires, the names of Members shall be recorded to show whether they voted for or against a proposal.

Disorderly Conduct

- 34(a). No member shall at a meeting persistently disregard the ruling of the Chairman, willfully obstruct business, or behave irregularly, offensively, improperly or in such a manner as to bring the Council into disrepute or bring it into contempt or ridicule.

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- (b) If, in the opinion of the Chairman, a member has broken the provisions of Standing Order 32(a), the Chairman shall express that opinion to the Council and thereafter any member may move that the member named be no longer heard or that the member named leaves the meeting, and the motion, if seconded shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
- (c) If either of the motions mentioned in Standing Order 32(b) is disobeyed, the Chairman may suspend the meeting or take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce them.

Contracts

35. Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £5000 for the supply of goods, materials and services, or for the execution of works, the Clerk shall give at least three weeks notice on the Parish Notice Board and obtain estimates (up to £50,000) or invite tenders (over £50,000) from a list of contractors agreed by the Council for that purpose. The Council is not bound to accept any or the lowest estimate/tender.

Delegated powers for Clerk

36. Delegated powers are given to the Clerk to:
- Authorise work up to the value of £500 (excluding VAT) on routine matters within agreed policies and budget; this must be reported to the Chairman of the relevant committee (including sub-committees), within 48 hours.
 - In the event of an emergency, to authorise work up to the value of £1000 (excluding VAT); this must be reported to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman within 48 hours.
 - Implement non-discretionary adjustments to the Clerk's pay according to recommendations by NALC and to increase other staff salaries by the same percentage; Chairman of the Personnel Committee to be notified of adjustments.

Minutes

- 37(a) Production of the draft minutes of a meeting shall be the responsibility of the clerk. The clerk may consult the member who presided at the meeting. When the clerk does not attend a meeting, the members present at that meeting should agree for one member to assume the responsibility of the clerk relating to the production of minutes. If the Chair of a Committee is present then they should preside over the meeting. If the Chair is not present then members should vote to elect a member to Chair that meeting.
- (b) At any point until the end of a meeting, a member may ask that the clerk (or if the clerk is not present, the presiding member) to record whether members voted for or against a proposal during that meeting. Members shall not approach the clerk after a meeting to request amendments, although they may inform him of their intention to propose an amendment at the following meeting, when the minutes are to be approved.
 - (c) A copy of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting will be placed on the Parish Council's website no later than 7 days after the meeting and in any event no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting.
 - (d) 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 may be made without written notice.
 - (e) 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.

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- (f) 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 view was not upheld by the majority of the () and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- (g) 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.

Adopted 14.05.09

Review 13.05.10

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Amended 14.02.13

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