

FINDON PARISH COUNCIL
STANDING ORDERS
Standing Orders for Local Councils
(Adopted 9 March 2015)

Introduction

Standing Orders for the organisation and transaction of Councils' business are decided by full Council. A committee or sub-committee may decide its own standing orders if its appointing body (which is the Council in the case of a committee or a committee in the case of a sub-committee) has not made Standing Orders which apply to them.

Standing orders in **bold type** should not be ignored or substantively amended unless the legislation out of which they are born changes.

Standing Orders, not highlighted in bold type, do not incorporate statutory requirements. They are aimed at (i) highlighting matters that merit regulation by Standing Orders and (ii) encouraging use of Standing Orders to regulate routine administrative arrangements.

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1 Meetings

Mandatory for full Council meetings

Mandatory for committee meetings

Mandatory for sub-committee 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 **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 or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.**
- 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 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 within the remit of the Council and not limited to matters on the Agenda for that meeting.
- e The period of time [which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing order 1(d) above] shall not exceed fifteen minutes, except at the Chairman's discretion.
- f Subject to standing order 1(e) above, each member of the public is entitled to speak for not more than three minutes, except at the Chairman's discretion.
- g 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 may receive a response at a later date if additional information is required.
- h In accordance with standing order 1(g) above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- i A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- j A person shall be requested to raise his hand to indicate their wish to speak and give their name.
- k Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Chairman.
- l 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.
- m **A person may not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if present at the meeting of the Parish Council or its Committees, but otherwise may (subject to standing order 1(c) above):**
 - a) **film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting;**
 - b) **use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later;**
 - c) **report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.**

The Chairman of the meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any recording and/or reporting if, in their opinion, it is distracting or otherwise disrupting proceedings at the meeting. A protocol will be brought for approval at a future Council meeting.

- n 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.
- o 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 Deputy Chairman (if any).
- p The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Deputy Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
- q 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.
- r 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.
- s 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 moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- t The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of Councillors present and absent.
- u 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.
- v The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to Councillors in respect of the entire meeting.
- w 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 order 6 below.)
- x 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.
- y 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.
- z Meetings should aim not exceed a period of two hours, at the discretion of the Chairman.

2 Ordinary Council meetings

See also standing order 1

- a In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council (AGM) 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 (AGM) 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 (AGM) shall take place at 7pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council (AGM), at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.** (The Council holds eight meetings each year).
- e **The election of the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.**
- f **The Chairman of the Council shall preside at the annual meeting and shall continue in office until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified.**
- g **The Deputy 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 Deputy Chairman (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council (AGM), the order of business could include the following (unless dealt with at other meetings during the Council year):
 - i. In an election year, delivery by councillors of their declarations of acceptance of office.
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees.
 - iii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees and other local authorities.
 - iv. Review of the terms of references for committees.
 - v. Receipt of nominations to existing committees.
 - vi. Appointment of any new committees, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them.
 - vii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.
 - viii. Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.
 - ix. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.
 - x. In a year of elections, if a Council's period of eligibility to exercise the power of well being expired the day before the annual meeting, to review and make arrangements to reaffirm eligibility.
 - xi. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment.
 - xii. Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
 - xiii. Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.

- xiv. Establishing or reviewing the Council's complaints procedure.
- xv. Establishing or reviewing the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- xvi. Establishing or reviewing the Council's protocol for filming, recording and reporting of meetings held in public.
- xvii. Establishing or reviewing the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media.
- xviii. Confirming the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council for the year ahead.

3 Proper Officer

- a 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.
- b The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following.
 - i. **Sign and serve on Councillors by delivery or post at their residences or electronically (where possible and acceptable) a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee and sub-committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting.**
 - ii. **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).**
 - iii. Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(d) below, include in the agenda all motions in the order received unless a Councillor has given written notice at least ten days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it.
 - iv. **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.**
 - v. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.
 - vi. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
 - vii. **Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.**
 - viii. Retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.
 - ix. Keep proper records required before and after meetings;
 - x. 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.
 - xi. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
 - xii. Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.
 - xiii. Arrange for legal deeds to be signed by 2 councillors and witnessed (*See also model standing orders 12a.*)

- xiv. 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. Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority;
- xvi. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.

4 Motions (Agenda items)

- a In accordance with standing order 3(b)(iii) above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless the relevant business is included in the agenda, unless deemed as urgent action since the Agenda was published.
- b 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.
- c Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without an agenda item.
 - i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
 - ii. To approve the absences of Councillors, if applicable.
 - 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 thereto.
 - xi. To receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee.
 - xii. To 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 authorise the payment of monies in accordance with the Financial Regulations Schedule.
 - xvi. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
 - xvii. To extend the time limit for speeches.
 - xviii. To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
 - xix. To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
 - xx. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.
 - xxi. To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.**
 - xxii. To adjourn the meeting.
 - xxiii. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.

- xxiv. To answer questions from Councillors.
- d If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a committee or sub-committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such committee or sub-committee or employee provided that the Chairman may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience.

5 Rules of debate

- a Motions (Agenda items) 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.
- b Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(d) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- c Subject to standing order 3(b)(iii) above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.
- d A Councillor may move amendments to his own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.
- e Any amendment to a motion shall be either:
 - i. to leave out words;
 - ii. to add words;
 - iii. to leave out words and add other words.
- f A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.
- g Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.
- h Subject to Standing Order 5(g) above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.
- i Pursuant to standing order 5(g) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a Councillor, shall be at the discretion of the Chairman. .
- j If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.
- k If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- l The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding three minutes.
- m Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion at the very end of debate and immediately before it is put to the vote.
- n Subject to standing orders 5(l) and (m) above, a councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another Councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- o 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.

