

## STANDING ORDERS

### SECTION ONE: MEETINGS

Mandatory for Full Council meetings ●

Mandatory for committee meetings ●

References to committees shall apply equally to sub-committees

1. **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.** ●
2. **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.** ●
3. **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.** ●
4. **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.** ●●

### Public Questions and Statements

5. A standard item will appear on all agendas of Ordinary Meetings of the Council and Standing Committees to allow, at the discretion of the Town Mayor/Chair, those -members of the public on the electoral roll of Godalming Town Council; or a young person under 18 whose parent or guardian is on the electoral roll; or with business premises in the town (evidenced by a business rates bill); or user of the Town Council's premises; to make representations, ask or answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda or other matters not on the agenda-
  - i. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with Standing Order 5 shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
  - ii. Subject to Standing Order 5i. a member of the public shall not speak for more than three minutes.
  - iii. A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given. If a matter raised is one for Principal Councils or other authorities, the person making representations will be informed of the appropriate contact details.

- iv. A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chair of the meeting.
- v. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

### Questions by Members

- 6. At a Council meeting, any member of the Council may ask a question of the Town Mayor/Chair or the Town Clerk which relates to a matter which affects a function of the Council or its area or the inhabitants of the area or some of them, provided proper notice has been given.
  - i. Notice of the question must be given in writing and delivered to the Town Clerk at least two clear working days before the meeting, signifying to whom the question is put.
  - ii. A reply to the question can be given verbally at the meeting or by written reply or by indicating that the question will be referred to a future meeting of the Council or of a Committee, Working/Task Group
  - iii. Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for questions.
  - iv. Each question will be put and answered without discussion, but the person questioned may decline to answer.
- 7. **Subject to Standing Order 8 below, a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To 'report' means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of the meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report of commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
- 8. **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission. ●●**
- 9. **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. ●●**
- 10. **Subject to Standing Orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Town Mayor may in their absence be done by, to or before the Deputy Town Mayor. ●**
- 11. **The Town Mayor, if present, shall preside at a meeting of the Full Council. If the Town Mayor is absent from the meeting, the Deputy Town Mayor, if present, shall preside. If both the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor are absent from the meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting. ●**
- 12. **Subject to a meeting being quorate (at least one third of the council or committee subject to a minimum of three councillors), all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting. ●●**
- 13. **The Chair may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise a casting vote whether or not the Chair gave an original vote. (See also Standing Orders 28 and 29 below.) ●●**

14. **Unless provided 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 their vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda. ●
15. The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
  - i. The time and place of the meeting;
  - ii. The names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
  - iii. Interest that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
  - iv. The grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
  - v. Whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered
  - vi. If there was a public participation sessions; and
  - vii. The resolutions made.
16. A councillor shall submit apologies for absence to the Town Clerk prior to a meeting.
17. During a prolonged period of absence, a meeting may be asked to approve, by a resolution, a councillor's reason for absence, such resolution shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the approval was given.
18. **A councillor or non-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 the matter.** ●●
19. **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. ●●
20. Meetings shall not exceed a period of three hours or by resolution of the meeting three hours and thirty minutes.

## **SECTION TWO: ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

*See also Section One above*

21. **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.**
22. **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.**
23. **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6.00pm.**
24. **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.**
25. **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor of the Council.**

26. **The Town Mayor, unless the individual has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office, and preside at the annual meeting until a new Town Mayor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
27. **The Deputy Town Mayor, unless the individual has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Town Mayor at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
28. **In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has not been re-elected as a member of the Council that Town Mayor shall nonetheless preside at the annual meeting until a successor Town Mayor has been elected. The current Town Mayor shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
29. **In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has been re-elected as a member of the Council, that Town Mayor shall preside at the meeting until a new Town Mayor has been elected. The current Town Mayor may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
30. Following the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
  - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor 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 Town Mayor of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date.**
  - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council.
  - iii. Receipt of nominations to existing committees.
  - iv. Appointment of any new committees, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them.
  - v. Review and adoption of appropriate Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
  - vi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.
  - vii. In a year of elections, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future.
  - viii. Setting the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the Full Council for the year ahead, if not already set.

