

**WOLDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL  
STANDING ORDERS**

*(The paragraphs which are within brackets indicate that the contents are prescribed by law)*

**1. MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Council shall be held in the Village Hall at 7.30 pm on the last Wednesday in each month except August and December unless the Council otherwise decides at a previous meeting.

(The Statutory Annual Meeting (a) in an election year shall be held on the Wednesday following the elections to the Council and (b) in a year which is not an election year shall be held in the month of May.)

Before the commencement of each meeting members of the public will be asked for their names and to state the subject on which they wish to speak.

**2. VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

In extreme circumstances, for example the Covid19 pandemic, the Parish Council will hold its meetings virtually, once permission has been received from the Government. Meetings will be advertised in the normal way and The Parish Council will invite people to join the monthly meeting by contacting the Parish Clerk, who will send them an invitation to the online meeting. The meeting minutes will be issued in the usual way on Woldingham.com and Facebook.

**3. CHAIRMAN OF MEETING**

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

**4. PROPER OFFICER**

The Clerk to the Council for the time being is the Proper Officer and shall exercise all functions and duties conferred on the Proper Officer by statute, regulation, or order.

**5. QUORUM**

The Quorum for any meeting of the Council or any committee or sub-committee of the Council shall be one-third of its members (establishment is set at 9 so a quorum is 3)

**6. VOTING**

Members shall vote by show of hands, or, if at least two members by request, by secret ballot. If a member so requests, the Clerk shall

record the names of the members who voted on any question so as to show how they voted.

(a) Subject to (b) below the Chairman may give an original vote on any matter, and in the case of an equality of votes may give a casting vote even though he gave no original vote

(b) 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 Chairman and Vice-Chairman until the end of their term of Office, he or she may not give an original vote in the election for Chairman. The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for Chairman.

In normal circumstances and in order to maintain the impartiality of the chair the casting vote should be used in such a way to leave the issue for future reconsideration.

## **7. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

At each Annual Meeting the first business shall be:

- (a) To elect a Chairman;
- (b) To receive the Chairman's declaration of office or, if not 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 which have not been received as provided by law shall be received;
- (e) To elect a Vice-Chairman)

(At every meeting other than the Annual Meeting the first business shall be to appoint a chairman if the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are absent and to receive any declaration of acceptance of office).

The next business shall be:

- (a) To record apologies of absence-
- (b) To read and consider the minutes, provided that if a copy has been circulated to each member in advance of the Meeting, the minutes may be taken as read.
- (c) After consideration to approve the signature of the Minutes by the presiding Chairman as a correct record.
- (d) To receive declarations of Interest.
- (e) To consider urgent business.
- (f) To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- (g) To receive and consider reports and minutes of committees and advisory committees.
- (h) To receive and consider reports from officers of the Council
- (i) To consider motions or recommendations on which they have been notified-

- (j) Any other business specified in the summons.
- (k) To authorise the signing of orders for payment.

- 8. (a) A motion to vary the order of business may be proposed by the Chairman or any member and, if proposed by the Chairman, may be put to the vote without being seconded, and  
(b) Shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- 9. Correspondence: All correspondence sent to the Clerk or any Councillor during the month will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting and answered within one week of the meeting. Correspondence received under Freedom of Information will be answered in the statutory 20 business days.

**10. RULES OF DEBATE**

- (a) No discussion shall take place upon the Minutes except upon their accuracy. Corrections to the Minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Chairman.
- (b) A motion or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- (c) A member shall direct his/her speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a question of order (d) The mover of a motion or of an amendment shall have the right of reply, not exceeding 5 minutes.
- (e) The ruling of the Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- (f) Councillors shall address the chairman.

**11. RESOLUTIONS**

- (a) No resolution except as stated in 15(b) may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been put on the agenda by the clerk the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has delivered the notice in writing to the clerk not less than ten days before the next meeting of the Council.
- (b) A resolution may be moved without prior notice where it relates to urgent or unexpected matters that have arisen during the meeting.

**12. DISORDERLY CONDUCT**

- (a) If, after warning, a member persistently disregards the ruling of the Chairman or behaves in such a manner as to bring the Council into contempt, the Chairman may propose his/her exclusion from further participation in the meeting. The member may be excluded by resolution of the Council.
- (b) If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any removed from the Council Chamber.

