

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

MEETINGS

- 1) Meetings of the Council shall be held in each year on such dates as the Council may direct at the Council Offices, Fortuneswell, commencing at seven o'clock in the evening unless the Council otherwise decides at a previous meeting.
- 2) **The Statutory Annual Meeting**
 - a) **In an election year, shall be held on the thirteenth day next following the day of elections to the Council; and**
 - b) **In a year which is not an election year, shall be held on the third Wednesday in May or such other day in the month of May as the Council may determine.**
- 3) **In addition to the Annual Meeting, at least three other statutory meetings shall be held in each year on such dates as the Council may direct.**
- 4) **Additional meetings shall be held on such dates as the Council may direct.**
- 5) The Town Mayor may summon an additional meeting at anytime. An additional meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition of not less than 3 Members of the Council. The summons shall set out the business to be considered at the special meeting, and no other business shall be transacted.

CHAIRMAN OF MEETING

- 6) **The person presiding at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Town Mayor in relation to the conduct of the meeting.**

PROPER OFFICER

- 7) Where a statute, regulation or order confers functions or duties on the proper officer of the Council in the following cases, he shall be the Clerk: -
 - a) To receive declarations of acceptance of office.
 - b) To receive and record notices disclosing pecuniary interests.
 - c) To receive and retain plans and documents.
 - d) To sign notices or other documents on behalf of the Council.
 - e) To receive copies of byelaws made by a District Council.
 - f) To certify copies of byelaws made by the Council.
 - g) To sign and issue summonses to attend meetings of the Council.

- 8) **Five members shall constitute a quorum.**
- 9) If a quorum is not present when the Council meets, or if during a meeting the number of councillors present and not debarred by reason of a declared interest falls below the quorum, the meeting shall be adjourned and the business not transacted at that meeting shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the Town Mayor may fix.

VOTING

- 10) Members shall vote by show of hands.
- 11) **If a member so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of the members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it. Such a request must be made before moving on to the next business.**
- 12)
 - a) **Subject to (b) and (c) below, the Town Mayor 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 even though he gave no original vote.**
 - b) **If the person presiding at the annual meeting would have ceased to be a member of the Council but for the statutory provisions, which preserve the membership of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor until the end of their term of office, he may not give an original vote in an election for Mayor.**
 - c) **The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for Chairman.**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 13) **At each Annual Meeting, the first business shall be: -**
 - a) **To elect a Town Mayor**
 - b) **To receive the Town Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.**
 - c) **In the ordinary year of election of the Council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reason of insufficient nominations.**
 - d) **To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.**
 - e) To elect a Deputy Town Mayor
 - f) To receive a report from the outgoing Mayor
 - g) To adjourn the meeting until the following Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the Council Offices, Fortuneswell. (Official guests and Portland residents are then invited to join the Town Mayor and other Councillors for light refreshments)

14) At the adjourned meeting, the following business shall be transacted:

- a) To appoint representatives to outside bodies.
- b) To appoint committees and sub-committees, and to specify their terms of reference.

And shall thereafter follow the order set out in Standing Order 16.

15) At every meeting other than the Annual Meeting, the first business shall be to appoint a Chairman if the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor be absent, and to receive such declarations of acceptance of office (if any) and undertaking to observe the Council's Code of Conduct as are required by law to be made, or, if not then received, to decide when they shall be received.

16) After the first business has been completed, the order of business, unless the Council otherwise decides on the ground of urgency, shall be as follows: -

- a) To read and consider the minutes: provided that, if a copy has been circulated to each member not later than the day of issue of the summons to attend the meeting, the minutes may be taken as read.
- b) After consideration, to approve the signature of the minutes by the person presiding as a correct record.**
- c) To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.**
- d) To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- e) To answer questions from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 26a.
- f) To receive such communications as the person presiding may wish to lay before the Council.
- g) To answer questions from Councillors in accordance with Standing Order 25.
- h) To receive and consider reports and minutes of committees.
- i) To receive and consider motions in the order in which they have been notified.
- j) To receive and consider reports from officers of the Council.
- k) To authorise the sealing of documents.
- l) If necessary, to authorise the signing of orders for payment.
- m) Any other business specified in the summons.

