



Moretonhampstead Parish Council Standing Orders May 2021

1. Rules of debate at meetings

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- d If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the amended motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be proposed.
- e A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- f Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.

2. Disorderly conduct at meetings

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. Meetings generally

Full Council meetings and all public meetings

- a **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.**
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include 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 or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or**

mourning.

- c **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.**
- d Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda on any other matter related to town life.
- e The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(d) above shall not exceed 10 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- f Subject to standing order 3(d) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- g In accordance with standing order 3(d) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- h A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- i Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- j **Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior written consent.**
- k **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- l **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.**
- m **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.**
- n **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- o **The chairman of a meeting 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 standing orders below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.*
- p **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a 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 moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- q The minutes of a meeting shall be an accurate record of the meeting and include the resolutions made.

- r **A 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 is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- s **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 three.**
- t **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.**
- u **A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours.**

4. Committees and sub-committees

- a **Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee or working group whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee and approved by full council.**
- b **Sub committees and working groups may include non-councillor members unless it is the Finance and Policy Committee.**

5. Ordinary council meetings

- a **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.**
- b **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.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d **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.**
- e **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.**
- f **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.**
- g **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.**
- h **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.**
- i **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.**
- j **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 business of the annual meeting shall include:

- i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
- ii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
- iii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- iv. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.

6. 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.**

7. 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 7 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. When a motion moved has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

8. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and shall relate 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 the proposer has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 8 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion. If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, reject it until the proposer of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least 5 clear days before the meeting.
- d If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered 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 in the agenda or rejected.
- e The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

9. 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.

10. Handling confidential or sensitive information

- a The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- b Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

11. Draft minutes

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 9(a)(i) above.
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, 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.
- 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 shall be destroyed.

12. 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.

- c 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 another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- d Dispensation requests shall be in writing using the standard form.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer.
- f Subject to standing orders 12(d) above, dispensations requests shall be considered by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required
- g **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 12(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.**

13. Code of conduct complaints

- a Upon notification by the Teignbridge 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 Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 10 above, report this to the council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 13(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 13(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 or Unitary 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.**

14. Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be the clerk.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors a summons, by email, confirming the time, place and the agenda provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.**
 - ii. **give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three 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);**
 - 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. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vi. 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;
- vii. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- viii. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;
- ix. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
- x. 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;
- xi. refer a planning application received by the council to the Chairman of the planning committee

15. Responsible Financial Officer

- a The council shall appoint an appropriate person to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

16. Accounts and accounting statements – refer to Financial Regulations Policy

17. Financial controls and procurement – refer to Financial Regulations Policy.

18. Handling staff matters

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of council or sub committee is subject to standing order 10 above.
- b Subject to the council's policy regarding absences from work, the council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence at its next meeting.
- c The chairman shall conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported to the council.
- d Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the council's most senior employee (or other employees) shall contact the chairman in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of council.
- e Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of a committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of committee.
- 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. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected.
- h Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred

to in standing orders 18(f) and (g) above if so justified.

- i Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 18(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Clerk and/or the Chairman of the Council.

19. 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 committee. The said committee shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

20. Relations with the press/media

- a All press requests should go through the chairman.

21. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution. Any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

22. 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) 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.

23. 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 7 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 above.
- c The Proper Officer 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.

Moretonhampstead Parish Council

Green Hill, Fore Street T 01647 440041
Moretonhampstead E clerk20@moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk
Devon TQ13 8LL W www.moretonhampstead-pc.gov.uk
Chairman: Councillor Vivienne Hodges | Clerk: Mrs Samantha Parkin