(c) If the steps in paragraphs (a) and (b) are disobeyed the Chairman may suspend or adjourn the meeting or take such further steps as may be reasonably necessary to enforce them.

**13. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETINGS**

If a meeting is adjourned the subsequent proceedings shall be regarded as part of the original meeting. Members not present at the adjourned meeting shall be advised of the date and place and time.

**14. DISCUSSIONS AFFECTING EMPLOYEES**

If any question relating to any person employed by the Council arises at a meeting, it shall not be considered until the Council has considered whether the public shall be excluded.

**15. EXPENDITURE**

- (a) Orders for the payment of money shall be authorised by resolution of the Council and signed by two members.
- (b) The Chairman of the Council may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council up to a limit of £100 and shall report such action to the Council at the next meeting.

**16. STANDING COMMITTEES**

- (a) The Council may appoint, dissolve, or alter the membership of committees, each of which may include a minority of persons who are not members of the Council. Their decisions are subject to ratification by the Council.
- (b) The Council's Standing Orders shall apply to its committees.

The Council may appoint advisory committees.

**17. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS**

All minutes kept by the Council and by any committee shall be open for inspection by any member of the Council or member of the public.

**18. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS TO MEETINGS**

- (a) The public shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees and sub-committees
- (b) The public may be excluded by resolution temporarily from any such meeting if publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business or for some other reason stated in the resolution and arising out of the business to be transacted.

(c) The Clerk shall afford to the press reasonable facilities for reporting any proceedings at which they are entitled to be present.)

## **19. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

No member of the Council or any committee shall disclose to any person not a member of the Council any business declared to be confidential by the Council or committee.

## **20. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a. Head of Planning. The Council will appoint a Head of Planning who will ensure the smooth running of planning reviews and that reviews are sufficiently and timely resourced. The Head of Planning will work with the Planning Assistant to ensure that OPAS is up to date and the Planning Assistant will schedule the working group's meetings to ensure that the Parish Council is appropriately updated in advance of meetings in order to timely address all applications.
- b. Planning Working Group: A planning working group will be set up which will include the Head of Planning. The Working Group will meet in person or remotely and they will be responsible for looking at all planning applications/matters that arise on behalf of the Parish Council. The Working Group will be responsible for adding comments to OPAS (Online Planning Application Solution), identifying reasons for and against the proposal, and drafting the suggested and the final response for the Council, giving all Councillors time to review applications and make any comments in advance of the meeting in which the full Council vote will occur. At the monthly meeting (either regular Parish Council or interim Planning meeting) all recommendations will be discussed and voted on by the full Parish Council.
- c. Site Reviews. The Working Group members shall normally visit the application site and take into consideration the views of neighbours when their concerns relate to planning policy and prepare a summary of their findings to present to the planning group and record on OPAS.
- d. Councillor duties. All Councillors should review all applications and comments on OPAS to ensure they can discuss at the meeting of the Council and vote on the recommendations made by the Working Group.
- e. Decision Timings. If an application is received between Council meetings and/or the deadline for responding to an application expires before the next meeting of the Council, where possible, an extension to the response deadline shall be sought. When deadlines cannot be extended past the next full Council meeting, an interim meeting of the Council shall be properly noticed and held to determine the planning application response.
- f. Declarations of interest. If a planning application is submitted by a Parish Councillor, or if a Parish Councillor or their spouse or civil partner or person living with the member as if they were civil partners, receives remuneration for any work related to an application or from the applicant, the Councillor must declare an interest at the start of the meeting and will be asked to vacate the meeting while the planning application is discussed. As with any vote,

Councillors with a conflict of interest cannot vote on the application in question.

**21. DELEGATED POWER AND AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES**

All members of the Council shall be deemed to have delegated powers to individually represent the Council during its business, but not otherwise. Such powers shall expressly extend to speaking and/or acting on behalf of the Council when appropriate including so doing at Public

Enquiries and Public Hearings relating to any matters of interest to the Council. Such powers shall also extend to signing letters and/or documents in circumstances where the Clerk is unable to do so. Councillors acting in this way shall be considered to be Authorised Signatories by virtue of this Standing Order and shall endorse such letters or documents as:

- (a) XYZ (Authorised Signatory) or
- (b) XYZ (Authorised Signatory) PP The Clerk

**22. CODE OF CONDUCT ON COMPLAINTS**

The council shall deal with complaints of maladministration allegedly committed by the Council or by any officer or member in the manner recommended in Circular 2/86 issued by the National Association of Local Councils.

