

Walberswick Parish Council Standing Orders

1. MEETINGS

- a. **Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b. **When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to councillors and the public, the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.**
- c. **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- d. Subject to standing order 1(c) above, members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.
- e. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing order 1(d) above shall not exceed 15 minutes.
- f. Subject to standing order 1(e) above, each member of the public, in respect of business itemised on the agenda, shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- g. In accordance with standing order 1(d) above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or debate.
- h. In accordance with standing order 1(g) above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- i. A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- j. A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chairman may at any time permit an individual to be seated when speaking.
- k. Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Chairman
- l. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Chairman shall direct the order of speaking.
- m. **Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's consent.**
- n. **In accordance with standing order 1(c) above, the press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- o. **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman.**
- p. **The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q. **Subject to model standing order 1 (y) below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors or Councillors with voting rights present and voting thereon.**
- r. **The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an**

equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote. (See also standing orders 2 (i) and (j) below.)

- s. **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**
- t. **The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following.:**
 - i. **The time and place of the meeting;**
 - ii. **the names of the councillors present and absent;**
 - iii. **interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights**
 - iv. **whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting**
 - v. **If there was a public participation session; and**
 - vi. **the resolutions made.**
- u. **A Councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on the matter.**
- v. **The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors in respect of the entire meeting.**
- w. **An interest arising from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes. (See also standing orders 7 and 8 below.)**
- x. **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than 3.**
- y. **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. Any outstanding business of a meeting shall be transacted at a following meeting.**
- z. **Meetings shall not exceed a period of 3 hours.**

2. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

See also standing order 1 above

- a. **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**
- b. **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.**
- c. **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 7.30pm.**
- d. **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.**
- e. **The election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.**
- f. **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g. **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

- h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j **Following** the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the order of business shall include;
 - i. In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their declarations of acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees.
 - iii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees and other local authorities.
 - iv. Review of the terms of references for committees.
 - v. Receipt of nominations to existing committees.
 - vi. Appointment of any new committees, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them.
 - vii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.
 - viii. Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.
 - ix. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.
 - x. In a year of elections, if a Council's period of eligibility to exercise the general power of competence expired the day before the annual meeting, to review and make arrangements to reaffirm eligibility.
 - xi. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment.
 - xii. Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
 - xiii. Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.
 - xiv. Establishing or reviewing the Council's complaints procedure.
 - xv. Establishing or reviewing the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
 - xvi. Establishing or reviewing the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media
 - xvii. Setting the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council for the year ahead.

3. PROPER OFFICER

- a The Council's Proper Officer shall be the Clerk. The Clerk shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in standing orders.
- b The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following.
 - i. **Sign and serve on councillors by delivery or post or email at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting.**

OR

Upon the Council having first resolved that service of summons on councillors confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda for a meeting by delivery or post at their residences at least 3 clear days before a meeting is not expedient 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 3 clear days before the meeting provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.
- ii. **Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
 - iii. **Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office, in accordance with standing order 3(b)i above.**
 - iv. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.
 - v. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
 - vi. Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.
 - vii. Retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.
 - viii. Keep proper records required before and after meetings;
 - ix. Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.
 - x. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
 - xi. Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.
 - xii. Arrange for legal deeds to be signed by 2 councillors and witnessed (*See also model standing orders 14(a) and (b).*)
 - xiii. Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
 - xiv. Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
 - xv. Refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council as soon as possible after receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
 - xvi. Retain custody of the seal of the Council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
 - xvii. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.
 - xviii. Manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme.

4. MOTIONS REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

- a In accordance with standing order 3(b)(iii) above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the next meeting.
- b The Proper Officer may, before including a motion in the agenda received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- c If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer in clear and certain language at least 4 clear days before the meeting.
- d If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda.
- e Having consulted the Chairman or councillors pursuant to standing order 4(d) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.
- f Notice of every motion received in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be numbered in the order received and shall be entered in a book, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.
- g Every motion rejected in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be duly recorded with a note by the Proper Officer giving reasons for its rejection in a book for that purpose, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.

- h** Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

5. MOTIONS NOT REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

- a** Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.
- i.** To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
 - ii.** To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - iii.** To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
 - iv.** To move to a vote.
 - v.** To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
 - vi.** To close or adjourn debate.
 - vii.** To refer by formal delegation a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee.
 - viii.** To appoint a committee or sub-committee or any councillors (including substitutes) thereto.
 - ix.** To receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee.
 - x.** To dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
 - xi.** To note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or sub-committee.
 - xii.** To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a sub- committee or an employee.
 - xiii.** To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant.
 - xiv.** To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
 - xv.** To extend the time limit for speeches.
 - xvi.** To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
 - xvii.** To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
 - xviii.** To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.
 - xix.** **To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.**
 - xx.** To adjourn the meeting.
 - xxi.** To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.
 - xxii.** To answer questions from councillors.
- b** If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a committee or sub-committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such committee or sub-committee or employee provided that the Chairman may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience.

6. RULES OF DEBATE

- a** Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Chairman's direction for reasons of expedience.
- b** Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- c** Subject to standing order 3(b)(iii) above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.
- d** A motion to amend an original or substantive motion shall not be considered unless proper notice has been given after the original or substantive motion has been seconded and notice of such amendment, shall, if required by the Chairman, be reduced to writing and handed to the Chairman who shall determine the order in which they are considered.
- e** A Councillor may move amendments to his own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.
- f** Any amendment to a motion shall be either:
- i.** to leave out words;
 - ii.** to add words;
 - iii.** to leave out words and add other words.
- g** A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.

