

WORMEGAY PARISH COUNCIL

Report of: Clerk of the Council

To: Wormegay Parish Council

Subject: Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Date Created: 5th September 2006

Reviewed: 5th August 2022 Minute ref 5.8.22 item 3

21st May 2019 Minute ref 25.5.19

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1. Introduction

The District Auditor has recommended that the Council reviews the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

STANDING ORDERS

1. Powers and Duties of the Chairman

The person presiding at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chairman in relation to the conduct of the meeting.

2. Proper Officer

The Proper Officer of the Council is the Clerk. The Responsible Financial Officer of the Council is the Clerk. Other duties and responsibilities of the Clerk are as laid down in the Conditions of Service Contract and Job Description.

Notwithstanding those duties and responsibilities, it shall be the duty of the Clerk to advise Members on the content and interpretation of these Standing Orders.

3. Quorum

Three Members shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present when the Council meets or if during a meeting the number of Members, for whatever reason, falls below the quorum, the business not transacted at that meeting shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the Chairman may decide.

4. Voting

Members shall vote by show of hands unless the meeting decides otherwise.

If the meeting so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of the Members who voted on any question and how they voted.

The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote and, in the case of equality of votes, may give a casting vote, whether or not an original vote was given.

5. Order of Business

The order of business shall be stated on an agenda paper which shall be delivered to each Member along with the summons convening the meeting at least three clear days prior to the date of the meeting by paper copy or email, and displayed in the Parish Notice Boards.

6. Resolutions Moved on Notice

Except as provided by these Standing Orders, no resolution may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been included on the Agenda.

Members may put an item or notice of resolution on the Agenda by giving the Clerk written notice of the item or resolution at least seven clear days prior to the meeting to which that agenda relates.

Every resolution, amendment or recommendation shall be relevant to some subject over which the Council has the power or which affects its area.

7. Resolutions Moved Without Notice

Resolutions on procedural matters may be moved without notice including those to vary the order of business on grounds of urgency or procedural efficiency. Such resolutions shall be put to the vote without discussion.

8. Rules of Debate

All remarks shall be addressed to the Chairman.

No discussion shall take place on the minutes of previous meetings except upon their accuracy. Corrections to the minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Chairman.

A Member shall, except as provided by these Standing Orders, only be entitled to speak once on any motion or amendment.

A Member shall direct comments to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a point of order.

No speech by a mover of a resolution shall exceed three minutes and no other speech shall exceed two minutes except by consent of the Council.

The mover of a resolution shall have the right of reply not exceeding three minutes.

The ruling of the Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of an item shall not be discussed.

A representative of the local Constabulary shall be allowed to speak at Council meetings at the discretion of the Chairman.

9. Closure

A motion of closure of a debate may be moved at any time but must be proposed and seconded without comment. The Chairman may refuse such motion if he feels that the question before the Council has not been sufficiently debated.

10. Rescission of Previous Resolutions

A decision of the Council (whether affirmative or negative) shall not be reversed within six months except by a special resolution, the written notice of which bears the names of at least three Members of the Council. When such a resolution has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

11. Confidential Business

No Member of the Council shall disclose to any person, not being a Member of the Council, any business declared to be confidential by the Council.

12. County and District Councillors

County and District Councillors who are not also Parish Councillors shall be invited to attend meetings and shall be sent copies of agendas, minutes and other relevant documentation. They may be allowed to speak at the discretion of the Chairman.

13. Length of Meetings

Except at the discretion of the Chairman, all meetings of the Council shall finish not later than two hours after commencement. Any business not transacted shall be carried over to the next meeting or such other date as the Chairman may decide.

14. Suspension of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders may be suspended at any time and for any period of time by resolution.

15. Smoking

Smoking shall not be permitted during meetings.

16. Standing Orders to be Given to Members

A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to all Members.

17. Interpretation

In these Standing Orders words importing one gender shall include all genders and the singular includes the plural and vice versa.

18. Parishioner Participation

Participation of Parishioners is limited to 3 minutes each during meetings to voice any concerns they may have.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. General

- 1.1 These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council and shall only be amended by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) under the policy direction of the Council shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 1.3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

2. Annual Estimates

- 2.1 A budget shall be prepared by the RFO for the January meeting.
- 2.2 During January of each year the Council shall set the precept to be levied for the ensuing year.
- 2.3 The budget shall form the basis of the financial control for the ensuing year.

