

MODEL STANDING ORDERS 2025 (ENGLAND)

Standing Orders for Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot Parish Council

A grouped parish council comprising of the two Parish Areas of Severn Stoke and of Croome d'Abitot

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Updated Feb 2026 ref to probable procurement thresholds, and, ref to staffing committee terms of reference.

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At a glance key updates to 2025 Model Standing Orders

- Meeting Conduct (SO 1 & 3): Contributions must relate strictly to the motion and cannot exceed 3 minutes without permission.
- Disorderly Conduct (SO 2): Chairs have enhanced authority to remove individuals who disrupt meetings or ignore requests to improve their conduct.
- Public Participation (SO 3): Public sessions are generally limited to 15 minutes, with individual speaking time capped at 3 minutes.
- Recording Meetings (SO 3): Explicit provisions allowing public reporting, filming, and photographing of meetings, provided they do not disrupt proceedings.
- Code of Conduct (SO 14): Updates often incorporate new or revised local councillor codes of conduct.
- Document Management: Agendas must be published at least three clear days before meetings on a publicly accessible website

HOW TO USE MODEL STANDING ORDERS

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of a council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework. NALC model standing orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. It is not possible for the model standing orders to contain or reference all the statutory or legal requirements which apply to local councils. For example, it is not practical for model standing orders to document all obligations under data protection legislation. The statutory requirements to which a council is subject apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council's standing orders.

The model standing orders do not include model financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer. Model financial regulations are available to councils in membership of NALC.

DRAFTING NOTES

Model standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements. It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning. Model standing orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but they do not contain statutory requirements so they may be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a council's needs. It is NALC's view that all model standing orders will be suitable for councils.

For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in model standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights.

A model standing order that includes brackets like this '()' requires information to be inserted by a council. A model standing order that includes brackets like this '[]' and the term 'OR' provides alternative options for a council to choose from when determining standing orders.

Vice is the same as 'Deputy' and the terms are interchangeable

Particulars for Severn Stoke and Croome D'Abitot Parish Council

Number of seats: 12. Nb. 3 for Croome d'Abitot and 9 for Severn Stoke.

Under the Local Government Act 1894 parish councils were created. The two separate Parish Areas of Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot existed at this time. From the Reform of Local Government Act 1972 the joint single Parish Council of Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot was inaugurated in 1973.

"While we may think of Town and Parishes as the closest layer of governance to the population in reality Parish Areas are (in most places these mirror Parish Councils, but not always). What has happened in places that are grouped is that these Parish Areas (which would be covered by different Parish Meetings) have come together to form one Parish Council. The Parish Council is the corporate body and therefore the employer and the body that makes the decisions in a Council area. The knowledge that a Parish is Grouped shouldn't really change anything, the only thing that has been flagged up is that each Parish Area should have its own Annual Parish Meeting of residents."

Christopher Wayman Worcestershire CAALC

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Items and Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting or upon a motion and majority vote by councillors. The Clerk may advise an amendment to order and councillors may vote upon that advice.
- b After debate on a topic appearing on the agenda, non-financial motions may be proposed at the meeting and do not need to appear on the agenda in advance - See 10a. Motions relating to financial expenditure above £100 or relating to expenditure outside and above the permitted threshold given in the delegation to the Clerk policy MUST appear on the published agenda in order to be voted upon. Those financial motions covered above NOT appearing on the agenda MUST be deferred to the next meeting before a vote can take place.
- c The Clerk may make recommendations and include motions on the agenda, including financial motions, in readiness for debate in public and in order that councillors be encouraged to debate and progress items already planned for and approved by councillors in the budget for that financial year.
- d A motion (or amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- e A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn, unless the motion has been placed on the agenda under the advice of the Clerk and Financial Responsible Officer as being within existing budget and project plans or as being vital to a function of the council.
- f If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- g An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- h If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- i An amendment to a motion may be tabled in advance of a meeting or may be offered at the meeting, unless relating to financial expenditure above £100 or relating to expenditure outside and above the permitted threshold given in the delegation to the clerk policy.
- j A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- k If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- l Subject to standing order 1(m), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- m One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- n A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

- o The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- p Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- q Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- r During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- s A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- t When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed () minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.
- d Items 2a, b and c above include the public open forum and should be taken to include any participation, debate or question submitted via social media/internet (subject to the necessary laws being in place to allow such participation).

