

MONKSILVER PARISH COUNCIL - STANDING ORDERS

1. COUNCILLORS

1.1. Following election or co-option to the Council, each Councillor will be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct. They will sign the form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk.

1.2 All Councillors will observe the Code of Conduct at all times when on Council business and no member will act in such a way that will bring the Council into disrepute, behave offensively in meetings or obstruct the Council's business.

1.3 The Code of Conduct adopted by the Council will define when a Councillor will declare a personal or prejudicial interest in an item for discussion at a Council meeting. Each Councillor will declare that interest and the nature of the interest at the commencement of the meeting.

2. ANNUAL MEETINGS

2.1 If the Annual Meeting is in an election year it must be held within 14 days after the election. If it is not an election year then the Annual Meeting will take place before the end of May.

2.2 If the outgoing Chairman is available then he/she will preside until a new Chairman is elected. The first business of the meeting will be the election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman and to receive their acceptance of office.

3. MEETINGS

3.1 Meetings will be held in an appropriate, accessible accommodation. Only when no other venue is available should meetings be held in premises used for the supply of alcohol.

3.2 At least 4 meetings will be held per year, The Annual Meeting will be an additional meeting. Agendas will be issued via e-mail unless otherwise arranged. The agenda must be issued at least 3 clear days before the meeting.

3.4 Public notices will be posted on the village notice board informing members of the public of the venue, date and time and business to be transacted at the meeting. The notice will be displayed at least 3 clear working days before the meeting.

3.5 Members of the public may speak at Council meetings at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting.

3.6 Meetings will be open to the public and press but they may be temporarily excluded from the meeting if the business is regarded as confidential, particularly if it is of a financial, legal or personal nature.

3.7 The agenda for the meeting will be agreed by the Chairman, and Clerk. The agenda will always include an item for Councillors to declare interests. An opportunity for public questions will be made available immediately before the commencement of the main meeting.

3.8 The Council may only take decisions on items clearly specified on the agenda.; if agreed by the Chairman, any urgent items which are not on the agenda may be discussed, but no decision may be made at that meeting.

3.9 The Chairman will preside at the meeting and will be responsible for the conduct of the meeting. If the Chairman is absent, the Vice-Chairman will preside. If he/she is not present, then the first item on the agenda will be the election of an appropriate Councillor who will chair the meeting. Whoever chairs the meeting will assume the duties of Chairman for that meeting or part of meeting.

3.10 The quorum for the Council will be one third of the total Councillor places, but in any case not fewer than three. If there are insufficient members present the no business will be transacted and a fresh notice will be issued to reconvene the meeting at a later date.

3.12 Voting at the meeting will be via a show of hands unless a majority of Councillors wants a ballot. Only the proposer and seconder will be recorded in the minutes unless a Councillor requests that their vote is noted.

3.13 In cases of equal votes the Chairman (or other person presiding) will have a second or casting vote

3.14 A minute of the meeting will be kept by the Clerk or other nominated person in the Clerk's absence. The minutes which are circulated will be draft minutes until they are approved by the Parish Council at their next meeting,

3.15 With regard to planning applications - if there is a personal interest, a statement can be made to the Parish Council meeting, but then the person must leave the room while discussions take place.

3.16 FINANCE

Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

3.16.1 The RFO is a statutory office and appointed by the Council. The Clerk will take on this role of managing the Council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices.

3.17 ESTIMATES & PRECEPTS

3.17.1 The RFO will compile estimates of income and expenditure annually for the Council's consideration. The Council will review the budget not later than the end of December in preparation for the precept being agreed and submitted to the District Council in January. The budget will be reviewed during the year against expenditure and income. Amendments to the budget will be discussed in Council and changes minuted.

3.18 ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

3.18.1 The RFO will determine all accounting procedures and financial records of the Council in accordance with Accounts and Audit regulations.

3.18.2 The RFO will complete the annual financial statements of the Council including the annual return as soon as practicable after the end of financial year and will submit and report on them to the Council. The Council will review each year and ensure there is an adequate, effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other procedures in line with proper practice.

3.18.3 An internal Auditor will be nominated to carry out the work to certify the financial statement. The person nominated will be competent and independent of the Council.

3.18.4 The RFO will submit the Annual Return to the external auditors by the due date, ensuring the return is complete.

3.19 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

3.19.1 The Council's banking arrangements will be made by the RFO and approved by the Council.

3.19.2 At least 2 people will be nominated to be authorised to sign cheques on behalf of the Council. This will normally be the Chairman and Clerk.