### **SECTION THREE: PROPER OFFICER/RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER/LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **Proper Officer**

31. The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
32. The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Finance Officer.
33. The Proper Officer shall:
  - i. **At least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a committee or sub-committee, serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residence or by email**

**authenticated in such a manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**

- ii. **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

*See Standing Order 2 for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of the Full Council and Standing Order 3 meeting of a committee.*

- iii. Subject to Standing Order 36-43, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 7 days before the meeting confirming withdrawal of it;
- iv. **Convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Town Mayor, occasioned by a casual vacancy in the office;**
- v. **Facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- vi. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vii. Hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- viii. Hold a copy of every councillors' register of interests;
- ix. Assist with responding to requests made under the freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- x. Liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- xi. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xii. Assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information and other legitimate requirements (e.g. The Limitation Act 1980);
- xiii. Arrange for deeds to be executed; (*see also Standing Orders 91 & 92*);
- xiv. After consultation with the Chair of the Policy & Management Committee, along with the appropriate Ward Members, respond on behalf of Godalming Town Council Committee to interested party's planning notification letters received by Godalming Town Council relating to applications on premises adjacent to council land/property;
- xv. Manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvi. Retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without resolution to that effect. (*See also Standing Orders 91 & 92*).

### **Responsible Finance Officer**

34. The Responsible Finance Officer shall do the following:
  - i. 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.

### **Leader of the Council/Spokesperson**

35. At the Annual Council Meeting the Council will appoint a Leader of the Council who will normally hold the position of Chair of the Policy & Management Committee.

Since no individual Member may act alone in an executive capacity, the Clerk is delegated and directed to work with the Leader to undertake overall management of the business of the Council, including:

- i. Day to day decisions on the implementation of Council Policy
- ii. Overseeing work to implement Council Strategy

- iii. Managing Urgent Business
- iv. Liaising with political groups to propose a consensus on Council priorities

It should be noted that the Leader of the Council is a political position and does not replace or usurp the statutory position and role of the Town Mayor as Chair of the Council

#### **SECTION FOUR: MOTIONS REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE**

- 36. In accordance with Standing Order 33i above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least nine clear days before the next meeting.
- 37. The Proper Officer may, before including a motion in the agenda received in accordance with Standing Order 36 above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- 38. If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with Standing Order 36 above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer in clear and certain language at least seven clear days before the meeting.
- 39. If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chair 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 or rejected in the agenda.
- 40. Having consulted the Chair or councillors pursuant to Standing Order 39 above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.
- 41. Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- 42. Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for the rejection.
- 43. A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and, in any event, 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.

#### **SECTION FIVE: MOTIONS NOT REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE**

- 44. 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 time limits for speaking;
  - xi. To exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other 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 or legal requirements**);
- xvi. To adjourn the meeting;
- xvii. To close the meeting.

## **SECTION SIX: RULES OF DEBATE**

- 45. Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Chair's direction for reasons of expedience.
- 46. Subject to Standing Orders 36-43 above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- 47. Subject to Standing Order 33i above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.
- 48. An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the Chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the Chair.
- 49. A councillor may move amendments to their own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.
- 50. 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.

The amendment shall not negate the motion.

- 51. A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.
- 52. Only one amendment shall be moved at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chair. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.
- 53. One or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chair considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.
- 54. The number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by an individual councillor, is limited to one.
- 55. If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chair.
- 56. 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.
- 57. The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.

58. 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.
59. Unless permitted by the Chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
  - i. To speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
  - ii. To move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
  - iii. To make a point of order;
  - iv. To give a personal explanation; or
  - v. To exercise a right of reply.
60. 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 that councillor considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting which concerns the councillor.
61. A point of order shall be decided by the Chair and the Chair's decision shall be final.
62. If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
63. 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 that person to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a 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.
64. Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chair 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 their right of reply.
65. Excluding motions under Standing Order 63, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 2 minutes without the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

## **SECTION SEVEN: CODE OF CONDUCT**

66. All councillors shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
67. Unless granted a dispensation, a councillor shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which that councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest. The councillor may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which the disclosable pecuniary interest existed.
68. **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.



