



OGBOURNE ST GEORGE PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

[Adopted March 2013]

MEETINGS

1. The Statutory Annual Meeting
 - 1.1. In an election year shall be held on the Thursday next following the fourth day after the ordinary day of elections to the Council
 - 1.2. In a year which is not an election year shall be held on the second Thursday in May, or as may be decided.
2. Three statutory meetings shall be held on the second Thursday in the months of January, September and November, or as may be decided.
3. Two additional meetings will be held on the second Thursday in the months of March and July (or as may be decided) if there is sufficient business.
4. Additional meetings may be called to deal with urgent matters.
5. Three full working days notice shall be given of any meeting. The agenda will be delivered to all councillors and posted on the notice board within this time limit. The agenda shall list all matters to be considered by the meeting, including any resolutions, and shall give details of any payments that need to be authorised. In an emergency the Chairman has discretion to admit items not on the agenda provided that a majority of Councillors agree.
6. Councillors may take decisions on routine matters which arise between meetings by informal means, including email, but any decisions so reached shall be reported to the next meeting of the Council and recorded in the minutes.
7. The Clerk shall distribute draft minutes to Councillors as soon as possible after each meeting and in the light of comments shall prepare and distribute a definitive draft which shall also be posted on the notice board.

CODE OF CONDUCT

8. All members of the Council shall be required to abide by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in July 2012. This includes an obligation under the Localism Act to declare to Wiltshire Council certain pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. (See also Section 22 below.)

CHAIR OF MEETING

9. The person presiding at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chair in relation to the conduct of the meeting.

QUORUM

10. Three Members shall constitute a quorum.

VOTING

11. If a member so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of the members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it. Such a request must be made before the vote but in any event before moving on to the next business. The Chair has discretion to allow a secret vote by ballot if such is requested by two members but is not obliged to do so.
12. Subject to sections 12.1 and 12.2 below the Chair may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may give a casting vote even though he or she gave no original vote.
 - 12.1. If the person presiding at the annual meeting would have ceased to be a member of the Council but for the statutory provisions which preserve the membership of the Chair and Vice-Chair until the end of their term of their office he or she may not give an original vote in an election for Chair.
 - 12.2. The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for Chair.

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

13. The Clerk to the Council shall be appointed and serve under an appropriate contract which will lay down his or her job description, terms of service and any appropriate standards of conduct. The Clerk will ex officio be the Proper Officer of the Council, and may be the Responsible Finance Officer if this appointment is not filled by a Councillor.
14. In the event of the Clerk having an interest in a matter before the Council s/he will relinquish his or her duties in handling the matter to a Councillor nominated for the purpose, and may then approach the Council as a member of the public

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

15. The Financial matters of the Council shall be handled in accordance with the Financial Regulations approved by the Council in May 2012. These regulations are to be reviewed annually, and any amendments noted in the minutes if the Parish Council.
16. The Council may if it so decides be advised by a Financial Sub-Committee, either on a permanent or temporary basis. The terms of reference are appended to the Financial Regulations. The membership of the

Sub-Committee shall be at least three Councillors, whose names shall be recorded in the minutes of the Council. The Clerk, if Responsible Finance Officer, shall normally be in attendance.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

17. In an election year, before the Annual Meeting commences, Councillors shall execute Declarations of Acceptance of Office (which include a written undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct) in presence of the Clerk as the Proper Officer authorised by the Council to take such declaration.
18. At each Annual Meeting the first business shall be:
 - 18.1. To elect a Chair
 - 18.2. To receive the Chair's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.
 - 18.3. To note any pecuniary or personal interest.
 - 18.4. In the ordinary year of election of the Council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reasons of insufficient nominations.
 - 18.5. To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.
19. At every meeting other than the Annual Meeting, if the Chair and Vice-Chair be absent, the first business shall be to appoint a Chair and to receive such declarations of acceptance of office (if any) as are required by law to be made, or if not then received to decide when they shall be received.
20. At every meeting the next business before consideration of Agenda items (see section 5 above) shall be:
 - 20.1. After consideration to approve the signature of the Minutes as a correct record by the person presiding.
 - 20.2. To note any pecuniary or personal interest.
 - 20.3. To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.