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

Full Council meetings	●
Committee meetings	●
Sub-committee meetings	●

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.** In the case of this parish, it is acknowledged that an extreme lack of viable premises may make meeting in a public house a necessity if the meetings are to proceed at all. Meetings shall only take place in a public house if all options of the church and facilities at Croome have been exhausted. Councillors have undertaken to try to ensure that full council meetings always occur within the parish and remain accessible to residents and therefore have expressed a preference to use a facility within the parish, rather than remove that full council meeting from the parish entirely (ie outside the parish at a distance from residents, thereby excluding them).
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning but does include a Saturday.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
- d **di. Meetings shall be open to the public 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 public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**

- dii.** In the case of Staffing Committee meetings, the terms of reference for that committee note that the agenda may entirely consist of confidential matters and that that public may therefore be excluded as a matter of course. In order to preserve public observance and participation, the staffing committee will take all motions and recommendations to full parish council, where those matters will appear on the agenda for that full meeting, for councillors debate and vote and allowing public questions and input in public open forum.
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda, in the portion of the meeting allotted for public participation.
 - f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 30 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
 - g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless permitted by the chair of the meeting.
 - h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
 - i A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)]. The chair of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
 - j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chair of the meeting.
 - k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
 - l **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
 - m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
 - n The Council asks those persons recording proceedings not to edit the film or recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show lack of respect towards those being filmed or recorded.

- COVID19 exceptions – When meeting in person the Parish Council will display these requirements as to filming, recording and broadcasting at its meeting venues and those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not. This will not be possible when meetings are conducted online and therefore attendees are required to ensure that they have familiarised themselves with these requirements before attending the meeting. Again, at online meetings, those undertaking these activities will be deemed to have accepted them whether they have read them or not.
- p **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present. This does not include any technology/wifi/computer equipment.**
- q **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
- r **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- s **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- t **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote and, in the case of an equality of votes, may exercise the casting vote whether or not previously giving an original vote.**

See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

- u **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- v The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
 - i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - vi. if there was a public participation session; and
 - vii. the resolutions made.

- w **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- x **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three. The quorum for this parish council is (4) FOUR out of (12) TWELVE seats.**
See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.
- y **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- z A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 hours. (previously was 2.5 hours. This was amended, in allowance to the fact that the parish council only meets every other month).

4. **COMMITTEES AND SUB-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 Council may appoint any committee/s as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 3 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
 - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;

- viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
- ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 7.30pm. (previously was 6pm).**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (see footnote) (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chair of the Council, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until a successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

- j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
- i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of the acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
 - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
 - ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
 - xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
 - xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
 - xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);
 - xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
 - xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
 - xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
 - xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

- xxii. Review of any matters required under the Transparency Code and in relation to audit practices.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within (7) days of having been requested to do so by (3) members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any (3) members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-committee].

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a A resolution shall not be reversed or amended within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least (3) councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee or a report provided by the Parish Clerk.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.
- c Safeguarding of public money: Where new or urgent information comes to light, a resolution may be returned back to full council for further examination. Furthermore, the Parish Clerk has delegated authority to delay a project or appointment in the event of a threat to services and public money. Evidence of due diligence by the Parish Clerk should be submitted to full council and within the annual audit.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a Nb Not covering the appointment of contracts.
- b Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.
- c In all matters relating to co-option the co-option policy shall be followed and the co-option policy shall be deemed to take precedence over the above in Standing Orders.

9. **MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER**

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda (unless covered by the Delegation to the Clerk policy, or unless covered by a situation arising/comprising an emergency and warranting immediate attention, or unless already provided for at a previous meeting in the minutes of that meeting), and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 (seven) clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least (3) clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final. Requests to include a motion that is outside the remit of the parish council shall be rejected. Similarly, if the parish council has no legal means to take an item forward, then that item or motion shall not be included. Whilst no agenda item shall be reasonably declined, the Proper Office is legally responsible for the agenda and meeting's validity and consequently the Proper Office, often the Parish Clerk, has the final say in agenda content and motion inclusion.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. **MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE**

- a. The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. To progress non-financial items/projects 1) already approved within the annual budget of the parish council, or 2) financial items under £100 or 3) items covered by the delegation to the parish clerk policy;
 - ii. In relation to the flood emergency evacuation plan; including emergency expenditure for the good and preservation of the lives of residents and property.
 - iii. to suggest a correction to the draft minutes of a meeting (The parish clerk does not have to accept them – see 'Draft Minutes' below);