17) A motion to vary the order of business on the ground of urgency: -

- a) may be proposed by the Town Mayor or by any member and, if proposed by the Town Mayor, may be put to the vote without being seconded, and

- b) shall be put to the vote, without discussion.

MOTIONS MOVED ON NOTICE

- 18) Except as provided by these Standing Orders, no motion may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been put on the agenda by the Clerk or the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has delivered the notice to the Clerk at least seven clear days before the next meeting of the Council.
- 19) The Clerk shall date every notice of motion when received by him, shall number each motion in the order in which it was received, and shall enter it in a book, which shall be open to the inspection of every member of the Council.
- 20) The Clerk shall insert in the summons for every meeting all notices of motion properly given in the order in which they have been received, unless the member giving a notice of motion has stated in writing that he intends to move at some late meeting or that he withdraws it.
- 21) If a motion specified in the summons is not moved either by the member who gave notice of it or by any other member, it shall, unless postponed by the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
- 22) If the subject matter of a motion comes within the province of a committee of the Council, it shall upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to such committee or to such other committee as the Council may determine for report; provided that the Town Mayor, if he considers it to be a matter of urgency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.
- 23) Every motion shall be relevant to some question over which the Council has power or which affects its area.

MOTIONS MOVED WITHOUT NOTICE

- 24) Motions dealing with the following matters may be moved without notice: -
 - a) To appoint a Chairman of the meeting.
 - b) To correct the minutes.
 - c) To approve the minutes.
 - d) To alter the order of business.
 - e) To proceed to the next business.
 - f) To close or adjourn the debate.
 - g) To refer a matter to a committee.
 - h) To appoint a committee or any member thereof.
 - i) To adopt a report.

- j) To authorise the sealing of documents.
 - k) To amend a motion.
 - l) To give leave to withdraw a motion or amendment.
 - m) To extend the time limit for speeches.
 - n) To exclude the public. (See Order 64 below)
 - o) To silence or eject from the meeting a member named for misconduct. (See Order 33 below)
 - p) To give the consent of the Council where such consent is required by these Standing Orders.
 - q) To suspend any Standing Order. (See Order 72 below)
 - r) To adjourn the meeting.
- 25) A Councillor may ask the Town Mayor any question concerning the business of the Council, provided notice of the question has been given to the Town Clerk at least 4 clear days before the meeting. No question not connected with business under discussion shall be asked except during the part of the meeting set aside for questions.
- 26) A member of the public may ask the Town Council any question concerning the business of the Council, but only during the 30 minutes set aside for this purpose shortly after the start of each meeting.
- 27) Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.
- 28) A person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer.

RULES OF DEBATE

- 29) No discussion shall take place upon the minutes except upon their accuracy. Corrections to the minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Town Mayor.
- 30)
- a) A motion or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded, and unless proper notice has already been given, it shall, if required by the Town Mayor, be reduced to writing and handed to him before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.
 - b) A Councillor, when seconding a motion or amendment, may, if he then declares his intention to do so, reserve his speech until a later period of the debate.
 - c) A Councillor shall direct his speech to the question under discussion, or to a personal explanation, or to a question of order.
 - d) No speech by a mover of a motion shall exceed five minutes, and no other speech shall exceed three minutes except by consent of the Council.

- e) An amendment shall be to delete words and/or to add other words.
- f) An amendment shall not have the effect of negating the motion before the Council.
- g) If an amendment be carried, the motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original one and shall become the motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- h) A further amendment shall not be moved until the Council has disposed of every amendment previously moved.
- i) The mover of a motion or of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding five minutes.
- j) A Councillor, other than the mover of a motion, shall not, without leave of the Council, speak more than once on any motion except to move an amendment or further amendment, or on an amendment, or on a point of order, or in personal explanation, or to move a closure.
- k) A Councillor may speak on a point of order or a personal explanation. A Councillor rising for these purposes shall be heard forthwith. A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by him that may have been misunderstood.
- l) A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the consent of the Council, which shall be signified without discussion, and no Councillor may speak upon it after permission has been asked for its withdrawal, unless such permission has been refused.
- m) When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except the following:
 - i) To amend the motion
 - ii) To proceed to the next business.
 - iii) To adjourn the debate.
 - iv) That the question be now put.
 - v) That a member named be not further heard.
 - vi) That a member named do leave the meeting.
 - vii) That the resolution be referred to a committee.
 - viii) To exclude the public and press.
 - ix) To adjourn the meeting

