

CHILTON POLDEN PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS 2026

(As per guidelines of the National Association of Local Councils Model Standing Orders 2025 (England))

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1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

1.1 Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair.

1.2 A motion shall not be debated unless proposed and seconded.

1.3 A motion not moved by its proposer may be treated as withdrawn.

1.4 A motion may be withdrawn only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

1.5 Amendments must be relevant and shall not negate the original motion.

1.6 Only one amendment shall be debated at any one time unless the Chair directs otherwise.

1.7 A Councillor may speak once on a motion except:

To speak on an amendment;

To move a further amendment;

On a point of order;

By way of personal explanation; or

To exercise a right of reply.

1.8 A point of order shall be decided by the Chair and the decision shall be final.

1.9 Contributions by a Councillor shall not exceed three minutes unless permitted by the Chair.

1.10 During debate no motion shall be moved except:

To amend the motion;

To proceed to the next business;

To adjourn the debate;

To put the motion to a vote;

To exclude the public and press;

To adjourn the meeting; or

To suspend Standing Orders.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

2.1 No person shall obstruct the business of the meeting or behave improperly.

2.2 If a person behaves improperly, the Chair shall request that the behaviour cease.

2.3 If the request is ignored, the Chair or any Councillor may move that the person be excluded from the meeting.

2.4 The Chair may suspend or close the meeting if necessary to restore order.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

3.1 Meetings shall not be held in premises licensed for the sale of alcohol unless no suitable alternative is available.

3.2 At least three clear days' notice shall be given for meetings.

3.3 Meetings shall be open to the public unless confidential or prejudicial matters are being considered.

3.4 Public participation shall not exceed 10 minutes unless directed otherwise by the Chair.

3.5 Individual speakers shall be limited to 3 minutes.

3.6 Questions from the public shall not require a response or initiate debate.

3.7 A person speaking shall direct comments through the Chair.

3.8 Only one person may speak at a time.

3.9 Members of the public may report, film, photograph or audio-record meetings open to the public provided such activity does not disrupt proceedings.

3.10 Oral commentary during meetings is prohibited without permission of the Chair.

3.11 The press shall be afforded reasonable facilities to report meetings.

3.12 The Chair shall preside at meetings. In their absence, the Vice-Chair shall preside. If both are absent, members present shall elect a Chair for the meeting.

3.13 Voting shall normally be by show of hands.

3.14 At the request of any Councillor, votes shall be recorded in the minutes.

3.15 Minutes shall include:

Time and place of meeting;

Names of members present and absent;

Declarations of interest;

Dispensations granted;

Public participation;

Resolutions made.

3.16 The quorum shall be one-third of the whole Council membership and never fewer than three members.

3.17 If a meeting becomes inquorate it shall be adjourned.

3.18 Meetings shall not normally exceed three hours.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

4.1 The Council may appoint committees and sub-committees.

4.2 The Council shall determine:

Terms of reference;

Membership;

Meeting arrangements;

Quorum.

4.3 The quorum for committees and sub-committees shall be no fewer than three members.

4.4 Committees may appoint sub-committees unless prohibited by the Council.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

5.1 In an election year, the Annual Meeting shall be held within 14 days of councillors taking office.

5.2 In other years, the Annual Meeting shall be held in May.

5.3 The first business of the Annual Meeting shall be:

Election of Chair;

Election of Vice-Chair.

5.4 The Annual Meeting shall also include:

Acceptance of office;

Approval of minutes;

Review of committees;

Review of delegation arrangements;

Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;

Review of insurance arrangements;

Review of asset register;

Review of subscriptions;

Review of policies and procedures;

Review of risk assessments;

Setting meeting dates for the forthcoming year.

5.5 The Council shall hold at least three ordinary meetings annually in addition to the Annual Meeting.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

6.1 The Chair may convene an extraordinary meeting at any time.

6.2 Two Councillors may request an extraordinary meeting in writing.

6.3 If the Chair does not convene the meeting within seven days, two Councillors may convene it themselves.

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

7.1 A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except by:

A special motion signed by at least two Councillors; or

A recommendation of a committee.

7.2 No similar motion may be moved within six months after rejection.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

8.1 Where more than two candidates are nominated and no absolute majority is achieved, the candidate with the fewest votes shall be eliminated and further votes taken until one candidate obtains a majority.

