

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL Standing Orders

Adopted by the Parish Council

May 2026

List of Standing Orders

Page No.

1.	RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS	3
2.	DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS	4
3.	MEETINGS GENERALLY	5
4.	COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES	8
5.	ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS	9
6.	EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES	11
7.	PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS	11
8.	VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS	11
9.	MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER	12
10.	MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE	13
11.	MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION	13
12.	DRAFT MINUTES	14
13.	CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS	15
14.	CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS	16
15.	PROPER OFFICER	16
16.	RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER	18
17.	ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS	18
18.	FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT	19
19.	HANDLING STAFF MATTERS	20
20.	RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION	21
21.	RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION	21
22.	RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA	22
23.	EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS	22
24.	COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT & COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS	22
25.	RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES	22
26.	COUNCILLOR TRAINING	23
27.	STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY	23

1. Rules of debate at meetings

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- h A Councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chairman.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient, but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A Councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chairman 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. in exercise of a right of reply.
- p 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 they consider

- has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- r When a 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 no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman 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 his right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r) above, 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 chairman of the meeting.

2. 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 chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any Councillor or the chairman 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.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) above is ignored, the chairman 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

3. Meetings generally

-  Full Council meetings
-  Committee meetings
-  Sub-committee meetings

-  a **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.**
-  b **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.**
-  c **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**
-   d **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.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking. The chairman will invite the speaker to give their name and address if they so wish for the purpose of the minutes and any written response if required.

- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
-   l **Subject to standing order 3(m), 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 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 or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
-   m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
-  n **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.**
-  o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if any).**
-  p **The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
-    q **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors or Councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
-    r **The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**

See standing orders 5(h) and (i) below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a 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 his vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

t 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 present and absent;
- iii. interests 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 session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.



u **A Councillor or a 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 their right to participate and vote on that matter.**



v **If a member fails throughout six consecutive months to attend any meetings of the Council, or of its Committees or Sub-Committees, they cease to be a member unless they have a statutory excuse or a reason already approved by Council. The period begins with the last meeting attended.**



w All apologies for absence must be sent to the Clerk in writing (email is acceptable) as soon as the member is aware that they will not be in attendance. They must be approved and Minuted as such, and a reason given, where appropriate. Late arrivals should be recorded and any withdrawals from the meeting on grounds of interest should also be recorded.



x **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**

See standing order 4d(viii) below for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.



- y **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.
- z A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours unless the members agree by majority vote to continue for no more than one hour. If any items are not concluded within the maximum time allowed, members must vote to agree to defer the item/s until the next meeting.

4. Committees and sub-committees

- a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b **The members of a committee may include non-Councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-Councillors.**
- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer, 3 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee or allow members of the committee to elect its chairman when the committee first meets;
 - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
 - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
 - ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;

- x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
 - xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
 - xii. may dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
- e Subject to Standing orders 4 and 5, all Councillors shall be a member of at least one standing committee.

5. Ordinary Council meetings

- a 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.**
- b 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.**
- c If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d 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 decides.**
- e The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council.**
- f The Chairman of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

- i In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- j Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council 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 Chairman of the Council 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 the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
 - ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
 - xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
 - xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
 - xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21);
 - xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
 - xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
 - xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
 - xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council up to and including the next annual meeting of full Council.

k. **Declarations of Acceptance of Office.** The Chairman must make their declaration at the meeting at which they are elected, and each Councillor must make their declaration at or before the first meeting after they are elected unless in either case the Council *at that meeting permits* the declaration to be made at or before a later meeting. The declaration must be made in the presence of the Council's proper officer (the Clerk), or in the Clerk's absence a member of the Council. If the declaration is not executed at the proper time, a casual vacancy automatically arises, but this does not affect the right of the person concerned to seek office again.

6. Extraordinary meetings of the Council and committees and sub-committees

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two Councillors, any two Councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two Councillors.**
- c The chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 2 members of the committee [and the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee [and a sub-committee].

