

# Brenchley Parish Council

## Standing Orders

### COUNCIL MEETINGS

#### 1 Chairing meetings

The Chair of the Council or in his/her absence the Deputy Chair, shall chair meetings of the Council. In their absence the Council shall select a person to chair the meeting.

#### 2 Quorum

No business shall be dealt with unless there is a quorum of 3 members present. If there is no quorum, the meeting must be adjourned immediately.

#### 3 Proper Officer

3.1 The Clerk to the Council is the Proper Officer and employee of the Council and as such is under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions of a local authority's Proper Officer.

3.2 The Clerk shall:

- receive declarations of acceptance of office;
- receive and record notices disclosing interests at meetings;
- receive and retain plans and documents;
- sign notices or other documents, including planning recommendations, on behalf of the Council;
- certify copies of bylaws made by the Council;
- carry out and implement any Council decision;
- sign and issue the summons to attend meetings of the Council;
- keep proper records of all Council meetings.

3.3 The Clerk may take urgent decisions on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Chair and/or another member(s).

#### 4 Holding meetings

4.1 An annual meeting of the Council shall be held in every year in the month of May. In the year of ordinary elections of parish councillors, the annual meeting shall be held within 14 days after the day on which councillors elected take office.

4.2 At least 3 other meetings of the Council shall be held in every year.

4.3 An extraordinary meeting of the Council may be called at any time by the chair.

4.4 Any 2 members may submit a written request signed by them to the Chair to call an extraordinary meeting. In the event of the Chair not calling an extraordinary meeting

within 7 days of receiving the request, or refusing to call an extraordinary meeting, the 2 members may call an extraordinary meeting.

- 4.5 Meetings shall be held at a place, date and time fixed by the Council. Meetings shall not be held in premises being used at the time for the supply of alcohol permitted by the Licensing Act 2003 unless no other suitable room is available.
- 4.6 Notice of the time and place of meetings and a copy of the agenda must be fixed in a conspicuous place in the parish at least 3 clear days before the meeting. Where a meeting is called by members of the Council (4.4 above), the notice shall be signed by those members and shall specify the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting (the agenda).
- 4.7 All members of the Council shall be given (by email or by post or left at their residence) at least 3 clear days written notice of all meetings of the Council from the Proper Officer specifying the business proposed to be transacted (the agenda).
- 4.8 An invitation to attend Council meetings will normally be sent to the councillors for the Brenchley and Horsmonden ward of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

## **5 Order of business for Annual Meetings**

- 5.1 At Annual Meetings business will be dealt with in the following order:
- Election of Chair (This will be followed immediately by the Chair's declaration of acceptance of office)
  - Election of Deputy Chair
  - When the Annual Meeting follows Council elections, to note the receipt of declarations of acceptance of office by members
  - Receiving any apologies for absence
  - Disclosures of interest by members (and employees) in items on the agenda
  - Agreeing the minutes of the last meeting and signing them
  - Announcements from the Chair
  - To appoint committees
  - To make appointments and nominations
  - Deciding the dates, times and place of meetings of the Council for the year
  - To receive recommendations from committees
  - Other business placed on the agenda
- 5.2 The order of business may be changed by the meeting by motion put by the Chair.

## **6 Order of business for ordinary meetings**

- 6.1 At ordinary meetings, business will usually be dealt with in the following order:
- Receiving any apologies for absence
  - Disclosures of interest by members (and employees) in items on the agenda
  - Agreeing the minutes of the last meeting and signing them (SO 7)
  - Announcements from the Chair
  - Public question time (SO 8.3)
  - Consideration of planning applications
  - Any appointments to committees and other bodies

- To receive recommendations from committees (SO 9)
- To receive business motions from members (SO 10)
- Notification of decisions taken and action implemented by the Clerk
- Reports on other meetings attended by councillors
- Matters arising from previous meetings
- Authorisation and signature of orders for payment
- Other matters as previously notified, including questions from members (SO11).

6.2 The order of business may be changed by the meeting by motion put by the Chair.

## **7 Minutes**

7.1 No discussion shall take place on a motion to agree the minutes other than upon their accuracy.

7.2 Any corrections shall be made by moving that the minutes are agreed with the corrections stated.

7.3 The minutes must record the names of members present at the meeting and the declarations of interest of any member.

7.4 The minutes of a meeting must be circulated to all members as soon as practicable and referred to the next meeting (other than an extraordinary meeting) for agreement and signing by the Chair.