69. A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer or by a meeting of the Council, or committee for which the dispensation is required, and that decision is final.
70. A dispensation request shall confirm:
- i. The description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
  - ii. Whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
  - iii. The date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
  - iv. An explanation as to why the dispensation is sought
71. Subject to Standing Orders 68 and 69 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 or at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or for which the dispensation is required.
72. **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with Standing Order 69 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**
73. Upon notification by the Borough 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 Orders 160 to 163 (Management of Information), report the matter to the Council.
74. Where notification in Standing Order 73 relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Town Mayor of this fact, and the Town Mayor 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 75.
75. The Council may:
- i. Provide information or evidence where such a disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or it is a legal requirement;
  - ii. Seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for the investigation of the matter.
76. **Upon notification by the Borough Council that a councillor has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against that councillor. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

## **SECTION EIGHT: MINUTES**

77. 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.

78. No discussion of the draft 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 44i above.
79. Minutes, including any amendment to correct their accuracy, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
80. If the Chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, that Chair shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:
- “The Chair 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 that view was not upheld by the majority of the ( ) and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
81. Following 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.

#### **SECTION NINE: DISORDERLY CONDUCT**

82. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this Standing Order is ignored, the Chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
83. If person(s) disregards the request of the Chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the Chair 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.
84. If a resolution made under Standing Order 83 above is ignored, the Chair 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.

#### **SECTION TEN: RESCISSION OF PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS**

85. 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 14 councillors of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
86. When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to Standing Order 85 above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months. This Standing Order and Standing Order 85 shall apply mutatis mutandis to the proceedings of Committees.

#### **SECTION ELEVEN: VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS**

87. Where more than two 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 Town Mayor’s casting vote.

## SECTION TWELVE: ACCOUNTS & ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

### 88. Accounts and Accounting Statement

- a. "Proper practices" in Standing Orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b. All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved, and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c. The Responsible Finance Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September, and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
  - i. The Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter.
  - ii. The Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
  - iii. The balances held at the end of the quarter being reported, and

Which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

### 89. As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Finance Officer shall provide:

- i. Each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
- ii. To the Council the accounting statement for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.

### 90. The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

### 91. All payments made by the Council shall be processed in accordance with its adopted Financial Regulations, including procedures for online banking, dual authorisation, and electronic record-keeping. A schedule of payments approved by councillors shall be included with meeting minutes as appropriate. In accordance with good governance practices, no signatory shall approve a payment to themselves, and evidence of authorisation shall be retained for audit purposes.

## SECTION THIRTEEN: EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

### 92. A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.

### 93. **In accordance with a resolution made under Standing Order 91 above, the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of the Town Mayor or in the Town Mayor's absence the Deputy Town Mayor and another member of the Council. Both the Town Mayor (and Deputy Town Mayor) and the member shall sign the deed as witnesses.**

## **SECTION FOURTEEN: COMMITTEES**

*See also Standing Orders 1- 20 above*

94. For the conduct of day-to-day business of the Council there shall be established four standing committees to be known as the:

- Policy & Management Committee
- Environment & Planning Committee
- Audit Committee
- Staffing Committee

95. **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**

- a. **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**

The terms of reference of the standing committees shall be as follows:

### **Policy & Management Committee**

96. Purpose of the Policy & Management Committee

To address and, where appropriate, formulate policy for consideration by the Council; to manage the Council's financial and other assets as delegated by the Council; to secure the good governance of the Council's affairs, media relations, external relationships, committee arrangements and day-to-day business.

