

Etwell Parish Council – Standing Orders
Adopted 4th October 2010
Amended 3rd September 2012

1 Meetings

- 1 Full Council meetings are held on the first Monday of each month except August. When the first Monday is a public holiday the meeting is deferred to an agreed date, usually the second Monday of the month. Meetings start at 7.30 pm unless a different time is agreed for a specific occasion.

Committee meetings normally start at 7.00 pm. When several committees meet in the same session the sequence and starting times are decided by the Chair and the Clerk.

Meetings of the Council and its committees normally take place in The Frank Wickham Hall. If that is not available, other venues should, if possible, be free and unlicensed.

- 2 In an election year, the first meeting of the Council takes place within 14 days of the election.
- 3 Extra meetings of the council may be called by the Chair of the council at any date or time subject to the issue of an agenda on time. Any two councillors may convene an extra meeting with a specified agenda by direct request to the Chair or the Clerk.
- 4 Meetings of a Council committee are held as and when the committee decides that a meeting is necessary. Minutes of a committee meeting may be approved by the members of that committee attending a full Council meeting.
- 5 Meetings are announced by the publication of the agenda for the meeting normally 6 calendar days in advance to members and on Council notice boards. Notices must specify the date, time and venue of the meeting. In an emergency notice, may be limited to three working days.

Notices may also be posted on the village website but this is not essential.

- 6 Agendas are settled by the Chair of the Council or committee and the Clerk. A member of the Council may put an item onto an agenda by giving notice to the Clerk in writing or orally at least 8 days before the meeting.
- 7 All meetings and minutes of meetings are open to members of the public and the press except that the meeting may decide that a matter of personal or commercial confidentiality should not be made public. The reason for exclusion must be declared and minuted.
- 8 Each agenda will contain a session for public participation. During it, members of the public will be free to ask questions or volunteer information on any matter on the agenda. They will not contribute to discussion at any other time except at the invitation of the Chair of the meeting.

The Chair can authorise discussion during public participation of matters not included in the agenda.

- 9 Reporters from local newspapers are admitted to all public meetings and are given facilities to report on the meeting.

The minutes are the only record of transactions and the making of audio or video recordings of meetings requires approval by the Council.

- 10 If an agenda item deals with the activities of the District or County Council, members of that council will be free to join the discussion at the invitation of the Chair of the meeting.
- 11 Only one person may speak at a time and the Chair decides the order in which the meeting is addressed.
- 12 Meetings are considered quorate if a third or more of those entitled to attend are present and their number is 3 or more. A meeting which fails the quorum qualification may conduct no business.
- 12 Minutes and agendas are circulated by email but individual councillors may ask to receive them by post or by hand.

2 Chairmanship

- 1 The role of the Chair is to ensure that the views of councillors are fully and fairly expressed and that decisions are clear, minuted and implemented.
- 2 The Chair is elected at the May meeting of the Council. That meeting is inaugurated by the Chair from the previous year who will deal with attendance and the minutes of the preceding meeting and then initiate the appointment of a Chair for the coming year. If a new Chair is appointed, the transition occurs at once.

The council will appoint a vice-Chair who will automatically take the place of the Chair if the need arises. If neither Chair nor vice-Chair is available, any meeting may appoint an ad hoc Chair for that meeting only.

- 3 If, at a May meeting, an outgoing Chair is no longer a member of the Council, members present will nominate a temporary Chair while the formal election of a Chair is conducted. This may be the vice-Chair from the preceding year.
- 4 All the Council's committees will appoint a Chair and vice-Chair at their first meeting following the May council meeting.
- 5 If a member of the Council or a committee feels that rulings of the Chair are preventing the full and reasoned discussion of a topic, that member may move that the chairmanship pass to the vice-Chair or another member for that topic or for the remainder of a meeting. This resolution will require a majority to become effective.

3 Voting

- 1 No vote is necessary if a meeting agrees with the Chair that a consensus is established and the resultant actions clearly defined.

- 2 Where a vote is necessary, it will be by show of hands except that any councillor may obtain a secret ballot by securing a majority for it by show of hands.
- 3 The Chair has a single vote in any normal voting procedure. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair has a casting vote whether or not he/she voted in the first division.

4 Proper Officer

- 1 The Council's Proper Officer is the Clerk, or any-one appointed by the Council to fill the position during the Clerk's absence.
- 2 The Proper Officer will collaborate with the Chair to ensure compliance with these Standing Orders and will, in addition, carry out the duties listed in the Clerk's job description, which is to be read as constituting part of these Standing Orders.

5 Members' Conduct

- 1 Members are required to behave in accordance with the guidelines set by the Standards Board for England.
- 2 At the beginning of each meeting any member with a personal, political, cultural or financial interest in any matter on the agenda must declare that interest publicly.
- 3 If a pecuniary interest is declared the member should leave the room for the relevant agenda item. The Chair may require the absence of a member in any case where the proper procedure is in question.
- 4 The register of members' interests kept by the clerk may be inspected at any time with reasonable notice by Council members or members of the public. The declaration of members' interests will also appear on the website.

6 Finance

- 1 Budgets and estimates of expenditure will be prepared each year in accordance with a timetable set by the District Council and must be agreed at a Council meeting.
- 2 The Council's Financial Regulations are reviewed at least once each year.
- 3 The Clerk will record expenditure by budget throughout the year and present a summary to each Council meeting of expenditure carried out, expenditure immediately proposed and both resource and budget balances.
- 4 Individual items of expenditure must be authorised after discussion as items on the agenda of a full Council meeting.
- 5 Where a budget is approved by a full council meeting and a committee has control of a project or activity, the committee may authorise expenditure within budget limits provided that it is included on a published agenda of the committee and no member of the council asks for the decision to be referred to a full Council meeting.

6 The Clerk may spend up to £600 to deal with issues so urgent that they cannot be delayed until the next meeting of the Council or relevant committee. Such expenditure will normally be agreed with the Chair and vice-Chair before commitment.

7 Committees

1 The Council may appoint permanent committees to deal with defined aspects of its business. The membership of committees is determined at the May meeting of the Council but may be changed at any time.

2 These Standing Orders apply to the conduct of committee business.

3 Committees may authorise expenditure up to budget limits authorised by the Council and must follow policies that are supported by the Council.

4 Committees must report their activities to every full meeting of the Council, even when no committee meeting has taken place.

5 All council members will be informed of every committee meeting and may attend them. Those who are not members of a committee may contribute to its discussion at the invitation of the committee Chair but may not vote on its decisions.