## **8 Admission of the public and press**

8.1 The public and press shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees and sub-committees.

8.2 The public and press may be temporarily excluded from any meeting by resolution of the Council when the nature of the business to be transacted is confidential.

8.3 At all meetings of the Council, the Chair may, at a convenient time, adjourn the meeting to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business which is about to be transacted.

8.4 There shall be no audio recording or photographs of the meeting without the express approval of the Council.

8.5 If any member of the public interrupts the proceedings, the Chair may, after warning, order that he/she be removed from the meeting.

## **9 Recommendations of committees**

9.1 Recommendations of committees must be included in full on the agenda for the Council meeting. Recommendations of committees meeting after the notice of meeting has been sent to members must be circulated to all members as soon as practical.

9.2 Recommendations cannot be discussed until they have been moved and seconded. This will normally be done by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the committee.

## **10 Business motions**

- 10.1 Any member may give to the clerk written notice of a motion the member wishes to move at a meeting at least 5 clear days before the meeting (and sufficient to enable the motion to be included on the agenda).
- 10.2 Motions must be included in full on the agenda in the order they are received.
- 10.3 Motions cannot be discussed until they have been moved and seconded.

## **11 Member questions**

- 11.1 Any member may put a question to the meeting about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the parish.
- 11.2 A member seeking a response to a question at the meeting should give the clerk notice of the question at least 5 clear days before the meeting. However, the Chair, at his/her discretion, might accept less or no notice if the matter on which an answer is sought is urgent or straightforward.

## **12 Rules of debate for committee recommendations and business motions**

- 12.1 The Council normally conducts its business without the need to apply formal rules of debate and the provisions of SOs 12.2-12.11 need not normally be enforced. However there may be occasions where a more formal procedure is necessary and the Chair or any member may require that the rules of debate in this section are applied to the consideration of a particular committee recommendation or business motion.
- 12.2 Any member may propose an amendment to a committee recommendation or business motion by giving notice of it in writing to the clerk at least 5 hours before the starting time of the meeting. The clerk shall provide all members at the meeting with copies of amendments.
- 12.3 An amendment must relate directly to the subject matter of the recommendation or motion and may refer the recommendation or motion to a committee for consideration or further consideration, delete words, add words, or delete and add words. An amendment must not have the effect of nullifying the recommendation or motion.
- 12.4 An amendment cannot be discussed until it has been moved and seconded.
- 12.5 An amendment can be withdrawn at any time by the member moving it.
- 12.6 The member moving the recommendation or motion may incorporate an amendment into the recommendation or motion.
- 12.7 Amendments will be discussed together unless the meeting agrees to discuss them separately on the motion of any member.

- 12.8 Amendments will be put to the vote in the reverse order in which they were moved. An amendment which is carried shall become the substantive recommendation or motion and other amendments will not be put to the vote.
- 12.9 The order of speaking shall be:
- mover of the recommendation or motion;
  - mover of first amendment;
  - mover of second amendment (and so on);
  - any other member wishing to speak;
  - right of reply of movers of amendments in reverse order;
  - right of reply of mover of recommendation or motion.
- 12.10 A member may speak only once in a debate except where the member has a right of reply or where the Chair, in her/his discretion, permits in the interests of debate.
- 12.11 During a debate but between speakers, any member may move a procedural motion:
- That the question be put to the vote immediately;
  - That the meeting move to the right of reply of the mover of the recommendation or motion and then to the vote;
  - To proceed to the next business.

If seconded, the procedural motion shall be put to the vote immediately without discussion.

### **13 Voting**

- 13.1 Members shall vote by show of hands or, if at least 2 members so request, by signed ballot.
- 13.2 Immediately after a vote is taken and before the next business is commenced, a member may require that the minutes of the meeting record the way in which that member has voted or that he/she abstained from voting.
- 13.4 Immediately before a vote is taken, any member may request that a vote is recorded. When a request is made, the Chair or person nominated by the Chair shall call the names of all the members and after each name is called the member shall state whether he/she is voting for or against the question put or abstaining. The record of voting shall be recorded in the minutes.
- 13.5 In the case of an equality of votes the Chair may give a casting vote whether or not he/she gave a first vote.
- 13.6 If the person presiding at an annual meeting would have ceased to be a member of the Council but for the statutory provisions which preserve the membership of the Chair and Vice-Chair until the end of their term of office, he/she may not give a first vote in an election for Chair of the Council.
- 13.7 The person presiding must give a casting vote in the event of there being an equality of votes for the election of Chair of the Council.

