

RATCLIFFE ON THE WREAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Standing Orders

A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to all Councillors when they first attain office.

1. MEETINGS

- (a) **Meetings of the Council will be held at Ratcliffe on the Wreake Village Hall on dates agreed by the Parish Council. Meetings will commence at 7.30 p.m.** No meeting shall last more than 3 hours and any business not transacted by that time shall be held over to the next meeting. However by agreement the meeting can be extended for a further 15 minutes.
- (b) **The Statutory Annual General Meeting shall normally be held on the 1st Thursday in May. In an election year, it shall be held on the Thursday following the election.**
- (c) **The Annual Parish Meeting shall be held between the 1st March and 1st June in any year.**
- (d) The Chairman of the Council or a Committee may call an additional meeting of the council/committee at any time. An extraordinary meeting may also be called at the request of 3 councillors. A minimum of 3 days' notice should be given and the reason for the meeting clearly stated.
- (e) Before the annual meeting following an election, Councillors should execute Declarations of Acceptance of Office in each other's presence and in the presence of the Clerk.

2. CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

The person presiding at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chairman in relation to the conduct of the meeting.

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman at any meeting other than the Annual Meeting, the first business shall be to appoint a Chairman.

3. PROPER OFFICER

The Proper Officer of the Council is the Clerk. The Clerk shall, amongst other duties:

- i) Receive declarations of acceptance of office.
- ii) Receive and record notices disclosing interests at meetings.
- iii) Receive and retain plans and documents.
- iv) Sign notices or other documents on behalf of the Council.
- v) Sign summonses to attend meetings of the council.
- vi) Invite speakers to meetings.
- vii) To keep proper records of all Council meetings.
- viii) The Clerk may deal with minor matters and items for next Agenda between meetings in consultation with the Chairman and other Councillors.
- ix) The Clerk is authorised to deal with minor emergencies.
- x) The Clerk is authorised to spend up to £250 in the case of emergency repairs, maintenance matters and utility bills subject to the agreement of the Chairman, Vice Chairman or Responsible Finance Officer.

Other duties and responsibilities of the Clerk are as laid down in the Conditions of Service Contract and Job Description.

Notwithstanding those duties and responsibilities at each meeting, it shall be the duty of the Clerk to advise Members on the content and interpretation of these Standing Orders.

4. QUORUM OF THE COUNCIL

- (a) **Three Members, or a third, whichever is greater, shall constitute a quorum at meetings of the Council.**
- (b) In the event of a bare quorum being present, those present can agree to postpone all but the most urgent business to the next meeting.

5. VOTING

- a) Members shall vote by show of hands or, if at least two members so request prior to voting, by signed ballot.
- b) **The Clerk shall show in the Minutes the way in which councillors voted if asked to do so.**
- c) **The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter and, if the vote is tied, may give a casting vote, whether or not an original vote was given.**
- d) If the person presiding at the annual meeting would have ceased to be a member of the Council but for the statutory provisions which preserve the membership of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman until the end of their term of office he may not give an original vote in an election for Chairman. However he must give a casting vote in the event of a tie for the new Chairman.

6. ORDER OF BUSINESS

Unless the council decides otherwise, the order of business shall be as presented in the Agenda, which will have been drawn up by the Clerk in consultation with the chairman.

Any Councillor wishing to have a subject put on to the agenda should pass the relevant information to the Clerk at least 7 days before the meeting.

At every meeting, other than the Annual Parish Meeting, the first business shall be to appoint a Chairman if the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are absent and to receive such declarations of acceptance of office as are required by law.

After the first business has been completed, the order of business, unless the Council has otherwise decided on the grounds of urgency, shall be as follows:

- a) Open Forum to last no longer than 15 minutes
- b) To consider the minutes circulated prior to the meeting
- c) After consideration to approve and sign the minutes by the person presiding. Any corrections must be agreed and initialled by the chairman. Once agreed and signed, the Minutes are seen as a correct record of the meeting.
- d) To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.
- e) To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- f) To authorise the signing by three members of orders for payment.
- g) To receive and consider reports from the Finance Officer.
- h) To consider Planning Applications.
- i) To receive and consider reports from outside bodies.
- j) To receive such communications as the person presiding may wish to lay before the Council.

7. CHANGING ORDER OF AGENDA

A motion to vary the order of business may be proposed by the Chairman or by any member and, if proposed by the Chairman, may be put to the vote without being seconded and shall be put to the vote without discussion.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL PARISH MEETING

At each Annual General Parish Meeting in May the first business shall be:

- i) To Elect a Chairman of the Council
- ii) To receive the Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office.
- iii) To fill any vacancies on the Council, if there have been insufficient nominations in an election year.
- iv) To decide when to receive declarations of acceptance of office not already received as provided by law.
- v) To elect a Vice-Chairman.
- vi) To elect/confirm Council representative/s on School Governing Body.
- vii) To appoint/confirm representatives to outside bodies where applicable.
- viii) To appoint committees where applicable.

