

Fittleton cum Haxton Parish Council

Standing Orders

1. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

The standard method of communications between The Clerk of the Council and Council members is by e-mail and will be used for the notification of meetings, the passing of agenda's, minutes and general accounts etc. Hard copies will be provided on request.

2. MEETINGS

The Statutory Annual General Meeting:

- a. in an election year shall be held within 14 days after the elections to the Council and
- b. in a year, which is not an election year, shall be held on the first available date in May. At this meeting the Chairman, and Vice Chairman to the Council will be elected and committee members and representatives on outside bodies selected.

In addition to the Annual General Meeting there will be a meeting programmed every two months making six meetings per year.

Other meetings can be called by the Chairman as necessary.

3. 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 elected Chairman and Vice-chairman are automatically ex-officio members of any council committee.

4. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CHAIRMAN

The person presiding at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chairman in relation to the conduct of the Meeting.

5. PROPER OFFICER

The Proper Officer of the Council shall be the Clerk. The Proper Officer shall:

- i. at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors a summons by email, confirming the time, place and the agenda provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.
- ii. give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a meeting of a committee or sub-committee.

6. QUORUM

One third of the Council members to a minimum of three members shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present when the Council meets or if during the meeting the number of Members, for whatever reason, falls below the quorum, the business not transacted at that meeting shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the chairman may decide.

7. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS TO MEETINGS.

The public shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees and sub-committees.

The following action may be used to temporarily exclude the public by means of the following resolution: -

“That in view of the * (special)(confidential) nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw”

Note: * The special reason should be stated. If a person’s advice or assistance is needed they may be invited (by name) to remain after the exclusion resolution is passed.

With prior notification anyone has the right to film, photograph, and record or take notes of council meetings and official gatherings with the exception of Confidential Business.

The Clerk shall afford to the Press reasonable facilities for taking their report of any proceedings for which they are entitled to be present

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of time shall be set aside at the start of and or during a Meeting to allow members of the public to ask questions, or make statements on any subject and of any Member, Councillor or member of Constabulary or any other person present qualified to answer that question. If the question cannot be answered satisfactorily at the Meeting a written reply should be sent as soon as the answer is known.

No question or statement by a member of the public shall exceed three minutes, unless agreed by the Council

9. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

No Member of the Council shall disclose to any person, not being a Member of the Council, any business declared to be confidential by the Council.

10. VOTING.

1. Voting during a meeting shall be by a show of hands.
2. If the meeting so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of the Members who voted on any question and how they voted.
3. The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may give a casting vote, whether or not an original vote was given.
4. Any new proposal by one councillor shall be seconded by another councillor before being put to the vote.

11. RESOLUTIONS MOVED ON NOTICE

1. Except as provided by these Standing Orders no resolution may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been included on the Agenda.
2. Members may put an item or notice of resolution on the Agenda by giving the Clerk written notice of the item or resolution at least seven clear days prior to that meeting to which that agenda relates.
3. Every resolution, amendment or recommendation shall be relevant to some subject over which the Council has the power or which affects its area.

12. RESOLUTION MOVED WITHOUT NOTICE

Resolutions on procedural matters may be moved without notice including those to vary the order of business on grounds of urgency or procedural efficiency. Such resolutions shall be put to the vote without discussion.

13. RULES OF DEBATE

- All remarks shall be addressed to the Chairman.
- No discussion shall take place on the minutes of the previous meeting except upon their accuracy. Correction to the minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Chairman.

- A Member shall, except as provided by these Standing Orders, only be entitled to speak once on any motion or amendment.
- A Member shall direct comments to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a point of order.
- No speech by a mover of a resolution shall exceed three minutes and no other speech shall exceed two minutes except by consent of the Council.
- A mover of a resolution shall have the right of reply not exceeding one minute.
- The ruling of the Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of an item shall not be discussed.
- A representative of the Local Constabulary, a Wiltshire Councillor, or a member of the public, shall be allowed to speak at Council meetings at the discretion of the Chairman.
- Whenever the Chairman rises to his feet during a debate all other Members shall be seated and silent.

14. CLOSURE

A motion of closure of a debate may be moved at any time but must be proposed and seconded without comment. The Chairman may refuse such a motion if he feels the question before the Council has not been sufficiently debated.

15. RECISSION OF PREVIOUS RESOLUTION

A decision of the Council (whether affirmative or negative) shall not be reversed within six months except by a special resolution, the written notice of which bears the names of at least three Members of the Council. When such a resolution has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

16. CODE OF CONDUCT

All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.

17. WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Wiltshire Councillors who are not also Town Councillors shall be invited to attend meetings and shall be sent copies of agendas, minutes and other relevant documentation. They may be allowed to speak at the discretion of the Chairman.

18. LENGTH OF MEETINGS

- Except at the discretion of the Chairman, all meetings of the Council shall finish not later than two-and-a-half-hours after commencement.
- Any business not transacted shall be carried over to the next meeting or such other date as the Chairman may decide.

19. MOBILE PHONES

Mobile Phones are to be switched off during the meetings. If due to emergency or operational necessity a phone rings during the meeting the owner must immediately leave the room to answer.

20. ACCOUNTS & CONTRACTS

Procedures as to accounts and contracts are laid down in the council's Financial Standing Orders. This includes a mechanism for a yearly audit at the end of the financial year, a half-yearly audit by the Chairman, and regular statements of account provided by the RFO to the Council at Council meetings, to include bank balances and all income/expenditure incurred since the last update.

21. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

See Annex A for details of procedure for responding to Planning Applications.

22. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

- a. A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b. Any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

23. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

These Standing Orders may be suspended at any time and for any period of time by resolution.

Date of Acceptance. 13th May 2025

Date of Review: 15th May 2026