VOTING IN COMMITTEES

21. In the case of an equality of votes the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

INTERESTS

22. If a member has an interest as defined by the Code of Conduct (see section 8 above) then he or she shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the existence and nature of that interest as required. If The Chair considers the interest to be prejudicial then the member shall

withdraw from the room or chamber during consideration of the item to which the interest relates.

23. The Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining a record (in a book to be kept for the purpose) of any declaration of a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest made by any member or any officer of the Council, and for ensuring that Wiltshire Council is informed, including of any changes. This record shall be open for inspection under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI).
24. If the Clerk has an interest, see section 12 above.

ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS TO MEETINGS

25. The public shall normally be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees and sub-committees. However the Council may call meetings to which the public are not admitted (closed meetings) to consider matters of a sensitive or confidential nature. The public may also be excluded from part of the regular meeting by means of a resolution stating "That in view of the [special] [confidential] nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public or a commercial interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw." The reason for the exclusion should be stated. If an individual's assistance advice is needed s/he may be invited to remain after the passing of the resolution.
26. At the absolute discretion of the Chair members of the public may be permitted to address the Council briefly either before the matter is debated by Councillors or, if clarification is required, during the debate. Such persons shall signal their wish to speak and give their name and address.
27. The Clerk shall afford to the press reasonable facilities for taking their report of any proceedings at which they are entitled to be present.

INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

28. All Minutes kept by the Council and by any committee shall be open for the inspection of any member of the Council unless the relevant meeting is closed, in which case their handling will be determined in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

PLANNING APPLICATION CONSIDERATION

29. The Clerk (or a Councillor nominated to handle planning applications) shall have powers to make recommendations on planning applications on the PC's behalf, subject to guidance laid down by the Parish Council from time to time.
30. The Clerk (or Councillor) will consult with the Councillors on all planning applications as to whether the application is of sufficient interest to be brought to a meeting of the Parish Council. When this is the case, additional Parish Council meetings may if necessary be convened and members of the public given the required statutory notice of such a meeting. All planning applications received since the last meeting shall be listed on the Agenda showing their

current status, indicating whether or not they are to be formally considered at a Council meeting.

31. Applications deemed to be of sufficient interest to merit a Parish Council meeting will include:
 1. All proposals for new dwellings or significant increases in height of existing buildings;
 2. All proposals for commercial, industrial/warehousing development
 3. All proposals for material change of use;
and any other application as advised by the Chair/Vice Chair.
32. For all other applications the Clerk will consult with Councillors to see if they have any input and formulate a response from their replies.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

33. Any complaint against a member or officer of the Council should be addressed in the first instance to the Chair or Clerk as appropriate. If the matter cannot appropriately be resolved informally, it may be referred to an ad hoc Complaints Committee. The Committee shall be guided by NALC advice on Handling Complaints.
34. Any complaint against the conduct of an employee may be referred by the Complaints Committee to an ad hoc staffing Committee. Such complaints shall in any case be dealt with in accordance with the relevant ACAS Code of Conduct or Procedures.
35. Any grievance by an employee against the Council or its members shall be dealt with in accordance with the Model Grievance Procedure of NALC. Every attempt shall be made to resolve any grievance informally.
36. If a member reasonably believes that another member is in breach of the Code of Conduct, that member is under a duty to report the breach to the Chair or Clerk as appropriate.

STANDING ORDERS TO BE GIVEN TO MEMBERS

37. A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each member by the Clerk upon delivery to him or her of the member's declaration of acceptance of office and written undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
38. In the event of issues arising which are not covered by these Standing Orders reference may in the first instance be made to the Governance Toolkit for Parish and Town Councils published by NALC.
39. A copy of these Standing Orders will be available to the public on request to the Clerk and supplied within the terms of FOI legislation.