3. Budgetary Control

- 3.1 Revenue expenditure may be incurred up to the amounts included in the Council's budget.
- 3.2 The RFO shall provide the Council with a statement of income and expenditure as requested.
- 3.3 The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such urgency that, in the opinion of the Clerk, it must be done at once, whether or not there is budgetary provision, subject to a financial limit of £200. The Clerk shall report the action taken to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.4 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contracts entered into or tender accepted involving expenditure on capital account unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval can be obtained.

4. Accounting and Audit

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 or other Statutory Instrument which may supersede those Regulations.
- 4.2 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual accounts of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and in any case by the statutory date of 30 September and submit such accounts and report thereon to the Council.
- 4.3 The RFO shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996.

5. Banking Arrangements

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council.
- 5.2 Relevant invoices shall be presented to the Council and if in order shall be authorised for payment by a resolution of the Council.
- 5.3 Cheques drawn on the Council's bank accounts shall be signed by two elected Members.

6. Payment of Accounts

- 6.1 All payments shall be effected by cheque or by direct debit drawn on the Council's bankers.
- 6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined verified and certified by the RFO as evidenced by the presentation to Council for payment. Before such certification the RFO shall be satisfied that the works, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out. Examined and approved.

7. Payment of Salaries and Wages

- 7.1 It shall be the responsibility of the RFO to calculate payment of salaries and wages in accordance with the rates in force and arrange for such payment to be made via the Business Payments Service of the Council's banker.
- 7.2 All time sheets shall be examined by the RFO to ensure that they have been signed and duly certified that such time has been worked.

8. Loans and Investments

- 8.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO in the name of the Council after approval by the Council and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with Council policy.
- 8.2 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.3 All borrowings shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.4 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

9. Income

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2 Any bad debts shall be reported to the Council.
- 9.3 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

10. Contracts

- 10.1 An official order, letter or email will be issued for all work or service paid for by the council. All Councillors and Officers are responsible for obtaining

good value for money at all times. An Officer procuring goods and services on behalf of the Council will ensure that good value and appropriate terms are obtained for the transaction.

- 10.2 Quotations shall be obtained for the supply of goods or services over the value of £500.00. The number of quotations obtained shall be commensurate with the level of expenditure and risk associated with the purchase.
- 10.3 All estimates will be approved by the Council. Whilst the Council is not obliged to accept the lowest quotation, the reasons for accepting the quotation will be recorded.
- 10.4 If the Chair, Councillors or other Officer of the Council propose to attend training or other events in relation to their Council duties, and such attendance will require expenditure from Council funds, this shall be put to the Council for approval prior to booking and attendance.

11. Insurance

- 11.1 The RFO shall be responsible for effecting all insurance and negotiating all claims against the Council's insurers.
- 11.2 The RFO shall give prompt notification to the Council of all new risks and of any amendments affecting existing cover.
- 11.3 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in suitable fidelity guarantee cover.

12. Grants

- 12.1 The Parish Council awards grants, at its absolute discretion, to not-for-profit, charitable or volunteer organisations or worthy causes which can demonstrate a clear need for financial support to achieve an objective which will benefit the Parish by:-
 - Providing a service
 - Enhancing the quality of life
 - Improving the environment
 - Promoting the Parish of Wormegay in a positive way
- 12.2 Grant Application Process. The Clerk to the Council will receive all applications in the first instance and will then collate all the necessary information from the applicant ready for presentation and discussion at the appropriate Council meeting. Organisations requesting financial assistance are required to submit a completed application form available from the Parish Clerk.

12.3 Each year the Council will agree the absolute budget for available grants which will not exceed the total Section 137 elector rate. Organisations can submit one grant application per financial year up to the value of £200. Each application will be assessed on its own merits. However, to ensure as fair a distribution as possible of available funds, the Parish Council will take into account the amount and frequency of any previous awards, and the geographical spread within the parish. Due account may also be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or fund-raising activities. The Parish Council may make the award of any grant or subsidy subject to such additional conditions and requirements as it considers appropriate. The Parish Council reserves the right to refuse any grant application which it considers to be inappropriate, or against the objectives of the Council.

13. Revision of Financial Regulations

13.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review these financial regulations from time to time.