7. Previous resolutions

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 2 Councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

8. Voting on appointments

- a 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. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for 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.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it to the Proper Officer, in writing, so that it can be understood, at least 2 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman 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 in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

- a 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 the time limits for speaking;
 - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive 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 requirements);
 - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - xvii. to close a meeting.

11. Management of information

See also standing order 20

- a **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**
- b **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 (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c **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.

d Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

12. Draft minutes

-  Full Council meetings
-  Committee meetings
-  Sub-committee meetings

- a 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.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i) above.
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution, and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the (Full Council or [Planning, Open Space or Finance & GP] Committee) held on [date] in respect of (minute []) were a correct record but their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”



- e **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and 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.

13. Code of conduct and dispensations

See also standing order 3(u) above.

- a All Councillors and non-Councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council. (Attached as Appendix at the end of this document)
- b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- c Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- d **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.
- e 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 or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required] and that decision is final.
- f 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.
- g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f) 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 a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required].
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) 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**

14. Code of conduct complaints

- a Upon notification by the District or Unitary 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 order 11 above, report this to the Council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate a Councillor to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined [(England) and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(d) below].
- c The Council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- d **Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. Proper Officer

- a 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.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a committee or a**

sub-committee,

- **serve on Councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such 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**
- **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 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full Council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;

- ii. subject to standing order 9 above, 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 his withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from Councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every Councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures
- ix. liaise as appropriate with the Council's Data Protection Officer
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. 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 legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
See also standing order 23 below.
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in their absence Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council or planning committee;

- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

See also standing order 23 below.

16. Responsible Financial Officer

- a The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. Accounts and accounting statements

- 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 Financial 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 for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council’s aggregate receipts and payments 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.

- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each Councillor with a statement summarising the Council’s receipts and payments for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the full Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e 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) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return of the Council shall be presented to all Councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. 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.

18. Financial controls and procurement

- a The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial 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.
- b Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £30,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity.**
- d Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting Councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least

- one Councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £213,477 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £5,336,937 for a public works contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.**
- g **A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**

19. Handling staff matters

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council or the Finance and General Purposes committee is subject to standing order 11 above.
- b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman of the Council or, if he is not available, the vice-chairman of the Council of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to Council, committee or sub-committee at its next meeting.
- c The chairman of the Council or the vice-chairman shall conduct an annual appraisal and performance review of the of the work of the Proper Officer, as per the council's adopted policy. A summary report of the review shall be presented to the Council and any recommendations are subject to approval by resolution by the council.
- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior employee (or other employees) shall contact the

chairman of the Council or in their absence, the vice-chairman of the Council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.

- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Proper Officer relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of the Council, this shall be communicated to another member of the Council, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- f 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.
- g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. Responsibilities to provide information

See also standing order 21.

- a 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.
- b The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

21. Responsibilities under data protection legislation

(Below is not an exclusive list)

See also standing order 11

- a **The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer**
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **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.**

- e **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.**
- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

22. Relations with the press/media

- a 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.

23. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii) above.

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 23(a) above, any two Councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**
(The above is applicable to a Council without a common seal)

24. Communicating with District and County or Unitary Councillors

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward Councillor(s) of the District and County Council OR Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.
- b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District and County Council OR Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward Councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

25. Restrictions on Councillor activities

- a. Unless authorised by a resolution, no Councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect;
or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions, or directions.

26. Councillor Training

- a All Councillors upon taking office, whether by election or co-option, must undertake basic training within six months of taking office, or as soon as practical and continue with a training programme during their term of office.

27. Standing orders generally

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 Councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a Councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.



Councillors' Code of Conduct

PREAMBLE TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

This preamble provides an explanatory introduction to the Councillors' Code of Conduct. It is not part of the Code of Conduct itself.

Introduction

Four Marks Parish council *has adopted* the following code which deals with the conduct that is expected of Councillors and co-opted members of the Council when they are acting in that capacity, as required by section 27 of the Localism Act 2011.

The Council has a statutory duty under the Act to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, and this code sets out the standards that the Council expects its Councillors to observe.

The code is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the obligations that are placed on Councillors. If in doubt, Councillors should seek advice from the Clerk/Clerk or Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer at East Hampshire District Council, but the final decision and responsibility on how to act rests with Councillors themselves.

