



STANDING ORDERS

October 2015 (amended) and approved 7th October
2015

Index of Standing Orders

1. Stratton Audley Parish Council.....	4
Introduction.....	4
2. Meetings of the Parish Council.....	4
3. Annual Meeting of the Council.....	4
4. Ordinary Meetings of the Council.....	5
5. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees.....	5
6. Meetings generally	6
7. Disorderly Conduct	10
8. Committees and Sub Committees	11
9. Urgent business	11
10. Previous resolutions	12
11. Voting on appointments	12
12. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Clerk	12
13. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice.....	13
14. Handling confidential or sensitive information	14
15. Draft minutes	14
16. Code of conduct and dispensations.....	15
17. Code of conduct complaints.....	16
18. The Clerk (Proper Officer)	17
19. Responsible Financial Officer	18
20. Accounts and accounting statements	18
21. Financial controls and procurement	20
22. Handling staff matters	21
23. Requests for information	22
24. Relations with the press/media	23
25. Execution and sealing of legal deeds	23
26. Communicating with District and County councillors.....	23
27. Restrictions on councillor activities	24
28. Standing orders generally	24

1. Stratton Audley Parish Council.

Introduction

Stratton Audley Parish Council comprises five Councillors elected to represent the Parishioners of the Parish. It has agreed the following standing orders to clarify to its residents how the Council conducts its business. The Standing Orders include statutory requirements and optional rules which put into place practical arrangements to enable the Council to carry out its duties in an efficient and effective way. Items in **bold type** have statutory force.

2. Meetings of the Parish Council

- a. Meetings normally take the following forms:-
 - i. The Annual meeting
 - ii. Ordinary Council meetings
 - iii. Extra ordinary meetings.
- b. The Parish Council will also arrange an Annual Assembly of the residents of the Parish of Stratton Audley, in the past referred to as the Annual Open Meeting of the Parish. This is not a Parish Council meeting but tradition has it that the Chairman of the PC chairs the meeting on behalf of the community.

3. Annual Meeting of the Council

- a. **The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will normally be held during the month of May in every year**
- b. **In a year where a Parish Council election takes place the Annual Meeting must be held within 14 days of the new Councillors taking up their office.**
- c. **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council.**

- d. **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. 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.**
- e. **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.**
- f. **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 may exercise give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

4. Ordinary Meetings of the Council

- a. **The Council is required by law to hold at least 3 meetings every year in addition to the Annual Meeting.** Stratton Audley Parish Council has resolved to hold *future* meetings on the first Wednesday of every month, unless cancelled through lack of business
- b. Meetings of Stratton Audley Parish Council will normally take place in the Hunt Room of the Red Lion Public House at 7.00pm, **there being no other suitable premises available in the Parish free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**

5. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees

- 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 seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors requesting the meeting.**

6. Meetings generally

- a. **Meetings must be convened by giving at least 5 clear working days' notice, unless the meeting contains urgent business of the Council (as certified by the Chairman) in which case a meeting of the Parish Council may be convened by the Chairman on giving 3 days' notice and of the Parish Assembly on giving 7 days' notice.**
- b. **All Meetings shall normally be open to the public and the press. Only if publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed may the public and press be excluded. Any such exclusion must be by a resolution of the Council which explains the reason for the exclusion. The resolution to exclude the public and press continues only for the meeting at which the resolution was passed.**
- c. **The Council has agreed that it will normally designate a maximum period of 30 minutes for public participation when members of the public may make representations, ask or answer questions and or give evidence to the Council, but the Chairman may suspend the meeting to allow members of the public to participate at other times, if in his/her opinion to do so would assist the Parish Council in its deliberations.**
- d. **Councillors may submit agenda items for meetings to the Clerk and after discussion with the Chairman they will be included unless there is good reason for not doing so, in which case councillors will be informed of the reason by email.**

- e. Communication by email is acceptable and to be encouraged in order to speed up processes. No decisions can be reached outside a formal meeting of the council but the Clerk or the Chairman may use emails to canvas views on matters between meetings. Likewise Councillors with concerns should feel capable of raising these prior to meetings. Where a question is asked of the Council the chairman may direct that a written response be given after the meeting.
- f. Any person wishing to speak at a meeting of the parish council should indicate his wish to do so by raising his hand. When speaking comments should be addressed to the Chairman of the meeting.
- g. The Chairman has discretion to agree that members of the public wishing to raise issues at a Parish Council may do so while remaining seated. If more than one person indicates a wish to speak, the chairman will direct the order of speaking.
- h. The Council welcomes the public or the press making audio and/or visual of a meeting (or part of a meeting) of the Council or its committees. It would be helpful if those wishing to record could contact the Council before the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be put in place, which could include creating an area where members of the public who do NOT wish to be recorded can sit and from where they can take part. Should any such recording lead to the business of the meeting being disrupted the Chairman has the authority of the Council to terminate or adjourn the meeting. A request to record a meeting shall only be refused if the Chair of the meeting believes recording would disrupt the meeting.
- i. **Although there is a statutory right to photograph and record Council meetings**, the proceedings of that meeting must not be disrupted by the use of media tools and must not inhibit community involvement in the proceeding. Any member of the public, or of the media, wishing to photograph or record a meeting is asked to comply with the following:
 - i. any photography or audio / visual recording takes place from a fixed position in the meeting room approved by the Chairman so as to reduce disruption to the proceedings;

