
LITTLE SOMERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Standing Orders 2023

1. Councillors

- 1.1 Following the election or co-option to the Council, each Councillor will be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders of the Council. They will sign the form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk of the Council, or Chairman.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct adopted by the Council will define when a Councillor will declare a personal or prejudicial interest in an item for discussion at a Council meeting. The Councillor will declare that interest and the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.3 With regard to planning applications: if there is a personal interest a statement may be made to the Parish Council meeting but then the person must leave the meeting while discussion takes place.
- 1.4 Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a 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.
- 1.5 All Councillors will observe the Code of Conduct at all times when on Council business and no member will act in such a way that will bring the Council into disrepute, behave offensively in meetings or obstruct the Council's business.

2. Annual Parish and Parish Council Meetings

- 2.1. If the Annual Parish Meeting is in an election year it must be held within 14 days after that election. If it is not an election year then the annual meeting will take place on an appropriate day in May.
- 2.2. If the outgoing Chairman is available then he/she will preside until a new Chairman has been elected. The first business of the Annual Parish Council Meeting will be the election of the Chairman and to receive their acceptance of office.
- 2.3. The retiring Chairman will report on the activities of the Council for the preceding year.

3. Meetings

- 3.1. Meetings will be held in appropriate, accessible accommodation. The meetings will not be held in premises used for the supply of alcohol unless no other accommodation is available
- 3.2. An agreed frequency of meetings will be decided at the Annual Meeting and Councillors will be advised of the meetings by the issue of a summons and agenda normally by email, but where this is not possible, by post or by hand. The agenda must be issued at least three clear business days before the meeting.
- 3.3. Public notices will be posted on the website and in a conspicuous place informing members of the public of the venue, time, date and business to be transacted at the meeting. The notice will be posted at least three clear days before the meeting.
- 3.4. Meetings will be open to the public and press but they may be temporarily excluded from the meeting if the business is declared as confidential.
- 3.5. The agenda for the meeting includes a **Public Question Time** which is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Parish Council on any Council matter before the meeting commences. Every effort will be made to give accurate answers to all questions but in some cases further research may be necessary when an answer will be given as soon as possible.
- 3.6. The Council may only take decisions on items specified on the agenda. If agreed by the Chairman, any urgent items not on the agenda may be discussed, but no decision may be made at that meeting.
- 3.7. The Chairman of the Council will preside at the meeting and will be responsible for the conduct of that meeting. If the Chairman is not present then the first matter on the agenda will be the election of a Councillor who will chair the meeting. Whoever chairs the meeting will assume the duties of the Chairman for that meeting.
- 3.8. The quorum for Little Somerford Parish Council will be three members. If there are insufficient members present then no business will be transacted and a fresh notice will be issued to reconvene the meeting at a later date.
- 3.9. If at any time during the meeting it ceases to be quorate then the meeting will be adjourned and any further business carried forward to the next meeting when convened.
- 3.10. In decisions about legal, statutory and financial matters voting at the meeting shall be by a show of hands unless a majority of Councillors wants a ballot. Only the proposer and seconder will be recorded in the minutes unless a Councillor requests that their vote is noted. A Councillor may also request that the Clerk

records how each Councillor has voted, including abstentions. Any request of this nature will be made before moving on to the next business.

- 3.11.** In cases of equal votes the Chairman (or other person presiding) will have a second or casting vote.
- 3.12.** A minute of the meeting will be kept by the Clerk or other nominated person in the Clerk's absence. The minutes which are circulated will be draft minutes until they are approved by the Parish Council at their next meeting and signed by the person presiding at the meeting.

Finance

3.13.1 Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

The Responsible Finance Officer is a statutory office and appointed by the Council. The Clerk of the Council will take on the role of managing the Council's financial affairs in accordance with Proper Practices.

3.13.2 Estimates and Precept

Estimates of income and expenditure will be compiled for the Council's consideration throughout the year and detail actual figures against estimates. Significant underspends or overspends will be brought to the attention of the Council and action taken to address any discrepancies.

3.13.3 Income and Expenditure

The Council will review the budget not later than the end of December in preparation for the Precept being agreed and submitted to Wiltshire Council in January. During the year the budget will be reviewed against actual expenditure and income. Amendments to the budget will be discussed in Council and changes minuted.

- 3.13.4** No Councillor may commit any expenditure without explicit authority from the Parish Council.

4 Emergency Business

Should it not be appropriate to convene a special meeting then any emergency business will be handled by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and one other Councillor. Actions will be reported promptly to the Council and recorded at the next meeting.

5 Assets

The Clerk will ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets is maintained by the Council. It will be reviewed annually in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets if appropriate.

6 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment will be undertaken annually of all the activities of the Council and a report approved by the Council. This assessment will also cover the appropriateness of the internal audit arrangements.

7 Insurance

Following the annual risk assessment the Council will review the level of insurance cover and ensure it is adequate and appropriate for the activities of the Council. Minimum cover will include Public Liability, Employer's Liability, Money and Fidelity Guarantee,

8 Freedom of Information

The Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Clerk will ensure that the Council conforms to the requirements of the Act allowing public access to the appropriate documents.

9 Standing Orders

- 9.1. These standing orders will be reviewed annually by the Clerk and the Chairman, and any amendments will be decided by the Council.
- 9.2. During the course of meetings of the Council, the Chairman's decision as to the interpretation of the standing orders will be final.
- 9.3. The Council may resolve to suspend a Standing Order, in order to progress the business of the Council, and such decision will be included in the minutes. The suspension will not be taken lightly and it will be for a specific time.

These Standing Orders were adopted at a meeting of Little Somerford Parish Council on 7 March 2023

Signed



Chair