## **14 Procedural motions**

14.1 Any member at any time may move, between speakers, any of the following motions:

- To proceed to the next business
- To move to the vote
- To refer a matter to a committee
- To exclude temporarily from the meeting and for a specific reason, members of the public and press (SO 8.2)
- To adjourn the meeting

14.2 If the motion is seconded, it must be put to the vote immediately without discussion.

## **15 Conduct**

15.1 Members must abide by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 1 October 2007

15.2 In particular, members must disclose personal and prejudicial interests in any Council business, as required by the Code of Conduct. Unless dispensation has been obtained from the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Standards Committee, members with a prejudicial interest in an item of business must withdraw from the room while that business is considered by the Council.

15.2 A member when speaking must address the Chair.

15.2 Members must behave in a way that is conducive to the efficient conduct of business and respect the role of the Chair in the proper management of the meeting.

15.3 If a member persistently disregards the ruling of the Chair by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructing business, the Chair may move that the member be not further heard. If the motion is seconded, it must be put to the vote immediately without discussion.

15.4 If the member continues to behave improperly after a motion that the member be not further heard, the Chair may move that either the member leaves the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If the motion is seconded, it must be put to the vote immediately without discussion.

15.5 If there is a general disturbance at the meeting involving any person present, making the orderly conduct of business impractical, the Chair may adjourn the meeting for as long as he/she considers necessary.

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **16 Appointment of committees**

16.1 At its Annual Meeting, the Council may appoint standing committees and, at any other time, may appoint such committees as are necessary, or dissolve or alter the membership of committees.

16.2 Committee members shall not hold office later than the next Annual Meeting.

- 16.3 The Council may appoint persons other than Council members to any committee.
- 16.4 Committees may appoint sub-committees.

## **17 Chairing committee meetings**

- 17.1 The Council may elect Chairs and Deputy Chairs of committees when the committees are appointed. Alternatively, every committee shall, at its first meeting and before conducting any business, elect a Chair for the year. A committee may elect a Deputy Chair.
- 17.2 The Chair of the committee, or in his/her absence the Deputy Chair, will chair meetings of the committee. In their absence, the committee shall select a person to chair the meeting.

## **18 Committee Quorum**

- 18.1. The Council will set a quorum for committees on their appointment. This will normally be half of the members of the committee but in no case will it be fewer than 2 members.
- 18.2 No business shall be dealt with unless the committee is quorate. If there is no quorum, the meeting must be adjourned immediately.

## **19 Committee meeting procedures**

- 19.1 The provisions of the following Standing Orders (SO) governing Council business will equally apply to committee meetings:
- SO 4.3 – 4.7 on holding meetings
  - SO 6 on order of business (insofar as the items listed are relevant to the business of the committee)
  - SO 7 on minutes. Minutes of committee meetings should be circulated to all Council members.
  - SO 8 on admission of the public and press
  - SO 12 on rules of debate
  - SO 13 on voting
  - SO 15 on conduct
- 19.2 Any Council member not being a member of a committee may attend any meeting of the committee and the Chair may permit any such member to speak.

## **OTHER PROVISIONS**

### **20 Smoking**

- 20.1 Smoking is prohibited during any Council and committee meeting.

## **21 Exercise of Council functions by individual members**

- 21.1 A member cannot individually exercise any functions of the Council on behalf of the Council. A member must not issue any order relating to work being done for the Council or claim any right to enter any property on behalf of the Council.

## **22 Access to documents**

- 22.1 In addition to the provisions of SO 4.6, a reasonable number of copies of agendas and any open reports submitted to the Council shall be available, from the Clerk, for members of the public attending meetings.
- 22.2 Agreed minutes of Council meetings will be published on the Parish website ([www.brenchleyandmatfield.co.uk](http://www.brenchleyandmatfield.co.uk)).
- 22.3 Council minutes, committee minutes and any open reports or other open documents held by the Council will be available for inspection on application to the clerk. Copies of documents may also be requested. Individual copies of minutes will be available free of charge. Multiple or bulk copies of minutes and copies of other documents may be subject to a copying charge.
- 22.4 A Council member may, for the purpose of his/her duty (but not otherwise), inspect any document in possession of the Council or a committee and, if copies are available, shall on request, be supplied with one.