- ii. use of flash photography or additional lighting is for a limited period only during the meeting at a point in the proceedings agreed in advance with the Chairman;
- iii. if the Chairman feels that any photography, audio or visual recording is disrupting the meeting in any way, or any pre-meeting agreement has been breached, then the operator of the equipment will stop;
- iv. if, during the meeting, a motion is passed to exclude the press and public, because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, then all rights to record the meeting are removed and the operator of the equipment will be required to stop recording and /or photography;
- v. if a meeting is adjourned by the Chairman then the operator of the equipment should stop any recording or photography at the point at which the meeting is adjourned;
- vi. any request made by the Chairman regarding respecting the public's right to privacy is complied with;
- vii. people seated in the public seating area should not be photographed, filmed or recorded without the consent of the individuals concerned. Public notices will confirm that recording may take place and it is for the public to inform the council, or the person recording, if they object.
- viii. use must not be made of an image or recording if consent is refused by a member of the public featured in that recording or image;
- ix. photographs, audio, and visual recordings should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.
- j. The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities to enable them to report all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- k. **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may**

in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if any).

l. 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.

m. Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors present and voting.

The Chairman of a meeting may vote on any matter before the meeting and, in the case that votes for and against a proposal are equal, may also exercise his/her casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.

n. Voting on any question shall normally be by a simple majority of those Councillors present and voting by show of hands at the time of the vote. However, at the request of any councillor before the vote is taken, 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.

o. In the event that the Council conducts a formal debate on any motion the Council will adopt the rules of debate for the time being of Cherwell District Council.

p. 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 councillors present and absent;

iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;

q. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;

iv. if there was a public participation session; and

v. the resolutions made.

- r. Minutes of a meeting shall be, so far as possible, concise and informative, while containing sufficient information for members of the public to understand the matter before the council and the reasons for the particular decision taken.
- s. **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 may be subject to restrictions on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- t. **At least three members of the Parish Council are required to be present for a meeting to be quorate.**
- u. If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no formal business may be transacted and the meeting may be closed. Any business on the agenda for decision at the meeting shall be adjourned.
- v. A meeting shall not normally exceed a period of 2 hours, unless the meeting resolves to continue for a further specified amount of time.

7. Disorderly Conduct

- a. If, in the opinion of the Chairman, any member of the Parish Council misbehaves at a meeting by persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chairman, or by behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively, or by wilfully obstructing the business of the Council, the Chairman or another Councillor may move not to hear the Councillor further. If the motion is seconded it shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- b. If, in the opinion of the Chairman, the Councillor persistently misbehaves after such a motion has been carried, the Chairman may if necessary adjourn or suspend the meeting of the Parish Council.
- c. If a Councillor is required to leave a meeting the member is not entitled to vote during the period of exclusion.
- d. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Chairman may issue a warning. If the interruption continues the Chairman may order that the person leaves the meeting.

- e. In case of general disturbance in any part of the meeting venue open to the public the Chairman may order that part cleared. If the Chairman considers it necessary he/she may close the meeting.

8. Committees and Sub Committees

- a. **The council may appoint such standing committees or time limited committees as may be necessary, and in doing so, shall determine their terms of reference and in all other respects ensure that they comply with the law.**
- b. **Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- c. **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.**
- d. **Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**

9. Urgent business

- a. Where a decision is required before the next meeting of the council or any standing committee, or if there is insufficient time for an extra-ordinary meeting to be called, the ability to take decisions is delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, and where time permits, other Councillors. In all cases the Clerk will ensure that details of the decision taken will be circulated to all members of the Council as soon as practicable, reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Council and recorded in the minutes.
- b. Where ever possible, the Clerk/ Chairman will contact all members of the Council to canvass views prior to any such decision being taken.

10. Previous resolutions

- a. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b. When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 8(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

11. Voting on appointments

- a. Where more than two 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. A tie in votes may be settled by the exercise of the casting vote by the Chairman of the meeting

12. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Clerk

- a. The Council may debate a motion relating to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled or to the performance of the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
- b. No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Clerk at least seven clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

- c. The Clerk may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 11(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d. If the Clerk considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 11(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Clerk so that it can be understood at least five clear days before the meeting.
- e. If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered inappropriate, improper or unlawful, the Clerk 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 in the agenda or rejected.
- f. Subject to standing order 10(e) above, the decision of the Clerk as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

13. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

- a. The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;

- x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close a meeting.