- p A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his decision shall be final.
- q A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the consent of the Council, which shall be signified without discussion, and no Councillor may speak upon it after permission has been asked for its withdrawal unless such permission has been refused.
- r Subject to standing order 5(n) above, when a Councillor's motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be silent or for him to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting;
 - ix. to suspend any Standing Order, except those which are mandatory.
- s. In respect of standing order 5(r)(iv) above, the Chairman shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is seconded and put to the vote. The Chairman shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.
- t. Each Councillor shall speak on any Agenda Item at the discretion of the Chairman.

6 Code of conduct

- a **All Councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.**
- b All Councillors shall undertake training in the code of conduct within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.
- c **If paragraph 12(2) of the code of conduct contained in the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 (SI No.1159) has been adopted by the Council or pursuant to relevant provisions in a statutory code of conduct in force at the time, Councillors may exercise the rights contained in standing order 6(d) below only if members of the public are permitted to (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted.**
- d **Councillors with a pecuniary/prejudicial interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting may (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must, thereafter, leave the room or chamber.**

7 Minutes

- a If a copy of the unapproved 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.
- b No discussion of the unapproved 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 4(c)(iv) above.
- c 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.

- d 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.”

- e Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, any previous draft minutes or recordings of the meeting shall be destroyed.

8 Disorderly conduct

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly.
- b If, in the opinion of the Chairman, there has been a breach of standing order 8(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.
- c If a resolution made in accordance with standing order 8(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.

9 Rescission of previous resolutions

- a A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least six (6) Councillors of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
- b When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 9(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

10 Voting on appointments

- a Where more than 2 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. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.

11 Expenditure

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

12 Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing order 3(b)(xiii)

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.
[In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 12(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.]

13 Committees

See also standing order 1

- a The Council may, at its annual meeting, appoint 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;
 - iii. 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;
 - iv. may in accordance with Standing Orders, dissolve a committee at any time.
 - v. the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Council may attend all committee meetings and may exercise their right to speak and vote (ex-officio).

14 Sub-committees

See also standing order 1

- a 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.
- b The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Council may attend all committee meetings and may exercise their right to speak and vote (ex-officio).

15 Extraordinary meetings

See also standing order 1

- 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 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.**
- c The Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee at any time.
- d If the Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not, or refuses to, call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two Councillors, those two 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 two Councillors.

16 Advisory Committees/Working Groups

See also standing order 1

- a The Council may appoint advisory committees comprised of a number of Councillors and non-councillors.
- b Advisory committees and any sub-committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.
- c Advisory Committees and Working Groups do not have any decision making powers on behalf of the Council.

17 Canvassing of and recommendations by Councillors

- a Canvassing Councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this Standing Order to every candidate.
- b A Councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.
- c This Standing Order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

18 Inspection of documents

- a Subject to Standing Orders to the contrary, 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.

19 Unauthorised activities

- a Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual Councillor shall in the name of, 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.

20 Confidential business

- a Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature.
- b A Councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 20(a) above may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council.

21 Matters affecting council employees

- a If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council OR the appropriate committee OR the appropriate sub-committee has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to Standing Order 1(c) above.
- b The Chairman or in his absence, the Deputy Chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and/or appraisal of the Proper Officer and shall keep a written record of it.
- c Grievances shall be handled in accordance with the each employee's Contract of Employment.
- d 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.

- e 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.
- f 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.
- g Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records referred to in standing orders 21(e) and (f) above if so justified.
- h Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 21(e) and (f) above shall be provided only to the Proper Officer and the Chairman.

22 Freedom of Information Act 2000

- a 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.
- b Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer who 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).

23 Relations with the press/media

- a Councillors are encouraged to answer questions asked by the press or media but should make it clear when they are speaking on behalf of the Council and when they are speaking in a personal capacity.
- b A protocol for social media such as Facebook and Twitter should be developed.

24 Liaison with District and County Councillors

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the Councillor(s) of the District and County Councils.
- b Unless the Council otherwise orders, a copy of each letter sent to the District or County Council shall be sent to the District or County Council councillor(s) representing the parish.

25 Representatives to external bodies

- a To attend meetings at the invitation of the organisation, to listen to what is being said and to prepare a written report for the next meeting of the Council. This report should be submitted to the Proper Officer within two weeks of the meeting or event having taken place.
- b To inform the organisation of developments in the parish.
- c Parish representatives should not participate in initiating or preparing any bid for Section 137 funds the organisation might be making to the Council.
- d Where an organisation is considering making a bid it should be referred to the Council's Section 137 application criteria and documentation which can be obtained from the Proper Officer. The Council has limited funds available for making grants and agrees only to one successful bid for any one organisation in a year.
- e The Council will not fund projects under Section 137 which it considers to be the responsibility of the relevant statutory authority, for example, Education or Highways. Any such projects should be referred in the first instance to the Proper Officer, who will advise on whether the Council has any powers to consider the bid.

26 Complaints

- a The Parish Council follows the Model Complaints Procedures adopted by Arun District Council and this details how a complaint should be handled.
<http://www.arun.gov.uk/main.cfm?type=COMPLAINTSAGAINSTC&objectid=6304&searchtermre direct=complaints>

27 Allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct

- a On receipt of a notification that there has been an alleged breach of the code of conduct the Proper Officer shall advise the correspondent that such an allegation should be directed to the Monitoring Officer at Arun District Council. The Proper Officer must also inform the Chairman of the alleged breach of the code of conduct.
- b References in standing order 27 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.

28 Variation, revocation and suspension of Standing Orders

- a 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.
- b A motion to add to or to vary or to revoke one or more of the Council's Standing Orders, not mandatory by law, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the name of at least 8 councillors.

29 Standing orders to be given to councillors

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