

BISHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

Meetings shall be open to the public and press 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 exclusion of the public and press from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.

1. Councillors

1.1 Following election or co-option to the Council, each Councillor will be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders of the Council. They will sign the form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk of the Council, or of a Councillor who has been specifically designated by the Council for this purpose.

1.2 All Councillors will observe the Code of Conduct at all times when on Council business and no member will act in such a way that will bring the Council into disrepute, behave offensively in meetings or obstruct the Council's business.

1.3 The Code of Conduct adopted by the Council will define when a Councillor will declare a personal or prejudicial interest in an item for discussion at a Council meeting. The Councillor will declare that interest and the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity.

2. Meetings (all held in public)

2.1 Ordinary meetings of the Council shall be held in the months of September to July. Special Meetings may be called at any time on the instructions of the Chairperson of the community council on the request of not less than one-half of the total number of Council members; or the receipt of a common written request (petition), signed by at least 20 persons, resident within the Community Council area, to convene a special meeting for a particular matter or matters to be debated, it shall call such a meeting. A special meeting shall be held within 14 days of the receipt of the request made to the Clerk of the Council. Annual general meetings are held annually in May.

2.2 The notice of ordinary and annual general meetings of the Council, featuring the date, time and venue, shall be placed on the Council's website by the Clerk of the Council, and sent electronically to Councillors, at least 10 days before the date fixed for the meeting.

3. Minutes

3.1 Draft minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the Council shall be drawn up by the Clerk (or other nominated person in the Clerk's absence) within fourteen days from the date of that meeting, distributed to Councillors and placed on the Council's website. The minutes which are circulated will be draft minutes until they are approved by the Council at their next meeting and signed by the person presiding at that meeting.

4. Quorum

4.1 A quorum shall be one-third of the current voting membership of the Council, or 3 voting members, whichever is the greater. If there are insufficient Councillors present then no business will be transacted and a fresh notice will be issued to reconvene the meeting at a later date. If at any time during the meeting it ceases to be quorate then the meeting will be adjourned and any further business carried forward to the meeting when next convened.

5. Order of Business

5.1 Ordinary Meeting

The order of business at every ordinary meeting of the Council shall be as follows: -

- (a) Recording of membership present and apologies received.
- (b) Agreement of the agenda
- (c) Questions from Members of the Public
- (d) The minutes of the last meeting of the Council shall be submitted for approval.
- (e) Matters Arising from the Minutes
- (f) Business as listed on the agenda
- (e) Any other item of business, which the Chairperson has directed, should be considered.

- (f) Chairperson to declare date of next meeting and close meeting.

5.2 Annual General Meeting

It will not be uncommon that the Council has arranged for an ordinary meeting of the Council to begin at the close of the annual general meeting, to enable any outstanding reporting on business matters to be heard; and for Councillors and members of the public to have an opportunity to bring matters to the attention of the Council, possibly for inclusion on a future agenda.

The order of business at every annual general meeting of the Council shall be as follows: -

- (a) Recording of membership present and apologies received.
- (b) Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Council
- (c) The minutes of the last annual general meeting of the Council shall be submitted for adoption.
- (d) Retiring Chairperson's Annual Report (and questions from the floor).
- (e) Clerk's Annual Report (and questions from the floor).
- (f) Clerk's submission of Balance Sheet and Annual Accounts duly independently examined and certified correct (and questions from the floor).
- (g) Chairperson to close meeting.

5.3 Extraordinary General Meeting

The order of business at every extraordinary general meeting of the Council Shall be as follows: -

- (a) Recording of membership present and apologies received.
- (b) Business for debate, as described in the calling notice for the special meeting.
- (c) Chairperson to close meeting.

6. Order of Debate

6.1 The agenda for the meeting will be drafted by the Clerk and agreed by the Council at the start of the meeting. The agenda will always include an item to enable Councillors to declare interests. An opportunity for public questions will be made available immediately before the commencement of each meeting.

6.2 The Chairperson shall decide all questions of order, relevancy and competency arising at meetings of the Council and her/his ruling shall be final and shall not be open to discussion. In particular, the Chairperson shall determine the order, relevancy and competency of all questions from the public raised at 6.1 above. The Chairperson shall have particular regard to the relevance of the issue to the community and ensure that the discussion and proceedings are conducted in such a manner that decisions are reached in a democratic manner. The Chairperson shall have the power, in the event of disorder arising at any meeting, to adjourn the Council meeting to a time he/she may then, or afterwards, fix.

6.3 If the Chairperson is not present then the Vice Chairperson will preside. If they are not present then the first matter on the agenda will be the election of an appropriate Councillor who will chair the meeting.