**23. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

(a) Any member of the Council or of its committees who has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a contract, proposed contract, or other matter to be discussed must declare an interest before the first discussion of the matter. The member concerned must not take part in the discussion at the meeting or any subsequent meeting where the matter is to be discussed. If so required, the member concerned shall withdraw from the meeting or any subsequent meeting while the matter is being discussed.

(b) The Clerk shall keep a record in a book to be kept for the purpose of any notice given by any member or any officer of the Council of a pecuniary interest in a contract or any other matter and the book shall be open during reasonable hours of the day for examination by any member.

**24. UNAUTHORISED ACTIVITIES**

No member of the Council or of any committee or sub-committee shall in the name or on behalf of the Council

(a) inspect any lands or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect, or

(b) issue orders unless authorised to do so by the Councillor the relevant committee or sub-committee.

**25. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) shall be the Clerk to the Council or a councillor who has been formally designated by the Council.

**26. Budgetary Control**

(a) Expenditure on revenue account may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved budget.

(b) No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the appropriate budget unless the Council has approved a transfer.

(c) The RFO/Internal Auditor shall quarterly provide the Council with a statement of income and expenditure to date under each heading of the approved annual revenue and capital budgets.

(d) The RFO may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500.00. The RFO shall report such action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

(e) All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

**27. Estimates**

(a) The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its meeting in the month of November.

**28. Accounting and Audit**

(a) All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996.

(b) The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual accounts of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them to and report thereon to the Council.

29. **Banking Arrangements and Cheques**

(a) The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council.

(b) A schedule of the payment of money shall be prepared by the RFO and presented to the Council together with the relevant invoices for payment.

© Electric transfers/Cheques and other orders drawn on the bank accounts in accordance with the schedule referred to in the previous paragraph shall be signed by two Councillors.

30. **Payment of Accounts.**

(a) All payments shall be effected by electronic transfer/cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.

(b) All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Councillor issuing the order. Before certifying an invoice the Councillor concerned should satisfy themselves that the work, goods or services to which they relate have been carried out, examined and approved.

(c) Duly certified invoices shall be passed to the RFO who shall examine them in relation to arithmetical accuracy and authorisation, and code them to the appropriate expenditure head. They shall take all possible steps to settle all invoices submitted, which are in order, within 30 days of their receipt.

31. **Loans and Investments**

(a) All investments and borrowings should be set up by the RFO in the name of the Council. Changes to loans and investments should be instigated by the Council when necessary.

(b) All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

32. **Income**

(a) The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

(b) Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be ultimately responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.



(c) Any bad debts shall be reported to the Council.

(d) All sums received on behalf of the Council shall either be paid to the RFO for banking, or be banked by a Councillor collecting the money into the Council account.

33. **Orders for work, goods and services**

(a) An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services. Copies of orders issued shall be maintained.

(b) All officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. A Councillor issuing an official order is to ensure as far as possible that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction.

34. **Contracts**

Every contract made by the Council shall comply with these orders.

(a) The lowest quotations shall be accepted for all work, services or supplies unless it is agreed by the Council that better value would be obtained by accepting a quotation other than the lowest.

(b) Where the estimated value of work, services or supplies authorised by the Council is £5,000.00 or more three written quotations shall be obtained and the lowest quotation shall be accepted unless it is agreed by the Council that better value would be obtained by accepting a quotation other than the lowest.

35. **Payments under contracts for building or other construction works**

(a) Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be reported to the Council.

36. **Insurance**

(a) The RFO shall affect all insurances and process all claims on behalf of the Council.

(b) The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

(c) The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim.

37. **Revision of Financial Regulations**

(a) It shall be the duty of the RFO to review the financial regulations of the Council from time to time and make such recommendations to the Council as he/she considers are required.

**38. COUNCILLOR'S CONTACT WITH THE PRESS**

To avoid misunderstanding, Councillors are requested to restrict their comments to minuted views or decisions of the Parish Council. If in any doubt, the caller should be referred to the Chairman. Any personal opinion should be clearly specified as such.

**39. STANDING ORDERS TO BE GIVEN TO COUNCILLORS**

A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each member by the Clerk upon delivery to him or her of the Councillor's declaration of acceptance of Office,

Standing orders amended February 2024