97. Functions of the Policy & Management Committee

- i. To identify key policy issues facing the Council and to formulate, for the Council's consideration, its strategies and timetables for dealing with them;
- ii. To maintain an overview of Council initiatives and report to the Council on their impact and effectiveness;
- iii. To make recommendations to the Council on constitutional issues;
- iv. To ensure the Council is adequately resourced to achieve its aims;
- v. To prepare the annual budget reflecting the Council's agreed strategy and priorities, putting this forward for the Council's approval and recommend a precept to the Full Council;
- vi. To secure effective control of expenditure authorising items of expenditure on behalf of the Council and to scrutinising expenditure against budgets through the year;
- vii. To appoint the auditors of the accounts;
- viii. To approve charges for the use of Council properties; and on other fees and charges;
- ix. To decide on applications for Service Level Agreements and Council Community Grants made by local organisations;
- x. To ensure the proper management of the properties and amenities owned, controlled or provided by the Council;
- xi. To develop strategy on media relations, and to formulate policy on public participation;
- xii. In consultation with the Town Clerk, to agree priorities for the Management of Committee business;
- xiii. To recommend appointment to outside bodies;
- xiv. To act as a channel for communications with external organisations;
- xv. To oversee the maintenance and development of the Council's website;
- xvi. On behalf of the Council, to take all action that the Council can lawfully take in relation to such matters;
- xvii. To recommend to the Full Council a policy for the appointment of Town Mayor and

- Deputy Town Mayor and to keep it under review;
- xviii. To consider and determine in consultation with the Town Mayor all matters relating to the Council's civic and ceremonial functions, and events; and
- xix. To recommend to Full Council an allowance for the Town Mayor.

## **Environment & Planning Committee**

### 98. Purpose of the Environment & Planning Committee

To address and, where appropriate, formulate policy for consideration by the Council and to discharge the Council's functions relating to the local environment and infrastructure

### 99. Functions of the Environment & Planning Committee

- i. To identify key environmental and planning policy issues facing the Council and to formulate, for the Council's consideration, its policy towards the natural and built environment and principles to guide the Council's consideration of specific issues and proposals;
- ii. To develop proposals for the environmental improvement of Council land;
- iii. Consideration and comment on issues relating to local and regional plans and any other planning or highway matters the Town Council is consulted upon;
- iv. To maintain an overview of Council environmental and planning initiatives and report to the Council on their impact and effectiveness;
- v. To decide on applications made by local organisations for funding from the Council's Carbon-reduction and biodiversity fund grant scheme, when such grant funds are contained within the annual budget;
- vi. To consider applications for Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and where appropriate make recommendations to Full Council for the award of Neighbourhood CIL
- vii. Consideration of and comment on applications for planning permission and other matters within the terms of the Town and Country Planning Acts and related legislation, including compliance with the Policies set out in the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan
- viii. Monitoring and reviewing the continued validity of the Neighbourhood Plan
- ix. Consideration and comment on issues relating to Street naming.
- x. To agree priorities for the Management of Committee business;
- xi. On behalf of the Council, to take all action that the Council can lawfully take in relation to such matters.
- xii. To develop and review long term strategic management of Nightingale and Eashing Cemeteries, including site visits by elected Members

## **Staffing Committee**

### 100. Purpose of the Staffing Committee

To consider all matters relating to the appointment and management of Council staff.

### 101. Functions of the Staffing Committee

- i. To oversee the appointment and management of Council staff, delegating responsibility to the Town Clerk as they consider appropriate, or to an interview panel, but acting subject to the approval of the Full Council in relation to the appointment of the Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
- ii. To provide support to and management of the Town Clerk. Monitor and manage hours of working, home working, annual/flexi/compassionate/time off in lieu leave and absences and sick leave.
- iii. Review employee's remuneration and make recommendations thereon to The Council.