3.19.3 All items of expenditure will be authorised by the Council and the payments approved. The RFO will examine invoices and verify and certify the expenditure. Cheques will be authorised and signed by two authorised persons.

3.20 LOANS

3.20.1 All loans will be in the name of the Council and will not be entered into until all necessary approvals have been given. Any application for a loan must be approved by the Council, especially the terms and purpose. These terms must be reviewed annually.

4 INSURANCE

4.1 The Council will annually review the level of insurance cover and ensure it is adequate and appropriate to the activities of the Council. Minimum cover will include public liability, employers liability, money and fidelity guarantee.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 A risk assessment will be undertaken annually of all activities of the Council.

5.2. If the Council undertakes a new activity not covered by the existing risk assessment an assessment will be made before the activity commences.

6. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

6.1 The Council is subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. The Clerk will ensure the Council conforms to the requirements of the Act allowing public access to the appropriate documents.

7. . CLERK TO TBE COUNCIL

7.1 The Clerk will act as the Proper Officer of the Council and he/she will receive the declarations of the acceptance of office and notices disclosing interests; sign documents on behalf of the Council, issue agendas and notices of meeting; receive and distribute plans and documents on behalf of the Council; and also advise the bank of changes to mandates with the bank.

8. STANDING ORDERS

8.1 These and other standing orders will be reviewed annually by the Chairman and Clerk and any amendments will be agreed by the Council.

8.2 During the course of the meetings of the Council, the Chairman's decision as to the interpretation of the standing orders will be final. In cases of doubt, the Council will seek the advices of the Somerset Association of Local Councils.

8.3 The Council may resolve to suspend a Standing Order, in order to progress the business of the Council, and such decision will be included in the minutes. The suspension will not be taken lightly and it will be time-limited.

ADDENDUM TO MONKSILVER PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS ADOPTED 17TH AUGUST 2020 ZOOM MEETINGS

1. Public notices will be posted on the Monksilver Parish Council Website at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting. A hard copy will also be placed in the MPC Notice Board.
2. The Agenda and all associated information which is to be discussed will also be available on the Website.
3. Members of the public will need to notify their intention to attend by email to the clerk prior to 6.30pm on the day of the meeting. (monksilverparishcouncil@gmail.com)
4. Should any member of the public wish to attend the Zoom meeting but need instruction or guidance on how to use any software necessary, they should email the clerk at least 3 working days prior to the meeting. (monksilverparishcouncil@gmail.com) and assistance will be given.
5. If members of the public have a specific question for the meeting or wish to raise any concerns, details should be emailed to the Clerk at least 3 working days prior to the meeting. (monksilverparishcouncil@gmail.com) Subject to this and at the discretion of the Chairman, they will be allowed to speak to the council prior to the commencement of the meeting.
6. Members of the public attending the Zoom meeting will generally be muted. They must also NOT switch their cameras off.
7. Everyone attending the meeting are asked to:
 - a. Ensure the lighting on them is in front of them.
 - b. Ensure their background is natural and suitable.
8. The Chairman reserves the right to exclude any member of the public from the meeting should their actions affect the normal progress of the meeting.
9. Any person requesting to speak may raise a hand. The Chairman will outline the procedure at the beginning of any such meetings.
10. Voting will take place by a "a show of hands". If a show of hands is not clear enough, at the request of any Councillor or the Clerk, the Chairman will call the name of each attending councillor in turn and request them to state whether they support a proposal, oppose a proposal or abstain.
11. If a member in remote attendance is required to leave the meeting, owing to 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, that member must log out from the remote meeting for a period agreed with the Chairman, to allow discussion to continue without them. Once the agreed time has elapsed, or if notified by the Chairman via email or other remote messaging, the member should reconnect to the same meeting.

12. If the Council resolves to exclude the public from part or all of a meeting, the Chairman will make a statement to explain reasons for the public's exclusion. On conclusion of the public business, the Chairman will thank the public for their attendance, notify Councillors that a new meeting invitation will be immediately issued by email to Councillors only, and close the remote meeting.
13. All Standing Orders pertaining to normal meetings will continue to apply.

These Standing Orders were re-adopted by Monksilver Parish Council at a meeting of the Council held on the 13th May 2024.