

STOKE ST GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

Adopted 14 November 2016

Some clause numbers may not be consecutive; this is because these Standing Orders are based on a model from the Somerset Association of Local Councils from which some clauses have been omitted, but we are maintaining synchronised numbering in order to simplify future amendments.

Clauses in bold are statutory requirements.

Words in italics are to assist or for cross-referencing, and are not part of the formal Standing Orders.

1 Meetings

- 1a **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.**
- 1b **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, a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.**
*Local Government Act 1972 section 270 includes the following definitions and interpretations:
"Christmas break" means the period beginning with the last week day before Christmas Day and ending with the first week day after Christmas Day which is not a bank holiday. "Easter break" means the period beginning with the Thursday before and ending with the Tuesday after Easter Day.*
- 1c **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.**
- 1d 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. 1e The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing order 1(d) above shall be at the Chairman's discretion.
- 1f Subject to standing order 1(e) above, each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than (5) minutes.
- 1g 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 an immediate response or debate.
- 1i A brief summary record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- 1k Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Chairman.
- 1l 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.
- 1m **Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior (written) consent.** (*Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (7)*)
- 1n **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.**

- 1o **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 (if any).**
- 1p **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.**
- 1q **Subject to model standing order 1 (y) below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors present and voting thereon.**
- 1r **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.)**
- 1s **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 the vote is taken and before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**
- 1t **The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present and absent.**
- 1u **If prior to a meeting, a Councillor has submitted reasons for his absence at the meeting which is then approved by a resolution, such resolution shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the approval was given.**
- 1v **The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors in respect of the entire meeting.**
- 1w **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.)**
- 1x **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.**
- 1y **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be adjourned. Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be transacted at a following meeting or delegated to the Clerk in consultation with such members as may be available, unless specifically prohibited.**
- 1z **Meetings should not exceed a period of 3 hours.**

2 Ordinary council meetings *(See also standing order 1 above)*

- 2a **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.**
- 2b **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.**
- 2d **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.**
- 2f **The election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.**
- 2g **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.**
- 2h **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.**

- 2i **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.**
- 2j **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.**
- 2k 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 be as follows.
 - i In an election year, delivery by councillors of their declarations of acceptance of office, and any resolution to extend the statutory time limit for delivery.
 - ii Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council.
 - iii Elect PC representatives to committees and other bodies.
- 2l In the event of severe weather conditions or any other emergency the Clerk may, in consultation with the Chairman of Council, cancel any meeting of Council, a committee or a sub-committee and shall give immediate notice of such cancellation to as many members of council as is practicable.

3 Proper Officer

- 3a The Council's Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or such other employee as may be nominated by the Council from time to time or (ii) such other employee appointed by the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer during the Proper Officer's absence. The Proper Officer and the employee appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in standing orders.
- 3b The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following.

Serve on councillors by delivery or post a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council at least 3 clear days before the meeting.

 - i **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 or a sub-committee provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
 - ii Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) below, include in the agenda all motions received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 6 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it.
 - 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.
- xv Refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council within 2 working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
- xvii Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.
- xviii Declare any casual vacancy arising in the office of councillor following resignation, ceasing to be qualified, disqualification or loss of office due to failure to attend; and then to carry out the necessary steps to proceed towards the filling of the vacancy as appropriate.

4 Motions requiring written notice

- 4a 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.
- 4b 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.
- 4c 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 5 clear days before the meeting.
- 4d 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.
- 4e 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.
- 4g Every motion rejected in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be duly recorded in the minutes of the next meeting after rejection..
- 4h 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

- 5a Motions on the agenda in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.
 - i To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.

- ii To approve the absences of councillors.
- iii To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
- iv To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
- v To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- vi To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
- vii To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
- viii To close or adjourn debate.
- ix To refer by formal delegation a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee.
- x To appoint a committee or sub-committee or any councillors (including substitutes) thereto.
- xi To receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee.
- xii dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
- xiii To note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or sub-committee.
- xiv To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a sub- committee or an employee.
- xv To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant.
- xvi To authorise legal deeds signed by two councillors and witnessed.
(See standing orders 14(a) and (b) below.)
- xvii To authorise the payment of monies up to (£500).
- xviii To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
- xix To extend the time limit for speeches.
- xx To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
- xxi To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
- xxii To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.
- xxiii **To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.**
- xxiv To adjourn the meeting.
- xxv To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.
- xxvi To answer questions from councillors.
- xxvii Any other motion at the discretion of the Chairman.

6 Rules of debate

- 6a 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.
- 6b Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- 6c A motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.
- 6p 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.
- 6q A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his decision shall be final.