9. RESOLUTIONS MOVED ON NOTICE

Except as provided by these Standing Orders, no resolution may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been put on the Agenda by the Clerk.

Every resolution or recommendation of the council shall be relevant to some subject over which the Council has power or which directly affects the parish.

10. RESOLUTIONS MOVED WITHOUT NOTICE

Resolutions on procedural matters may be moved without notice including those to vary the order of business on grounds of urgency or procedural efficiency. Such Resolutions shall be put to the vote without discussion.

11. RULES OF DEBATE

No discussion shall take place on the minutes of previous meetings except upon their accuracy.

- a) All remarks shall be addressed to the Chairman
- b) A member shall direct his speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a point of order.
- c) A representative of the local Constabulary shall be allowed to speak at Council meetings at the discretion of the Chairman.

12. CONDUCT

All members shall conduct themselves in accordance with current legislation. In the event of any disruption, a warning to be given by the Chairman. If the disruption continues, then the Chairman or any Councillor may request that the person/s be removed from the meeting under the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960. The matter would be put to the vote by the Council, and the meeting ceases until the disruptive person/s leaves the Parish Room.

13. DECISION OF PREVIOUS RESOLUTION

A decision of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except by a vote of three members following a specific proposal included on the agenda.

14. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTIONS EFFECTING EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNCIL

Any questions relating to the appointment, conduct, dismissal, salary or conditions of service of any member of the Council or anyone employed by the Council shall not be discussed until it has been decided whether or not the public should be excluded and the subject deemed “confidential”.

15. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Any matters declared to be “confidential” must not be discussed outside the Council and should only be discussed during the closed section of the meeting.

16. DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLORS

District and County Councillors who are not also Parish Councillors shall be invited to attend meetings and shall be sent copies of agendas, minutes and other relevant documentation. They may be allowed to speak at the discretion of the Chairman.

17. INTERESTS

- a) All members must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the Code of Conduct before becoming a Councillor.
- b) If a member has a personal interest as defined by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council then he shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the existence and nature of the interest as required.
- c) If a member who has declared a personal interest then considers the interest to be prejudicial, he must withdraw from the meeting room during consideration of the item to which the interest relates.
- d) The Clerk shall record particulars of any members’ interests. This record shall be available for inspection by other members’ at all reasonable times.

18. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

All approved minutes kept by the council shall be open for the inspection of any member of the council. Parishioners may view the minutes on the parish website or by approaching a Councillor or the Clerk. (This does not limit any persons right under the Freedom of Information Act.)

19. ADMISSION TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS TO MEETINGS

The public and press shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960). However, they may be temporarily excluded by means of the following resolution:

“That in view of the (confidential) nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.”

20. ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- a) The Council shall consider and approve Financial Regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, to include detailed arrangements for the following:
 - i) the accounting records and systems of internal control
 - ii) the assessment and management of risks faced by the Council
 - iii) the work of the Internal Auditor
 - iv) the financial reporting requirements of members and local electors
- b) All accounts for payments and claims upon the Council shall be laid before the Council.
- c) The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each member as soon as practicable after 31st March in each year a statement of the receipts and payments of the Council for the completed financial year.

21. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a) The Clerk shall record the name of the applicant, the place to which it relates, and a summary of the nature of the application.
- b) The Clerk shall refer every planning application received to the Chairman or in the Chairman's absence, to the Vice-Chairman within 48 hours of receipt.
- c) The Planning Inspection Panel will consist of every member of the Council.
- d) Where a planning application is received which requires consideration before the next scheduled meeting of the Council, the Clerk shall, in consultation with the Chairman, taking account of the nature of the application, determine whether or not to call a Special Meeting of the Council to discuss the application.

22. RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLORS

A member who for whatever reason wishes to tender their resignation shall do so in writing addressed to the Chairman with a copy to the Clerk. The resignation will be reported by the Clerk at the next meeting of the Council. Acceptance of resignations, or otherwise, shall not be the subject of debate within the Council.

23. CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS

Where a vacancy occurs on the Council, if there are not at least 10 signatures of electors requesting a poll, then the Council may Co-opt new members.

The vacancies must be advertised on local Notice Boards for a minimum of 21 days.

If there are more candidates than vacancies, then a vote of the Council will take place by show of hands or by secret ballot if at least two members of the Council have so requested.

The successful candidate must by law have received more than 50% of the votes. If necessary more than one vote will take place with the candidate receiving the lowest votes dropping out at each stage.

24. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

- a) Any or every part of the Standing Orders except those printed in **bold type** may be suspended by the Council at any time and for any period of time by resolution.
- b) Resolutions to add, vary or revoke a Standing Order must be notified on the Agenda.

25. STANDING ORDERS – shall be reviewed annually at the Annual General Parish meeting in May.

26. INTERPRETATION

In these Standing Orders words importing one gender shall include all genders and the singular includes the plural and vice versa.

These Standing Orders were updated and agreed on 6th May 2021