



# *Cowden Parish Council*

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## **COWDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **STANDING ORDERS**

#### **MEETINGS**

1. Meetings to begin at 7.30pm and finish at 9.30pm unless otherwise agreed.
2. Date of meetings to be fixed at AGM. Usually six months in the year (every other month) and on the second Monday in the month. Further meetings fixed as required.
3. Meetings to be held in the Memorial Hall. If not possible another suitable venue to be used.
4. The Statutory Annual Meeting:
  - (a) in an election year shall be held within fourteen days of elections to the Council and;
  - (b) in a year which is not an election year shall be held on any day in May.
5. At each Annual Meeting the first business shall be:
  - (a) to elect a Chairperson;
  - (b) to receive the Chairperson's declaration of Acceptance of Office or, if not then received, decide when it shall be received;
  - (c) to decide when any declarations of Acceptance of Office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.
6. Documenting Meeting Proceedings:
  - (a) A person present at a meeting may take notes, having advised the Chairperson of their intent. Recording or filming of proceedings is strictly forbidden.
  - (b) A formal record of the meeting is issued by the Parish Council following approval by Members at the subsequent Parish Council meeting.

#### **APOLOGIES**

7. Apologies for absence with reasons to be given to the Clerk or the Chairperson at least one hour prior to the meeting.

#### **CHAIRPERSONSHIP**

8. The Chairperson shall have regular contact with the Clerk regarding Parish Council matters and drawing up the agenda.
9. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will chair the meeting. If both officials are absent from the meeting then those Members present must elect a chair. The person presiding at the meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chairperson in relation to the conduct of the meeting.

## **VOTING**

10. Members shall vote by show of hands or, if at least two Members so request, by signed Ballot.
11. If a Member so requires, the clerk shall record the names of the Members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it.
12. In the event of an equality of votes the Chairperson has a casting vote.

## **QUORUM**

13. Three Members of the Parish Council shall constitute a quorum for each Parish Council meeting. Committees and sub-committees will need to refer to their terms of reference.

## **PLANNING CONSULTATIONS**

14. Upon receipt of a planning application notification from Sevenoaks District Council, Members will review the application and the Chairman of the Planning Committee will collate respective Members responses in support of the Members decision.

A formal response to a planning application will be submitted to Sevenoaks District Council by the Clerk by the due date or by an agreed extension provided by Sevenoaks District Council.

Details of the current planning applications being considered by Members will be listed on the Parish Council's website.

A copy of the Parish Council's final response will be publicly available on Sevenoaks District Council's website.

The Chairman of the Planning Committee reserves the right to convene a face-to-face meeting in the event that a planning application received for consultation is deemed to be of a significant or contentious nature.

## **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

15. Time will be allocated for public questions at each of the Parish Council meetings. This time to be limited to a maximum of thirty minutes, any further comments may be submitted in writing for consideration outside the meeting. Questions may not include items already raised at this or previous public question times. The Chairperson will formally close the Public Questions session. Interventions by members of the public are not permitted during the main Parish Council meeting unless a member of the public is invited to speak by the Chairperson.
16. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings:
  - (a) No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this Standing Order is ignored, the Chairperson of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
  - (b) If person(s) disregard the request of the Chairperson of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any Councillor or the Chairperson of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

- (c) If a resolution made under Standing Order 6(b) is ignored, then at the Chairperson's discretion, further reasonable steps may be taken to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

### **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

17. Members asking for items to be included on the next agenda must also give supporting information as to why the matter is being raised so that the Council understands the issues. This also enables the Clerk to carry out any research necessary so that the Council can reach a decision with the minimum delay.

### **RESIGNATIONS**

18. Resignations are submitted as follows:  
Parish Councillors to the Chairperson  
Chairperson to the Parish Council

### **VACANCIES**

19. Where a Member has resigned from the Parish Council and due notice has been given to the Chairperson, the Chairperson must inform the Clerk immediately so that the necessary steps can be taken to have the vacancy filled. It is not necessary to wait until the next Parish Council meeting.
20. Where a Chairperson resigns from the office of Chairperson then the Parish Council must be informed at the next meeting. A Chairperson is then to be appointed. The Vice-Chairperson to take over in the meantime.
21. Where a Chairperson resigns both from office and from the Parish Council and there being no Parish Council meeting immediately imminent then a special meeting must be called so that a vacancy can be declared and the office of Chairperson filled. The Vice-Chairperson to take over in the meantime.

### **REPORTS FROM MEETINGS ATTENDED, TRUSTS, ETC**

22. Reports from meetings attended, trusts, committees, etc either written or verbal to be given to the Clerk where possible prior to each Parish Council meeting. A brief verbal report can be given at the Parish Council meeting if required.

### **SIX MONTH RULE**

23. Where a Member has not attended meetings of the Parish Council or its committees, sub-committees for six consecutive months and either no apologies have been given and/or where apologies have been given the reasons for absence have been unacceptable to the Parish Council then the following procedure is to be adopted:
- (a) Clerk to bring the matter to the attention of the Chairperson;
  - (b) The Chairperson to make an approach to the member concerns to find out what that person's future intentions are;
  - (c) The matter then to be raised at the next Parish Council meeting so that the matter can be decided upon.

## **FINANCE**

24. Financial procedures are set out in the Parish Council's Financial Regulations (Latest Version).

## **CONTRACTS**

25. Procedures for entering into contract arrangements for the supply of goods, materials or the execution of works are set out in the Parish Council's Financial Regulations (Latest Version).

## **COMPLAINTS**

26. Procedures for handling complaints from members of the public and the handling of unreasonably persistent or vexatious behaviours are set out in the Parish Council's Complaints Procedure (Latest Version) and the Parish Council's procedure for handling Unreasonably Persistent or Vexatious Behaviours (Latest Version).

IN THE ABSENCE OF A STANDING ORDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC) WILL BE SOUGHT.