6r 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.

7 Code of Conduct *(see also SSG PC Members Code of Conduct, 14-11-16)*

7a The intention behind this section is to prevent conflicts of interest without limiting the information available to the Council in reaching decisions. All councillors shall acquaint themselves with and observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

7b Pecuniary Interest

A councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest if, by virtue of any employment, sponsorship, contract (existing or foreseeable) or any other connection with the business in hand, they or their family is in a position to derive direct financial benefit (or loss) from a decision of the council. *(See Code of Conduct Appendix A.)*

Councillors with a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting must leave the room during the relevant item of business, unless permitted to remain following the grant of a dispensation.

7c Other Interests

A councillor has an "Other Interest" if a close personal friendship or association, or the membership of another body, is likely, when discussing the matter in hand, to compromise their objectivity in assessing what is in the best interests of the Parish as a whole. *(See Code of Conduct Appendix B.)*

Councillors with a non-pecuniary interest may (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must not vote unless granted a dispensation to do so, and may be asked to leave the room.

7d Dispensations

If it is felt that it would be helpful in giving a better understanding of the matter under discussion, any councillor with any form of interest may be granted a dispensation to speak about the relevant item, provided that a majority of the other councillors present vote in favour. Application for such dispensation may be made during the meeting, either by the interested councillor/s or by the chairman. The dispensation would normally permit speaking but not voting, though in exceptional circumstances the Council might choose to give a dispensation to vote. The interested councillor/s may choose or be asked to leave the room during the vote to grant a dispensation, and/or any vote on the item in which they have an interest (and not a vote).

8 Questions

8a A councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided 7 clear days notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.

8b 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.

8c Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

9 Minutes

9a 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.

- 9b 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.
- 9c 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.
- 9d If the Chairman 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 terms or to the same effect:
- “The Chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the majority of the () and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- 9e Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, any previous draft minutes or recordings of the meeting may be destroyed.

10 Disorderly conduct

- 10a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly.
- 10b 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.
- 10c 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.

12 Voting on appointments (multiple rounds)

- 12a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council, the choice should be made by paper ballot, conducted in public, unless a majority of the council votes in favour of using a simple show of hands. Each voting member of the council should write their choice on a slip of paper and sign it. The completed slips should be checked and counted by the clerk.
- 12b If at the end of the first round of voting, no candidate has an absolute majority, the candidate with the lowest number of votes should drop out, and a second round of votes should be cast in the same way. The chairman's paper vote should be taken as a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- 12c Should there be a tie for the lowest number of votes, just those candidates with the least votes should be voted on again in order to eliminate one, before the remaining candidates are carried over to the next round of voting. This procedure should be repeated until one candidate has an absolute majority.
- 12d When more than one position is to be filled, each voter should write the names of the required number of candidates on their voting slips in order of preference. All the names should be counted equally, and voting should proceed as above, eliminating the candidates with the lowest number of votes, until the required number of candidates has been chosen by a clear majority once all but one extra candidate have been eliminated. In the case of a tie, the candidate with the highest number of first preference votes should be chosen.

- 12e The clerk should minute the names of successful candidate/s, but does not need to minute the number of votes cast for each. All ballot papers should be destroyed by the clerk once voting has been completed without objection.

13 Expenditure

- 13a Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
- 13b **The Council's financial regulations shall be reviewed once a year.**
- 13c **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 5a xvi above)*

- 14a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.
- 14b 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 Committees *(See also Standing Order 1 above.)*

- 15a The Council may, at its annual meeting, appoint a staffing committee and other standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as may be necessary, and:
- i shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii may permit committees to determine the dates of their meetings;
 - ii shall appoint and determine the term of office of councillor or non-councillor members of such a committee (unless the appointment of non-councillors is prohibited by law) so as to hold office no later than the next annual meeting;
 - vi may in accordance with standing orders, dissolve a committee at any time.
 - vii The Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council may elect to be a voting member of any committee or sub-committee other than the Staffing Committee.

16 Sub-committees *(See also Standing Order 1 above.)*

- 16a Unless there is a Council resolution to the contrary, every committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by resolution of the committee.

17 Extraordinary meetings *(See also Standing Order 1 above.)*

- 17a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- 17b **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.**

- 17c The Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee at any time.
- 17d If the Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 councillors, those 2 councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee (or a sub-committee). The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the 2 councillors.

18 Advisory committees

- 18a The Council may appoint advisory committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.
- 18b Advisory committees and any sub-committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.