- iv. Review Conditions of Employment, Contracts of Employment and Job Descriptions as appropriate to ensure they meet the needs of the Council and comply with relevant legislation and established good practice
- v. To review the staffing structures to ensure they are sufficient to deliver the aims of The Council
- vi. Develop, implement and review Employment related policies, including Health & Safety policies
- vii. Manage The Council's compliance with Employment legislation, including Health & Safety policies
- viii. Ensure an appropriate Appraisal system is in place and monitor the effectiveness of the system
- ix. Provide appropriately trained Members to conduct the Appraisal(s) of the Town Clerk
- x. Set appropriate SMART objectives for the Town Clerk based on the aims and priorities of The Council
- xi. Hold regular informal meetings with the Town Clerk and Staff to discuss and review employment matters
- xii. Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to support staff development and training and to ensure that such training is in line with the allocated funds.
- xiii. Make appropriate recommendations to The Council where an identified training need would exceed the allocated funding
- xiv. Manage Disciplinary and Grievance procedures in accordance with the appropriate council policy and processes
- xv. Where necessary recommend appropriate actions to The Council
- xvi. If required appoint an appeals panel drawn from Members of the Staffing Committee or from an external body as appropriate to the circumstances and in accordance with appropriate council policy and procedures
- xvii. To consider any request by a claimant for variation under exceptional circumstances of the Council's discretionary powers as set out in the Council's Policy on the Exercise of Employer Discretions and to make recommendations thereon to the Full Council.

Note: Recommendations in-line with approved budgetary resource may go direct to Full Council, recommendations requiring additional financial resource are, where practicable, to be scrutinised by the Policy & Management committee before consideration by Full Council.

#### 102. Delegated Spending Authority

In order to undertake its functions, the Town Clerk is authorised to spend up to £5,000 per annum allocated from the professional fees revenue budget when such expenditure is necessary to provide advice to the Staffing Committee. The Chair of the Staffing Committee may seek advice from the Council's HR Service provider when seeking advice on behalf of the Staffing Committee on matters relating to the performance or conduct of the Town Clerk. Expenditure requirements in excess of the authorised limit to be agreed in advance of expenditure commitment by resolution of the Council or if expediency is required the Policy & Management Committee.

#### 103. Deliberately left blank

### **Audit Committee**

#### 104. Purpose of the Audit Committee

To provide assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

#### 105. Functions of the Audit Committee

- i. To consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements, the

- control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements;
- ii. To review annually the effectiveness of internal audit;
- iii. To receive all reports from the internal auditor; and
- iv. To review the financial statements, external auditor's opinion and reports to members, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit;
- v. To consider the audited accounts and report on them to the Council;
- vi. To oversee the Council's banking and investment arrangements and keep investment policy under review

### **Accountability of Committees**

106. The Standing Committees shall be accountable to the Council and shall report to each meeting of the Council except for the Statutory Annual Meeting.

### **Composition of Committees**

107. The Policy & Management Committee shall comprise all elected councillors excepting that the Town Mayor shall not be a member of the Policy & Management Committee. The Town Clerk shall be responsible for Clerking the Policy & Management Committee.
108. The Environment & Planning Committee shall comprise all elected councillors excepting that The Town Mayor shall not be a member of the Environment & Planning Committee. The Town Clerk shall be responsible for Clerking the Environment & Planning Committee.
109. The Staffing Committee shall comprise six councillors, none of whom may serve on the Audit Committee, one of the six members of the Staffing Committee shall be the Chair of the Policy & Management Committee. The Town Mayor shall not be a member of the Staffing Committee.
110. The Chair of the Staffing Committee shall be responsible for nominating the Committee Clerk, who may be drawn from The Council's Officers or Committee Members as appropriate, the Chair is to ensure that minutes are provided to the Town Clerk within 4 working days of the close of the meeting.
111. Deliberately left
112. The Audit Committee shall comprise five councillors, none of whom may serve on the Staffing Committee. The Town Mayor shall not be a member of the Audit Committee. The Responsible Finance Officer shall be responsible for Clerking the Committee.

### **Substitutes**

113. Substitutes may be used when councillors are unable to attend a meeting of the Staffing or Audit committees. Such substitutes may be called for any Committee meeting up to 4.00pm on the day of the meeting,
114. A maximum of two substitutes per Committee shall be permitted. It shall be the responsibility of each councillor who gives notice of apology for non-attendance for a committee meeting to arrange an appropriate substitute. Whilst preferable to maintain political balance, substitutes nominated by the councillor who is unable to attend do not have to be of the same political group.

