

QUERNMORE PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

1. Meetings

1.1 The minimum three clear days' notice of a meeting shall be given to members and the public and published as required by law.

1.2 The quorum for meetings shall be one-third of the total number of members or three, whichever is greater.

1.3 If a meeting becomes inquorate, it shall be adjourned and the business carried forward to a future meeting.

1.4 The Chair (or Vice-Chair if the Chair is absent) shall preside. If both are absent, members shall elect a Chair for the meeting.

1.5 In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.

1.6 In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of Council shall take place on such a day in May as the Council decides.

1.7 In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least 3 other ordinary meetings shall take place on such dates and times as the Council decides.

1.8 The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice Chair (if there is one) of the Council.

1.9 Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include

- I. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
- II. Receipt of minutes of the last meeting of any committees;
- III. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- IV. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- V. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks
- VI. Review of Councils policies, procedures and practices in obligations under the freedom of information and data protection legislation.

2. Chairmanship and Order of Debate

- 2.1 The Chair shall direct the order of debate and maintain order.
- 2.2 A motion shall not be passed unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- 2.3 Members shall address the Chair and avoid personal attacks or offensive remarks.
- 2.4 The Chair may adjourn the meeting if it becomes disorderly.

3. Voting

- 3.1 Voting shall be by show of hands or, if requested, by a signed ballot.
- 3.2 A member may request their vote be recorded in the minutes.
- 3.3 The Chair may vote and has a casting vote if there is a tie.

4. Minutes

- 4.1 Draft minutes shall be circulated to members within 15 working days of a meeting.
- 4.2 The minutes shall be approved and signed at the next meeting.
- 4.3 Approved minutes shall be published on the parish council website or noticeboard.

5. Committees and Working Groups

- 5.1 The council may appoint committees and working groups with defined terms of reference.
- 5.2 Membership and responsibilities shall be agreed by full council.
- 5.3 Committees shall report their activities and recommendations to full council.

6. Finance

- 6.1 The Council shall appoint an appropriate person to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.
- 6.2 All financial transactions shall be conducted in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 6.3 The council shall review and approve a budget and precept annually.

6.3 Payments shall be authorised by resolution of the council and documented.

6.4 Payments shall be authorised by 2 additional authorised signatories to the Clerk via cheque or bank transfer.

6.4 Processing of payments shall be in accordance with the financial regulations policy.

6.5 Accounting records shall be kept up to date and accurate and account balances disseminated to Council each meeting held.

7. Code of Conduct

7.1 All members shall observe the Council's Code of Conduct.

7.2 Members must declare any interests in matters to be discussed and withdraw where required.

7.3 In the event of a complaint whereby a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing orders, report this to the Council.

7.4 Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action is to take against him or her. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

8. Public Participation

8.1 Members of the public may speak at council meetings during a designated time (e.g. 15 minutes total, 3 minutes per person).

8.2 The Chair may curtail contributions if they are repetitive or inappropriate.

8.3 The public forum is not a minuted verbatim, but items may be highlighted in the minutes e.g. "a member of the public raised an item regarding....." These do not form part of the minute actions of the meeting but for information purposes.

9. Freedom of Information and Transparency

9.1 The council shall respond to requests for information in line with the Freedom of Information Act.

9.2 The council shall publish required documents, including agendas, minutes, financial reports, and declarations of interest.

10. Amendment and Review of Standing Orders

10.1 Standing Orders shall be reviewed annually.

10.2 They may be amended by resolution of the council with a majority vote.

Appendix: Definitions

- **Chair** – The elected leader of the parish council.
 - **Clear Days** – Excludes the day of posting, the day of the meeting, Sundays, and bank holidays.
 - **Quorum** – The minimum number of members required for the meeting to proceed.
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