6.4. Every motion or amendment shall be moved and seconded. After a mover of a motion has been called on by the Chairperson to reply, no other members shall speak to the question. A motion or amendment once made and seconded shall not be withdrawn without the consent of the mover and seconder thereof. A motion or amendment which is contrary to a previous decision of the Council shall not be competent within six months of that decision.

6.5 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 Clerk at least 3 clear days before the next meeting. Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents. Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice. i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting. ii. To approve the absences of councillors. iii. To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting. iv. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting. v. To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting. vi. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience. vii. To

proceed to the next business on the agenda. viii. To close or adjourn debate. ix. To refer by formal delegation a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee. x. To appoint a committee or subcommittee or any councillors (including substitutes) thereto. xi. To receive nominations to a committee or subcommittee. xii. To dissolve a committee or subcommittee. xiii. To note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or subcommittee. xiv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a subcommittee or an employee. xv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant. xvi. To authorise legal deeds signed by two councillors] and witnessed. xvii. To authorise the payment of monies up to £ 200. xviii. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it. xix. To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting. xxi. To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct. xxii. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders. xxiii. To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law. xxiv. To adjourn the meeting. xxv. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies. xxvi. To answer questions from councillors.

6.6 Members of the public may speak at Council meetings at the discretion of the Chairperson of the meeting.

7. Voting

7.1 Voting shall be taken by a show of hands of those present and eligible to vote, with the exception that, at an annual general meeting, the election of office bearers may be held by secret ballot.

7.2 The Chairperson of a meeting of the Council shall have a casting vote as well as a deliberative vote.

8. Committees

8.1 The Council may appoint such committees as it may from time to time decide and shall determine their composition, terms of reference, duration, duties and powers.

9. Clerk and Other Employees of the Council

9.1 The Council will appoint a Clerk and may appoint further employees to assist it in the performance of its duties. All appointments shall be advertised openly, including on the Council's website. The Council will appoint an Appointments Panel of 3 members to

consider applications and make recommendations to the full Council for appointment. All employees will have a contract of employment stating the terms and conditions under which he/she is employed, and the specific requirements of the post. The Clerk is responsible for supervising other employees.

10. Finance

10.1 The Clerk of the Council will take on the role of managing the Council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices. The Clerk will compile statements and future estimates of income and expenditure annually for the Council's consideration. The Council will review the budget not later than the end of December in preparation for the precept being agreed, and submitted to the Collection Authority in January. During the year the Council will review the budget against actual expenditure and income, and adjust it as necessary.

10.2 The Clerk will complete the annual financial accounts of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and will submit and report on them to the Council. The Council will review each year and ensure that there is an adequate, effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other procedures. The Clerk will submit the annual accounts to the External Auditor by the due date, ensuring the return is complete.

10.3 The Council's banking arrangements will be made by the Clerk and approved by the Council. They will be regularly reviewed for efficiency. A resolution of the Council will nominate at least three members to be authorised by the Council to sign cheques.. The Clerk will examine invoices and verify and certify the expenditure. Cheques and bank debits must be signed by two authorised Councillors.

10.4 All Councillors and officers are responsible for obtaining good value for money at all times. An officer placing an order on behalf of the Council will ensure that good value and appropriate terms are obtained for the transaction. Orders for values £500 to £2000 require a minimum of two quotations; for values above £2000 three quotations are required. Contracts exceeding £50,000 require additional safeguards and will follow proper practice. All estimates will be approved by the Council; while the Council is not obliged to accept the lowest quotation the reasons for accepting the quotation will be recorded. Emergency expenditure be set at £500 to £2,000 and the Chairs emergency expenditure be set at £300 to £400. Complete costings/quotations subject to approval of the Council.

10.5. The Clerk will ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets is maintained by the Council. It will be reviewed regularly, in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets if appropriate.

10.6 The Clerk will promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT legislation will be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year.

10.7 Following an annual risk assessment the Council will review the level of insurance cover and ensure it is adequate and appropriate for the activities of the Council. Minimum cover will include Public and Employer's Liability.

11. Freedom of and Access to Information

11.1 The Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The Clerk will ensure the Council conforms to the requirements of the Act allowing public access to the appropriate documents.

12.1 The Council is also subject to the provisions of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 including those which require the publication of information about the Council's membership, meetings, minutes, financial accounts, register of interests, and other documents to be published electronically on the Council's website. The Clerk will ensure that that the Council conforms to the Act.

13. Standing Orders

13.1 These and any other standing orders will be reviewed annually by the Council. A proposal to alter these Standing Orders may be proposed at any time by the Council, provided that notice of motion to that effect is given on the agenda of a Council meeting at which the motion is discussed.

13.2 The Council may resolve to suspend a Standing Order, in order to progress the business of the Council, and such decision will be included in the minutes. The suspension will not be taken lightly and it will be time-limited.