### **Frequency of Committee Meetings**

115. As far as practicable the Policy & Management Committee will meet approximately every six weeks, the Environment & Planning Committee every three weeks and all other committees will meet as and when required but at least once per quarter.

## **Appointment of Committee Members**

116. As soon as practicable once the political representation of the council is determined, the Town Clerk shall determine the number of places on Committees which are to be filled by the members of each political group, ensuring, as far as possible, that the allocation of places reflects the balance of political representation on the Council as a whole.
117. At the annual meeting of the Council, the Council shall seek nominations and appoint councillors to Committees in line with the provisions of Standing Order 116.

## **Term of Office of Standing Committees**

118. The Council will determine the term of office of members of Standing Committees. In the absence of any decision by the Council to the contrary committee members will hold office until:
- i. They resign, collectively or individually and their successors are appointed; or
  - ii. A review of committee places by the Council; or
  - iii. Resignation as a member or members of the Council; or
  - iv. The first business meeting of the next Local Government Year. In an election year they shall retire when the Council is dissolved for the election.

## **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

119. Each Standing Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from among their number at meetings convened for this purpose. The term of office of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair shall be the same as that of their Committee. Chair and Vice-Chair may be re-elected for second and subsequent terms of office.

## **Procedure at Standing Committees**

120. Except for reports and confidential papers of the Staffing Committee, and confidential papers relating to other committees, which shall only be circulated to members of the relevant committee, agendas and any supporting papers, reports and minutes of standing committees shall be circulated to all councillors at the same time as they are circulated to members of committees.
121. Any councillor, having given notice to the Chair and the Town Clerk may attend any meeting of any Standing Committee and may address that meeting on an agenda item with the leave of the person in the chair for that meeting.
122. The provisions of Standing Orders 1 to 20 shall apply mutatis mutandis to all Committee proceedings provided that where, at any Committee, any resolution is carried by a majority of less than two votes, then immediately after the vote is taken it shall be open to any councillor present to propose that the motion shall be referred to the Town Council in the form of a recommendation for adoption at its next meeting. If such a proposition is supported by not less than one third of the councillors present at a meeting, then the motion to which it relates shall be treated as a recommendation instead of a decision taken under delegated powers.
123. Standing Committees may, at their discretion, invite up to two individuals who are not members, including those who are not councillors, to take part in their discussions on specific subjects for periods up to one year. Such individuals may receive the Committee papers which relate to their subject; but may not attend for other business declared to be confidential by the Committee and may not vote on any Committee decisions, the period of such an individual's participation may be extended beyond one year.



## Scheme of Delegation

124. The Councils Scheme of Delegation authorises Standing Committees of the Council, the Proper Officer, Responsible Finance Officer and nominates staff to act within delegated authority in the specific circumstances detailed. These delegations are necessary for the effective day to day running of the Council. The Scheme of Delegation shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually along with the review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
125. Deliberately left blank

## Task & Finish Groups

126. Every standing committee may appoint one or more Task & Finish Group for purposes, which shall be specified in terms of reference by the standing committee. The committee shall also prescribe the time limit, not exceeding one-year, within which the Task & Finish Group must complete its work. A Task & Finish Group shall be disbanded as soon as it has completed the tasks given to it.
127. Each Task & Finish Group will provide a regular update to the appointing standing committee; that update shall form an item on the agenda of that committee. Otherwise, the procedure of the Task & Finish Group may be informal. A Task & Finish Group has no authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council. Decisions based on the work of a Task & Finish Group are the responsibility of the appointing committee to which the Task & Finish Group makes its report.

## Advisory Committees

128. Every Standing Committee may appoint one or more advisory committees for purposes, which shall be specified in terms of reference by the Standing Committee.
129. **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
130. The provisions of Standing Orders 1 to 20 shall apply mutatis mutandis to all advisory committee proceedings (but only in so far as those provisions can apply to non-councillors). Non-councillor members of an advisory committee are not bound by the Code of Conduct but are expected to declare pecuniary and other registerable interests at meetings of the advisory committee as though they were bound by the Code.
131. Agendas and any supporting papers, reports and minutes of an advisory committees shall be circulated to all members of that advisory committee. Reports and minutes of an advisory committee will be circulated in accordance with Standing Order 120 above and will be received on the next agenda of the parent Committee.

