

# Westbury-on-Severn Parish Council

*A copy of these, and the Statutory Draft Standing Orders, will be given to all Councillors when they first attain office*

- 1 **All meetings of the Council shall be held at Westbury on Severn Parish Hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month, beginning at 7pm, unless otherwise notified.** 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.
- 2 **The Statutory Annual Meeting shall normally be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in May. In an election year, it shall be held on the Monday following the election.**
- 3 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.
- 4 Before the annual meeting following an election, Councillors should execute Declarations of Acceptance of Office in each other's presence or in the presence of the Clerk.
- 5 **The first business at each annual meeting shall be:-**
  - a) **To elect a Chairman**
  - b) **To receive the Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office, or decide when it should be received.**
  - c) **To fill any vacancies on the Council, if there have been insufficient nominations in an election year.**
  - d) **To decide when to receive any declarations of acceptance of office not received as provided by law.**
  - e) To elect a Vice-Chairman.
  - f) To appoint/confirm school governors.
  - g) To appoint wardens, working groups and representatives.
- 6 **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.**
- 7 **The person presiding at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chairman in relation to the conduct of the meeting.**
- 8 The Clerk is the proper officer of the council and is also the Responsible Financial Officer.
- 9 The Clerk shall, amongst other duties
  - a) Receive declarations of acceptance of office
  - b) Receive and record declarations of members' [financial] interests
  - c) Receive and keep plans and documents
  - d) Sign notices and other documents on behalf of the council
  - e) Sign summonses to attend meetings of the council
  - f) Authorised to agreed to spend up to £100 in the case of emergency repairs, maintenance matters and the purchasing of stationery items subject to the agreement of the Chairman or Vice- Chairman
- 10 **3 councillors shall constitute a quorum.**
- 11 In the event of the bare quorum being present, those present can agree to postpone all but the most urgent business to the next meeting.
- 12 Members shall vote by show of hands or by signed ballot if 2 or more councillors wish it.
- 13 **The Clerk shall show in the Minutes the way in which councillors voted if asked to do so.**
- 14 **The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter and, if the vote is tied, may give a casting vote, except when the retiring Chairman has ceased to be a member of the council (eg. following an election) in which case s/he cannot cast an original vote in electing a new**

**Chairman. However, s/he must give a casting vote in the event of a tie for the new Chairman.**

- 15 The council shall annually review the pay and conditions of service of any employees in the light of current employment and other relevant law.
- 16 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.
- 17 No discussion of the Minutes should take place except on their accuracy. 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.**
- 18 Any business expressly required by statute must be dealt with as soon as possible.**
- 19 Any Councillor wishing to have a subject put onto the agenda should pass the relevant information to the Clerk at least 7 days before the meeting.
- 20 Matters received within the week before a meeting can be added to the agenda at the discretion of the council. However, decisions, which would incur expense, cannot be taken unless the matter has been notified on the agenda.
- 21 Discussion papers or reports, **not** circulated prior to the meeting, should be restricted to one side of A4. Enough copies should also be supplied for the Clerk and all members of the council.
- 22 Orders for the payment of money shall be authorised by resolution of the Council and signed by 2 members.**
- 23 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.
- 24 Councillors may speak only once to a resolution listed on the agenda unless the Council agrees otherwise. However, the proposer of the resolution has a right to reply.
- 25 Councillors may ask the Chairman or the Clerk any questions relating to the business under discussion.
- 26 Members should address the Chairman, whose ruling on points of order or the admissibility of a personal explanation shall be final.
- 27 A decision of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except by a vote of five members following a specific proposal included on the agenda.
- 28 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”.
- 29 Any matters declared to be “confidential” must not be discussed outside the council.
- 30 Any Councillor with a direct or indirect financial interest (within the meaning of sections 94-95 of the 1972 Local Government Act) or a direct personal interest in a matter under discussion shall withdraw from the meeting, after answering any relevant questions raised by the Council. The Parish Council has adopted 2007 Revised Code of Conduct including paragraph 12(2) which allows members with a prejudicial interest the same rights as members of the public to speak to a meeting on the issue and then leave before the main discussion and vote.
- 31 The Clerk shall record particulars of any notices of financial interest by members of the council. This record shall be available for inspection by other members at all reasonable times.**
- 32 All minutes kept by council/committee shall be open for the inspection of any member of the council.** Similarly, all council documents may be inspected by councillors and, if feasible, copies supplied on request. Parishioners may view the minutes in Westbury-on-Severn and Minsterworth Post Offices or by approaching a councillor.
- 33 Planning:

- a) Planning Applications – the Clerk shall record the date on which it was received; the name of the applicant; the place to which it relates; and a summary of the nature of the application.
  - b) The Planning Inspection Panel will consist of every member of the Council and the Clerk.
  - c) The Clerk will act as the Sites Inspection Co-ordinator.
  - d) The sites inspection panel will meet prior to the monthly Parish Council meeting at times to comply with the time scales laid down by FODDC or other bodies who require observations etc from the Parish Council.
  - e) The Clerk, where possible, will obtain an extension from the FODDC to enable any decisions taken at a site inspecting meeting to be ratified at a full Parish Council meeting.
  - f) The Clerk will forward decisions/comments/observations made by the Planning Inspection Panel immediately after the inspections if that is necessary to meet the deadline. If this is not the criteria, the decision/comment/observation will be included in the agenda for the monthly Council meeting.
  - g) On the agenda for the Planning Inspection Panel meeting the Clerk will include Standing Order No 30.
  - h) The decisions of the Planning Sub-committee should be taken as read in order to reduce time at the meeting. Where the subject is potentially controversial the Sub-committee can recommend that the final decision be taken at the meeting.
- 34 All members shall conduct themselves in accordance with current legislation.
- 35 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.
- 36 No member of the Council shall issue orders, instructions or directions, write letters or inspect property etc., on behalf of the Council, unless specifically authorised to do so.
- 37 **a) The public shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees which may, however, temporarily exclude them** 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 be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.”*
- b) Members of the public can attend meetings for the purpose of making representations, giving evidence or answering questions. At Parish Council meetings there is an item on the agenda for Public Comment – maximum time of 10 minutes.
- 38 The Clerk shall afford the press reasonable facilities for taking their report of any proceedings at which they are entitled to be present.**
- 39 The Council shall deal with any complaints against it, its officers or members as recommended in Circular 2/86 issued by NALC.
- 40 Any part of these standing orders, except those in **bold**, may be suspended by the council. Resolutions to add, vary or revoke a Standing Order must be notified on the agenda.

Revised 24 September 2007