- h Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.
- i Subject to Standing Order 6(h) above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.
- j Pursuant to standing order 6(h) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a councillor, is limited to one.
- k If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.
- l If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- m The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment has no right of reply, at the end of the debate.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion either at the end of the debate of the first amendment or at the very end of debate and immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Subject to standing orders 6(m) and (n) above, a councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- p During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his decision shall be final.
- r With the consent of the seconder and/or of the meeting, a motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer. A councillor shall not speak upon the said motion or amendment unless permission for the withdrawal of the motion or amendment has been refused.
- s Subject to standing order 6(o) above, when a councillor's motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be silent or for him to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting;
 - ix. to suspend any standing order, except those which are mandatory.
- t In respect of standing order 6(s)(iv) above, the Chairman shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is seconded and put to the vote. The Chairman shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.
- u Excluding motions moved understanding order 1(s) above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing orders 1(d)–(i) above

- a All councillors shall undertake training in the code of conduct at the Council's convenience.
- b All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.

- d Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- e **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- f A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made [by the Proper Officer] OR [by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required] and that decision is final.
- g A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- h Subject to standing orders 7(d) and (f) above, dispensations requests shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required] OR [at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required].
- i **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:**
 - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

8. QUESTIONS

- a A councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided 5 clear days notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.
- b Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.
- c Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

9. DRAFT MINUTES

- a If a copy of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting has been circulated to councillors no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting they shall be taken as read.
- b 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 shall be raised in accordance with standing order 5(a)(iv) above.
- c 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.

- d If the Chair 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 term or to the same effect; “The Chair of the meeting does not believe that the minutes of the (xx) held on [date] in respect of (xxx) were a correct record but in view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings”
- e 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.

10. DISORDERLY CONDUCT

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the Chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If, in the opinion of the Chairman, there has been a breach of standing order 10(a) above, the Chairman shall express that opinion and thereafter any councillor (including the Chairman) may move that the person be silenced or excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
- c If a resolution made in accordance with standing order 10(b) above, is disobeyed, the Chairman may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce it and/or he may adjourn the meeting.

11. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 3 councillors of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
- b When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 11(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

12. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman’s casting vote.

13. EXPENDITURE

- a Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the Council’s financial regulations.
- b The Council’s financial regulations shall be reviewed once a year.**
- c The Council’s financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council’s functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.**

14. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing order 5(a)(xvi) above

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.
- b In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 14(a) above, any two members of the Council, may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

15. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

See also standing order 1 above

- a The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council**

within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.

16. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

See also standing order 1 above

- a The Council may appoint advisory committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.
- b Advisory committees and any sub-committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.

17. ESTIMATES/PRECEPTS

- a **The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year** at its meeting before the end of January.
- b Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than December.
- a Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees shall be available for inspection by councillors.

18. CANVASSING OF AN RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS

- a Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirement of this standing order to every candidate.
- b A councillor or a member of a committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment for promotion; but, nevertheless, such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.
- c This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for employment.

19. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

- a Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise) inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee, and request a copy of the same purpose. The minutes of the meeting of the Council and its committees shall be available for inspection by councillors.

20. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

- a Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- b A Councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 20(a) above may be removed from a committee by a resolution of the Council.
- C The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

21. MATTERS AFFECTING COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

- a If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 1(c) above.
- b The Chairman or, in his absence, the Vice-Chairman shall notify any absence occasioned by illness or urgency and that person shall report such absence to the Council at its next meeting.
- c The Chairman or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the

performance and/or appraisal of the Clerk and shall keep a written record of it. The review and/or appraisal shall be reported back and shall be subject to approval by resolution by the Council.

- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior employee shall contact the Chairman or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance and disciplinary matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, this shall be communicated to another member of the Council, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meeting relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.
- g The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected.
- h Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.
- i Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 21(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Clerk and/or the Chairman of the Council.

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

- a All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.
- b In accordance with the Council's policy in respect to dealing with the press and/or other media, councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media.

23. LIAISON WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the councillor of the District and County Council representing its electoral ward.
- b Unless the Council otherwise orders, a copy of each letter sent to the District or County shall be sent to the District or County councillor representing its electoral ward.

24. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the accounting records and systems of internal control;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments;
 - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 24(c) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value of less than £5,000.
- b Financial regulations should be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.**
- c Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £5,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 24(d) below.**
- d Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:
 - i. a public notice of intention to place a contract to be placed in a local newspaper;
 - ii. a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - iii. tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Proper Officer by a stated date and time;
 - iv. tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Proper Officer and

at least one member of the Council;

v. tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of Council or Committee.

e Neither the Council, nor any committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.

f **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No.5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with EU procurement rules.**

25. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council [(Wales) [County Borough] OR [County Council]] that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11 above, report this to the council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined [and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(d) below].
- c The council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- d 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 to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

26. VARIATION, REVOCATION AND SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

- a Any or every part of the standing orders, except those which are mandatory by law, may be suspended by resolution.
- b A motion to permanently add to or to vary or to revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders not mandatory by law shall not be carried unless a majority of the councillors at a meeting of the Council vote in favour of the same.

27. STANDING ORDERS TO BE GIVEN TO COUNCILLORS

- a The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor upon delivery of his declaration of acceptance of office.
- b The Chairman's decision as to the application of standing orders at meetings shall be final.
- c A councillor's failure to observe standing orders more than 3 times in one meeting may result in him being excluded from the meeting in accordance with standing orders.

28. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of [Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England)]
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council's financial regulations.

- c. As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the council's receipts and payments for the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- d. The year end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March. A completed draft annual return shall be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The annual return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

29. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

- a. Requests for information held by the council shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- b. Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the chairman of the Council.

Adopted at the Meeting of Walberswick Parish Council held 3rd February 2014