## SECTION FIFTEEN: EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

*See also Section One above*

132. **The Town Mayor may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
133. **If the Town Mayor 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.**

134. The Chair of a committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee at any time.
135. If the Chair of a committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by two councillors.

## **SECTION SIXTEEN: FINANCIAL CONTROLS & PROCUREMENT**

136. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Finance Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
- i. The keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
  - ii. The assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
  - iii. The work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv. The inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. Whether contracts with an estimated value below **£30,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
137. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
138. **Public contracts must be made in accordance with GTC Financial Regulations Section 5.**
139. All payments made by the Council shall be processed in accordance with its adopted Financial Regulations, including procedures for online banking, dual authorisation, and electronic record-keeping. In accordance with good governance practices, no signatory shall approve a payment to themselves, and evidence of authorisation shall be retained for audit purposes.
140. The Council's arrangements for electronic payments, including internet banking, BACS, CHAPS, variable direct debits, and standing orders, shall follow the procedures set out in the Council's Financial Regulations. These arrangements shall ensure that payments are subject to appropriate member authorisation, dual control, and audit transparency.
141. Councillors appointed as bank signatories or online authorisers shall be responsible for verifying that payment lists are accurate and reflect previously authorised expenditure. Evidence of authorisation and payment shall be retained in accordance with audit requirements and reported to the Policy & Management Committee.

## **SECTION SEVENTEEN: CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

142. Canvassing councillors or the members of a 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.
143. A councillor or a member of a 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.

144. This Standing Order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

## **SECTION EIGHTEEN: INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS, CONFIDENTIAL OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION & UNAUTHORISED ACTIVITIES**

145. Subject to Standing Orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, or its committees shall be available for inspection by councillors.
146. 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.
147. Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
148. A councillor in breach of the provisions of Standing Order 143 above may be removed from a committee by a resolution of the Council.
149. Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council or a 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.

## **SECTION NINETEEN: MATTERS AFFECTING COUNCIL STAFF**

150. If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the body meeting has decided whether the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to Standing Order 4 above.
151. Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Staffing Committee are to be informed if any absence is likely to occasion the closing of the Town Council's offices. The Town Clerk shall make a summary report of staff absences to each meeting of the Staffing Committee.
152. Annual staff appraisals shall be conducted in accordance with the Council's Appraisal Scheme.
153. All grievance matters shall be handled in accordance with the Council's adopted Grievance Policy and Procedures.
154. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance, or disciplinary matters.
155. 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.
156. 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.

157. Only the Town Clerk, or the appropriate line manager or the Chair of the Staffing Committee or, in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair of the Staffing Committee shall have access to employee's records of employment.
158. Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment shall be provided only to the Town Clerk or the Chair of the Staffing Committee.

## **SECTION TWENTY: RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**

159. **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
160. **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

## **SECTION TWENTY-ONE: RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

161. Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

## **SECTION TWENTY-TWO: RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

162. The Council's responsibilities under the data protection legislation includes the following, this list is not exclusive, see also Standing Orders Section Twenty-Three Management of Information.
  - i. **The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer.**
  - ii. **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.**
  - iii. **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
  - iv. **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
  - v. **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
  - vi. **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

## **SECTION TWENTY-THREE: MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION**

*(See also Standing Order 154 & 155)*

163. **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
164. **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (eg. The Limitation Act 1980).**

165. **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
166. **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

#### **SECTION TWENTY-FOUR: STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY**

167. 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.
168. A motion to add to or vary or 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 names of as least two councillors.
169. The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's Standing Orders to a councillor upon delivery of that councillor's declaration of acceptance of office.
170. The Chair's decision as to the application of Standing Orders at meetings shall be final.

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