19 Accounts and financial statements

- 19a All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, which shall be reviewed at least annually.
- 19b The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments for the each quarter and the balances held at the end of a quarter. This statement should include a comparison with the budget for the financial year. A Financial Statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March shall be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The Accounting Statements of the Council (which are subject to external audit), including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for formal approval before 30 June.

20 Estimates/precepts

- 20a The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its meeting before the end of January.
- 20b Any committee requesting financial assistance from the Parish Council shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure required for the coming year no later than November.

21 Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors

- 23d Councillors should not solicit on behalf of friends or associates for contracts or appointments in the gift of the council. Councillors may inform the council of potential candidates, but must openly declare any association or interest.

22 Inspection of Documents

- 22a 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.

23 Unauthorised activities

- 23a Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee:
- i inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii issue orders, instructions or directions.

24 Confidential business

- 24a Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature.
- 24b A councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 24(a) above may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council.

25 Power of General Competence

- 25a **Before exercising the power of general competence, a meeting of the full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.**
- 25b **The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 25 (a) above was made and has to be renewed by Council Resolution at the annual meeting of the Council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections.**
- 25c **After the expiry of its preceding period of eligibility, the Council continues to be an eligible council solely for the purpose of completing any activity undertaken in the exercise of the power to promote well-being which was not completed before the expiry of the Council's preceding period of eligibility referred to in standing order 25(b) above.**

26 Matters affecting council employees

- 26a If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council or [the staffing committee] has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 1(c) above. It shall also consider whether other councillors shall be excluded to ensure proper process in any Appeal.
- 26b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior employee shall notify the Chairman of [the staffing committee or, in his absence, the Vice-Chairman of the staffing committee of any absence occasioned by illness or urgency and that person shall report such absence to the staffing committee at its next meeting.
- 26c The Chairman of the staffing committee 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 staffing committee.
- 26d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior employee shall contact the Chairman of the staffing committee or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman of the staffing committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the staffing committee.

- 26e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance and disciplinary matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by Clerk relates to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the staffing committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the staffing committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the staffing committee.
- 26f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall keep written records of all meetings relating to their performance, and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters.
- 26g 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.
- h26 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.
- 26i Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records referred to in standing orders 26(g) and (h) above if so justified.
- 26j Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 26(g) and (h) above shall be provided only to the Clerk and/or the Chairman of the Council or of the staffing committee.

27 Freedom of Information Act 2000

- 27a All requests for information held by the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 27b Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the chairman of the Parish Council. The Chairman shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 including exercising the powers of the Proper Officer in respect of Freedom of Information requests set out under standing order 3(b)(x) above.

28 Relations with the press/media

- 28a 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.

29 Liaison with District and County or Unitary Councillors

- 29a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the councillors of the District and County or Unitary Council representing its electoral ward.

30 Financial matters *(See financial regulation October 2016.)*

- 30a 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 30(b) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value of less than [£60,000].

30b Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £60,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 30(c) below.

30c 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.

30d Neither the Council, nor any committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.

30e 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.

31 Allegations of breaches of the code of conduct

31a On receipt of a notification that there has been an alleged breach of the code of conduct the Proper Officer shall notify the chairman of the Council.

31b Where the notification relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of the Council of that fact, who, upon receipt of such notification, shall nominate a person to assume the duties of the Proper Officer set out in the remainder of this standing order, who shall continue to act in respect of that matter as such until the complaint is resolved.

31c Where a notification relates to a complaint made by an employee (not being the Proper Officer) the Proper Officer shall ensure that the employee in question does not deal with any aspect of the complaint.

31d The subject matter of notifications shall be confidential and, insofar as it is possible to do so by law, the Council (including the Proper Officer and the Chairman of the Council) shall take all steps considered necessary, to maintain confidentiality.

31g References in standing order 31 to a notification shall be taken to refer to a communication of any kind which relates to a breach or an alleged breach of the code of conduct by a councillor.

32 Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders

- 32a Any or every part of the standing orders, except those which are mandatory by law, may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.
- 32b 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 two-thirds of the councillors at a meeting of the Council vote in favour of the same.

33 Standing orders to be given to councillors

- 33a 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.
- 33b The Chairman's decision as to the application of standing orders at meetings shall be final.
- 33c A councillor's failure to observe standing orders more than 3 times in one meeting may result in him or her being excluded from the meeting in accordance with standing orders.

*Adopted by Stoke St Gregory Parish Council on 14 November 2016, amended 8 May 2017
Reviewed 9 May 2022 Minute no APCM 7*