8.2 In the event of equality of votes, the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

9. MOTIONS REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

9.1 Written notice of motions shall be submitted to the Proper Officer at least five clear days before the meeting.

9.2 The Proper Officer may correct minor grammatical or typographical errors.

9.3 Motions considered unlawful, defamatory, or unclear may be rejected.

10. MOTIONS WHICH DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

The following may be moved without written notice:

Correction of minutes;
Moving to vote;
Deferral of a matter;
Referral to committee;
Appointment of meeting Chair;
Changing agenda order;
Requiring reports;
Extending speaking times;
Excluding press/public;
Suspending Standing Orders;
Adjournment or closure of meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

11.1 The Council shall maintain secure arrangements for the management, storage, retention, and destruction of information.

11.2 Confidential information and personal data shall not be disclosed without lawful authority.

11.3 The Council shall maintain appropriate cyber-security and data handling procedures.

12. DRAFT MINUTES

12.1 Draft minutes shall be circulated with the agenda where practicable.

12.2 Discussion of draft minutes shall be limited to their accuracy.

12.3 Approved minutes shall be signed by the Chair.

12.4 Draft minutes shall be published on the Council website within one month of the meeting where required by legislation.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

13.1 Councillors shall comply with the adopted Code of Conduct.

13.2 Councillors with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest shall withdraw from consideration of the matter unless granted a dispensation.

13.3 Requests for dispensation shall be submitted in writing to the Proper Officer.

13.4 The Council shall determine whether a dispensation is granted.

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

14.1 Upon notification from Somerset Council that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred, the Council shall consider any appropriate action.

15. PROPER OFFICER

15.1 The Proper Officer shall be the Clerk unless otherwise appointed.

15.2 Duties include:

Issuing agendas and summonses;

Publishing notices;

Keeping minutes and records;

Managing correspondence;
Maintaining registers;
Managing planning consultations;
Managing information requests;
Executing legal documents;
Maintaining custody of the Council seal where applicable.

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

16.1 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) shall be the Clerk unless otherwise appointed.

16.2 The RFO shall manage:

Accounting records;
Budget monitoring;
Audit requirements;
AGAR preparation;
Financial reporting.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

17.1 Accounts shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and current legislation.

17.2 Quarterly financial reports shall be provided to Councillors.

17.3 Annual Governance and Accountability Returns shall be approved before 30 June each year.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

18.1 The Council shall adopt Financial Regulations based on current NALC guidance.

18.2 Expenditure above budgeted limits shall require Council approval.

18.3 Contracts and procurement shall comply with current procurement legislation.

18.4 For expenditure exceeding £500, at least two quotations shall normally be obtained unless impractical due to urgency or specialist supply.

18.5 Payments shall require approval in accordance with Financial Regulations and authorised signatories.

18.6 The Council shall maintain adequate internal controls and annual internal audit arrangements.

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

19.1 Staff matters shall be confidential.

19.2 Employment procedures shall comply with employment legislation and Council policies.

19.3 Staff appraisals shall be undertaken annually.

19.4 Grievance and disciplinary matters shall be managed in accordance with adopted procedures.

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

20.1 The Council shall publish information in accordance with:

Freedom of Information legislation;
Data Protection legislation;

The Smaller Authorities Transparency Regulations.

20.2 Information shall be published on the Council website where legally required.

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

21.1 The Council shall maintain:

Privacy notices;

Data breach procedures;

Records of processing activities;

Policies for responding to subject access requests.

21.2 The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS AND MEDIA

22.1 Media requests shall be handled in accordance with the Council's Media Policy.

22.2 The Clerk shall normally act as the first point of contact for media enquiries unless otherwise resolved.

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

23.1 Legal deeds shall only be executed following a Council resolution.

23.2 Any two Councillors may sign deeds on behalf of the Council and the Proper Officer shall witness signatures.

24. LIAISON WITH SOMERSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

24.1 Somerset Council ward councillors shall receive agendas and invitations to meetings.

24.2 Correspondence with Somerset Council may also be copied to the relevant ward councillors.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

25.1 Unless authorised by the Council, no Councillor shall:

Issue instructions to staff;

Enter or inspect Council land or premises;

Commit the Council to expenditure or agreements.

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

26.1 Standing Orders may be suspended by resolution except where statutory requirements apply.

26.2 Amendments to Standing Orders require written notice and approval by resolution.

26.3 The Chair's ruling on Standing Orders during meetings shall be final.

27. GENERAL PROVISIONS

27.1 The Council shall maintain an up-to-date register of assets.

27.2 Insurance arrangements shall be reviewed annually.

27.3 The Council shall regularly review governance and operational policies including:

Equality;

Data Protection;

Health & Safety;

Complaints;

Financial Regulations;

Risk Management.

27.4 An annual risk assessment shall be undertaken.

27.5 Where eligible, the Council may exercise the General Power of Competence in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

ADOPTION

Adopted by Chilton Polden Parish Council on: _____

Signed: _____
Chair

Signed: _____
Proper Officer / Clerk