31)

- a) A Councillor shall remain seated when speaking unless requested to stand by the Mayor.
- b) Subject to consulting the Town Clerk, the ruling of the Town Mayor on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, shall not be challenged.
- c) Councillors shall address the Town Mayor. If two or more Councillors wish to speak, the Mayor shall decide whom to call upon.

- d) Whenever the Town Mayor speaks during a debate, all other members shall be seated and silent.

CLOSURE

- 32) At the end of any speech, a Councillor may, without comment, move “that the question be now put”, “that the debate be now adjourned”, or “that the Council do now adjourn”. If such motion is seconded, the Town Mayor shall put the motion but, in the case of a motion “to put the question”, only if he is of the opinion that the question before the Council has been sufficiently debated. If the motion “that the question be not put” is carried, he shall call upon the mover to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the question immediately after the right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the Council shall not prejudice the mover’s right of reply at the resumption.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT

33)

- a) **All Councillors must observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 10th April 2002, a copy of which is annexed to these Standing Orders.**
- b) **No Councillor shall, at a meeting, persistently disregard the ruling of the Town Mayor, wilfully obstruct business, or behave irregularly, offensively, improperly or in such a manner as to scandalise the Council or bring it into contempt or ridicule.**
- c) **If, in the opinion of the Town Mayor, a Councillor has broken the provisions of paragraph (b) of this Order, the Town Mayor shall express that opinion to the Council and thereafter any Councillor may move that the Councillor named be no longer heard or that the member named do leave the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion. If a Councillor reasonably believes another Councillor is in breach of the Code of Conduct, that Councillor is under a duty to report the breach to the Standards Board for England.**
- d) **If the motion mentioned in paragraph (c) is disobeyed, the Town Mayor may adjourn the meeting or take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce it.**

RIGHT OF REPLY

- 34) The mover of a motion shall have a right to reply immediately before it is put to the vote. If an amendment is proposed, the mover of the amendment shall be entitled to reply immediately before the amendment is put to the vote. A Councillor exercising a right of reply shall not introduce a new matter. After the right of reply has been exercised or waived, a vote shall be taken without further discussion.

ALTERATIONS TO MOTIONS

- 35) Councillors may, with the consent of their seconders, move amendments to their own motions.

RESCISSION OF PREVIOUS RESOLUTION

36)

- a) A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least four members of the Council, or by resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
- b) When a special resolution has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

37) Where more than two persons have been nominated for any position to be filled by the Council, and of the votes given there is not an absolute majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken, and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESOLUTIONS AFFECTING EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNCIL

38) If, at a meeting, there arises any question relating to the appointment, conduct, promotion, dismissal, salary or conditions of service, of any person employed by the Council, it shall not be considered until the Council or committee (as the case may be) has decided whether or not the public shall be excluded. (See Standing Order No. 60)

RESOLUTIONS ON EXPENDITURE

39) Any resolution which, if carried would, in the opinion of the Chairman, substantially increase the expenditure upon any service which is under the management of, or reduce the revenue at the disposal of, any committee, or which would involve capital expenditure, shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, and any committee affected by it shall consider whether it desires to report thereon.

EXPENDITURE

40) Orders for the payment of money shall be authorised by resolution of the Council and signed by two Councillors plus the Town Clerk.

SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

41)

- a) A document shall not be sealed on behalf of the Council unless its sealing has been authorised by a resolution.
- b) The Council's Common Seal shall alone be used for sealing documents. It shall be applied by the proper officer in the presence of two members, who shall sign the
- c) document as witnesses.

COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

- 42) The Council may, at the Annual Meeting, appoint standing committees, and may, at any other time, appoint such other committees, sub-committees, and working parties as are necessary, but subject to any statutory provision in that behalf: -
- a) shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting; and
 - b) may, subject to the provisions of Order 36 above, at any time dissolve or alter the membership of a committee.
- 43) The Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be ex-officio voting members of every committee, sub-committee and working party, and any other Member of the Council may attend, and may speak at the invitation of the Chairman, at any meeting of a committee, sub-committee or working party.
- 44) Every committee, sub-committee or working party shall, at its first meeting, before proceeding to any other business, elect a Chairman and may elect a Vice Chairman, who shall hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, and shall settle its programme of meetings for the ensuing year.
- 45) The Chairman of a committee, sub-committee or working party or the Chairman of the Council may summon an additional meeting of that body at any time. An additional meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than a quarter of the members of the committee. The summons shall set out the business to be considered at the special meeting and no other business shall be transacted at that meeting.
- 46)
- a) The Council shall determine the quorum for a meeting of a Committee and a Sub-Committee, which shall be no less than three.
 - b) Membership of the Planning & Highways Advisory Committee shall comprise all members of the Council and the quorum shall be three members.
 - c) Membership of the Marine & Environment Partnership shall comprise all members of the Council plus the extra invited representatives and the quorum shall be four Council members.
- 47) The Standing Orders on rules of debate (except those parts relating to speaking more than once), and the Standing Order on interests of members in contacts and other matters, shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- 48)
- a) The Council may create advisory committees, whose name, and number of members and the bodies to be invited to nominate members shall be specified.
 - b) The Clerk shall inform the members of each advisory committee of the terms of reference of the committee.

- c) An advisory committee may make recommendations and give notice thereof to the Council.
- d) An advisory committee may consist wholly of persons who are not members of the Council.

VOTING IN COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES

49) Members of committees, sub-committees and working parties shall vote by a show of hands, or if any member requests, the way each Member voted shall be recorded in the minutes.

50) Chairman of committees, sub-committees and working parties shall, in the case of an equality of votes, have a second or casting vote.

ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

51)

- a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this Standing Order, or by statute, all accounts for payment and claims upon the Council shall be laid before the Council.
- b) Where it has been necessary to make a payment before it has been authorised by the Council, the appropriate officer shall certify such payment as to its correctness and urgency.
- c) All payments ratified under sub-paragraph (b) of this Standing Order shall be separately included in the next schedule of payments laid before the Council.

52) The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each member as soon as practicable after 31 March in each year a statement of the receipts and payments of the Council for the completed financial year. A Financial Statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March shall be presented to each member before the end of the following month of May. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to external audit) shall be presented to Council for formal approval before the end of the following month of September.

ESTIMATES

53)

- a) The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at a Council Meeting during either January or February.
- b) Any committee, sub-committee or working party desiring to incur expenditure, shall normally formulate recommendations to the Council by 31st December at the latest.

INTERESTS

54) If a member has a personal interest as defined by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 10th April 2002, then he shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the existence and nature of that interest as required.

55) If a member who has declared a personal interest then considers the interest to be prejudicial, he must withdraw from the room or chamber during consideration of the item to which the interest relates.

56) The Clerk may be required to compile and hold a Register of Member's Interests, or a copy thereof, in accordance with agreement reached with the Monitoring Officer of the Responsible Authority and/or as required by statute.

57) If a candidate for any appointment under the Council is to his knowledge related to any member of or the holder of any office under the Council, he and the person to whom he is related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Clerk. A candidate who fails so to do shall be disqualified for such appointment, and, if appointed, may be dismissed without notice. The Clerk shall report to the Council or to the appropriate committee any such disclosure. Where relationship to a member is disclosed this Standing Order shall apply.

58) The Clerk shall make known the purpose of this Standing Order to every candidate.

CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY MEMBERS

59)

- a) Canvassing of Councillors, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council, shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Clerk shall make known the purport of this sub-paragraph of this Standing Order to every candidate.
- b) A Councillor shall not solicit, for any person, any appointment under the Council, or recommend any person for such appointment, or for promotion; but, nevertheless, a member may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

60) Standing Orders 57, 58 and 59 shall apply to tenders, as if the person making the tender was a candidate for an appointment.

INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

61) A member may, for the purpose of his duty as such (but not otherwise), inspect any document in possession of the council and if copies are available, shall, on request, be supplied for the like purpose with a copy.