14. Handling confidential or sensitive information

- a. The agenda and any papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall, so far as possible, comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any successor legislation. Apart from invoices, names will only be disclosed with the person's consent.

15. Draft minutes

- a. Minutes of a preceding meeting shall be taken as read, with discussion only in relation to their accuracy.
- b. Once approved as a true record of the preceding meeting, minutes shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and will then stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- c. 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 meeting and the minutes are confirmed by a majority of councillors present as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

Any Councillor may ask for an endorsement to be added to any minutes approved by a majority of Councillors so as to reflect his/her view should this be the opposite of the majority view and requested.

- d. Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist may be destroyed.

16. Code of conduct and dispensations

- a. **All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.**
- b. 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. Any concerns about the nature of a pecuniary interest should be discussed before the meeting with the Clerk.
- c. Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Clerk as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- d. A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- e. 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.
- f. Subject to standing orders 14(d) and (f) above, dispensations requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- g. A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 15(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.

17. Code of conduct complaints

- a. Upon notification by the District 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 Clerk shall, subject to standing order 12 above, report this to the council.
- b. Where the notification in standing order 16(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Clerk, the Clerk shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate a councillor to investigate the complaint and advise the Council on the appropriate, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 15(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 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.

18. The Clerk (Proper Officer)

- a. The Proper Officer (for the purposes of legislation) shall be the Clerk
- b. The Clerk shall:
 - i. at least five clear days before a meeting of the council, serve on all councillors a summons confirming the time, place of the meeting, together with an agenda . Where agreed this may be served by email.
 - ii. Arrange for public notice of the time, place and agenda to be given at least five clear days before any
 - 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;
 - iv. facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
 - v. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;
 - vi. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
 - vii. forward a copy of every councillor's register of interests to the Monitoring Officer of the appropriate District Council;
 - viii. assist with responding to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the council's policies and procedures relating to the same;

- ix. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- x. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;
- xi. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
- xii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;
- xiii. record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority in the minutes of the Council meeting;
- xiv. refer a planning application received by the council to the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council as soon as practicable after receipt and facilitate an extraordinary meeting of the Council if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the council;
- xv. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
- xvi. send email copies of all communication relating to the parish council to the chairman or in his absence the Vice Chairman.

19. Responsible Financial Officer

- a. **The council has appointed its Clerk to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer**

20. 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

- 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. The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
- i. the council's receipts and payments for each quarter;
 - ii. the council's aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d. 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 last quarter and 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.
- e. 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.

21. Financial controls and procurement

- 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 keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices 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; and
 - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 18(c) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where a contract has an estimated value of less than £30,000.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. Financial regulations shall confirm that a proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £30,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 19(d) below.
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts in excess of £30,000 for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender

- and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
- iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Clerk;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Clerk in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- 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.**

22. Handling staff matters

- a. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of council OR the Staffing committee is subject to standing order 12 above.
- b. Subject to the council's policy regarding absences from work, the Clerk will notify the chairman of the Parish Council or in his absence, the vice-chairman of the Parish Council of any absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Parish Council at its next meeting.

- c. The chairman of the Staffing committee or in his absence, the vice-chairman shall review the performance of the Parish Clerk in the form of an annual appraisal. The review and appraisal shall be reported in writing to all Councillors.
- d. Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the any council employee shall contact the chairman of the Parish Council or in his absence, the vice-chairman of the Parish Council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall referred to the staffing committee for investigation and , if possible, resolution.
- e. Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Parish Clerk relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of the Parish Council, this shall be communicated to another member of the Staffing committee, which shall be dealt with in accordance with 17e above)
- f. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.
- g. The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure.
- h. Access to staff records referred to in standing orders 20(f) and (g) is only available to Councillors who have a need to know the information contained in them.
- i. Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 20(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Parish Clerk and/or the Chairman of the Council.

23. 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

Parish Council. The Parish Council will facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

24. Relations with the press/media

- a. Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

25. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing orders 16(b)(xii) and (xvii) above.

- a. **A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution of the Council**
- b. **Subject to standing order 23(a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Clerk shall witness their signatures.**

26. Communicating with District and County councillors

- a. An invitation to attend a meeting of the council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the District and County Council representing the area of the council.
- b. Unless the council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District and County Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the council.

27. Restrictions on councillor activities

- a. Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

28. Standing orders generally

- a. All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b. A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10 above.
- c. The Clerk shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.
- d. The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

Items in **bold type** have statutory force.