Councillors should not do anything in their capacity as councillors, which they could not justify to the public or could not justify by law. Councillors' conduct, and the public's judgement of that conduct, will affect the reputation and creditability as councillors and the Council as a whole.

Failure to comply with the code may result in a sanction being applied by the Monitoring Officer.

Expectations and values

It is the responsibility of individual Councillors to understand and comply with the provisions of the Code of Conduct and the protocols contained in or linked to Standing Orders. Councillors have a responsibility to ensure that they comply with the Code of Conduct in all respects.

- Councillors will treat each other and officers civilly and with respect.
- Councillors will regularly review their personal circumstances and intended actions in the context of the Code.
- It is not enough to avoid impropriety; perception that no impropriety has occurred is also important.
- Councillors should avoid giving any grounds for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct.



CODE OF CONDUCT

SEVEN GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The Code of Conduct includes and is intended to be consistent with the following seven principles, introduced by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, as required by the Localism Act 2011.

This Code of Conduct is adopted pursuant to the Council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted members¹ of the Council.

This code applies to you as a member or co-opted member of this Council when you act in that role, and it is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this code.

1. SELFLESSNESS

You must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.

2. INTEGRITY

You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.

3. OBJECTIVITY

When carrying out your public duties you must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

You are accountable for your decisions to the public and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

¹ A "co-opted member" for the purposes of this code is, as defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27 (4) " a person who is not a member of the Council but who

a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council; or

b) is a member of, and represents the Council on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Council; and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee".

5. OPENNESS

You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your Council and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions actions. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

6. HONESTY

You must be truthful and declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, that relate to your public duties, and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out below.

7. LEADERSHIP

You must exhibit these principles in your own behaviour and actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour when it occurs. You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in as characterised by the requirements contained within this Code of Conduct, by leadership and example in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

1. You must comply with this code whenever you -
 - (i) conduct the business of the Council,
 - (ii) act, claim to act, or give the impression you are acting as a representative of the Council, and references to your official capacity are construed accordingly,
 - (iii) act or may be perceived as acting in your role in public life.
2. You must -
 - (i) treat other councillors and members of the public with respect²
 - (ii) treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for local authority with respect and respect for the role they play.
3. You must not -
 - (i) do anything that may cause your council to breach the Equality Act 2010 (or subsequent legislation) that prohibit discrimination on grounds such as age, sex, race, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation, or pregnancy.
 - (ii) bully any person (Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or humiliating behaviour that is directed at somClerkne over whom you have some actual or potential influence.)
 - (iii) intimidate, or attempt to intimidate, anyone who has complained about you or who may be involved with a complaint about you.

² Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word.

- (iv) do anything that compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.
4. You must not -
 - (i) disclose information that you know, or ought to know, is confidential, without authority or legitimate reason,
 - (ii) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled to by law.
 5. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which a reasonable member of the public would regard as bringing the Council or the office of councillor into disrepute.
 6. You must represent the needs of the residents and deal with representations or inquiries from residents and visitors, fairly, appropriately, and impartially.
 7. You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the Council -
 - (i) act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements,
 - (ii) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes), and
 - (iii) you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
 8. When reaching decisions on any matter you must have regard to any advice provided to you by the Council's officers and you must give reasons for all decisions in accordance with any statutory requirements and any reasonable additional requirements imposed by the Council.

REGISTERING AND DECLARING INTERESTS

1. You must within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify East Hampshire District Council's (EHDC) Monitoring Officer of any 'disclosable pecuniary interest'. A 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is an interest of yourself or your partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person, with whom you are living as you are civil partners.
2. If an interest has not been entered onto EHDC's register you must disclose the interest to any meeting of the Council at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'³.
3. Following any disclosure of an interest not on EHDC's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

³ A "sensitive interest" is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of a Council having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the Council's monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

4. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions EHDC places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest as defined by EHDC.
5. A copy of the Register of Interests will be available for public inspection and will be published on the Council's website.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

6. You must not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on your part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply for the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.
7. You must register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of receipt.
8. You must register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that you have been offered but have refused to accept.