62) All minutes kept by the Council and by any committee shall be open for the inspection of any member of the Council.

UNAUTHORISED ACTIVITIES

63) No member of the Council, or of any committee or sub-committee, shall, in the name of, or on behalf of the Council: -

- a) Inspect any lands or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
- b) Issue orders, instructions or directions:

unless authorised to do so by the Council or the relevant committee or sub-committee.

ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS TO MEETINGS

64) The press and public shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees and sub-committees, which may, however, temporarily exclude the public by means of the following resolution viz:

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

65) The Clerk shall afford to the press reasonable facilities for taking their report of any proceedings at which they are entitled to be present. There shall be no audio or video recording of the meeting without the express approval of the Council, nor shall photography be permitted.

66) If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Chairman may, after warning, order that he be removed from the Council Chamber and may adjourn the meeting for such period as is necessary to restore order.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

67)

- a) No member of the Council, or any committee or sub-committee, shall disclose to any person not a member of the Council, any business declared to be confidential by the Council or the committee.
- b) Any Councillor in breach of the provisions of paragraph (a) of this Standing Order shall be removed from any committee of the Council by the Council.

URGENT BUSINESS

68) Where no meeting of the Town Council is scheduled within the necessary timescale to enable a decision concerning an urgent matter to be taken, the Town Clerk may, in consultation with the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor of the Council, determine an urgent matter. All decisions taken under this standing order shall be reported to the next meeting of the Town Council for information, and the Town Clerk shall provide the necessary information, including reasons for urgency, to enable the Town Council to be satisfied that the delegated power has been used properly.

STANDING ORDER ON CONTRACTS

69)

- a) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £1,000 in value for the supply of goods or services or for the execution of works, the Town Clerk may invite not less than three companies to tender for the contract in question, and where the value of the intended contract exceeds £10,000, the firms invited to tender shall be drawn from the appropriate standing approved list of contractors maintained by the District Council, or, if no such list is maintained, then in such newspapers circulating in the district as shall state the general nature of the intended contract, and state the name and address of the person to receive the tenders, and shall specify the date and time by which tenders should be received. Tenderers shall normally be given 14 days in which to submit tenders.

- b) Tenders shall be opened by the Clerk, or other person to whom tenders are requested to be addressed, on the date specified pursuant to paragraph (a) of this Order, and shall be reported by the person who opened them to the Council, or, where the tenders have been sought by a committee or sub-committee, to that committee or sub-committee.
- c) Neither the Council, nor any committee or sub-committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender.
- d) If no tenders are received, or if all tenders are identical, the Council may make such arrangements for procuring the goods or materials, or executing the works, as it thinks fit.
- e) A notice issued under this standing order shall contain a statement of the effect of Standing Orders Nos. 57, 58 and 59.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

70) The Council shall consider and approve Financial Regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer.

1) Such Regulations shall include detailed arrangements for the following:

- a) the accounting records and systems of internal control;
- b) the assessment and management of risks faced by the Council;
- c) the work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor which shall be required at least annually;
- d) the financial reporting requirements of members and local electors and
- e) procurement policies.

2) The Financial Regulations of the Council shall be subject to regular review, at least once every four years.

{Council is reminded that the European Union Public Sector Procurement Rules are likely to apply to contracts with a value in excess of £140,000 and advice should be sought at this level}

CODE OF CONDUCT ON COMPLAINTS

71) The Council shall deal with complaints of maladministration allegedly committed by the Council, or by any officer or member, in the manner recommended in the Code of Practice for Local Councils in Handling Complaints, as set out in NALC Circular 2/86, except for those complains which should be properly directed to the Standards Board for England for consideration.

VARIATION, REVOCATION AND SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

72) Any or every part of the Standing Orders, except those printed in **bold type**, may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.

73) A resolution permanently to add, vary or revoke a Standing Order, shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

STANDING ORDERS TO BE GIVEN TO MEMBERS

- 74) A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each member by the Clerk upon delivery to him of the member's declaration of acceptance of office.

(These Standing Orders were originally approved by the Town Council at its meeting on 23rd October 2002.)