- iv. to move to a vote;
- v. to defer consideration of a motion;
- vi. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
- vii. to reconsider a previous motion in light of urgent information where that information relates to the security of the public purse or a threat to public services.
- viii. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
- ix. to change the order of business on the agenda;
- x. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- xi. to require a written report;
- xii. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
- xiii. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xiv. to invite the press and public to speak at a meeting (necesitatnig the suspension of standing orders for that item).
- xv. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xvi. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xvii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xviii. upon the death of a councillor or sudden illness of a councillor and where the notes/paperwork relating to the parish council in ownership of that councillor are necesariily unavailable for inspection;
- xix. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xx. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- xxi. to extend the meeting beyond the 3 hour limit in events deemed expedient;
- xxii. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xxiii. to close the meeting.
- xxiv. to cover an item covered by the Delegation to the Clerk policy
- xxv. to cover a matter considered by at least 2 (two) members via a vote in agreement to be of sufficient urgency to the parish as may warrant immdate decision, including:

- in period of flood or natural disaster, or serious weather conditions, or
- maters relating to public health (physical and mental), or
- matters relating to public safety, or
- matters relating to an urgent risk assessment requirement/new evaluation, or

- matters demanded in writing (email) as requiring immediate attention by a solicitor/insurance company/ICO/Worcestershire CALC/higher council authority/Highways/SARA flood rescue/police fire and rescue/Police Crime Commissioner (and the Parish Lengthsman as a trusted advisor with delegated risk assessment duties), or
- matters mandated for by a majority of parishioners in a public survey/vote/referendum after the publication of the agenda, where the survey/referendum/request in writing is received as a hard copy at the meeting and where not acting would place the public/property at risk, or
- matters where a significant loss to the public purse might arise through inaction,
- matters requiring immediate attention include where a previously appointed contractor has requested urgent action/amendment to a project/instruction, where the project might be at risk through inaction (for example seasonal legal restrictions) and where significant loss to the public purse might arise.
- matters in relation to Monkwood Green as legally instructed by Natural England and where the SSSI designation would be at risk through inaction.
- matters in relation to urgent decisions regarding an insurance claim that occurred after date of publication of the agenda
- matters where parish council staff/councillors/lengthsman feel unsafe/threatened/at risk
- matters relating to urgent press enquiries and where the integrity of the parish council is at risk.
- matters relating to urgent FOI requests and where the integrity of the parish council is at risk.
- matters reported by the public in Public Session/Question Time where urgent health and safety matters require resolving.
- matters reported by a education authority as urgently affecting child health , safety, security and well being
- matters relating to data protection, including reported urgent issues with data security and GDPR.
- matters relating to the resignation of a councillor that occurred after publication of the agenda AND where positions require filling on committees/projects etc in order to preserve the public purse and integrity of the parish council.

11. **MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION** *See also standing order 20*

- a With prior reference to the ‘ **Data Protection Policy & Information Security Policy**’ of this council.....
- b **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council’s retention policy shall confirm the period**

for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).

- d The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.
- e Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

12. DRAFT MINUTES

Full Council meetings ●
Committee meetings ●
Sub-committee meetings ●

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).
- c The minutes remain the record of events as considered by the Clerk. The Clerk is not required to agree to any amendments moved by councillors. This does not affect the resolution proceeding as per (d) below.
- d The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- e If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

"The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

- f **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
-
-
- g Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- c Unless granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required. Verbal dispensation requests to the Proper Officer shall be accepted with agreement from the Chair.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required] and that decision is final. In an emergency this may be granted by the Proper Officer/Clerk in advance of a Meeting or Extra Ordinary Meeting.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required] OR [at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required].
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**
 - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. **CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

- a Within the parameters of and reference to the '**Grievance Policy**' and the '**Complaints Policy**' of this council.....
- b **Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. **PROPER OFFICER**

- a A Parish Council Proper Officer is a statutory title, usually held by the Parish Clerk, responsible for carrying out the council's legal, administrative, and procedural duties. As the primary officer, they manage council records, issue legal notices, advise on law/policy, and ensure decisions are implemented legally.
- b The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent. In the case of this parish council, the Proper Officer is the parish clerk. These Standing Orders confirm the Parish Clerk's designation as Proper Officer.
- c The Proper Officer shall:
- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time and place (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).¹**

See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;
 - ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least (7) days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
 - iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
 - iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
 - v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**

¹ Local Gov Act 1972 the date, time and location of a meeting must be in a conspicuous place physically within the parish, not the full agenda -often but not always a noticeboard. In addition to this law the Transparency Code requires full publication of the full agenda on a website. This clarification has been added by the parish clerk.

- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed; (*see also standing order 23*);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair, Vice Chair and Councillors via email within two working days of receipt. Clerk has delegated powers to receive comments on the application and form a response. Response to be circulated to Cllrs for approval if comments other than approval/refusal are submitted (see Scheme of Delegation) Clerk will facilitate a site visit or extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires one.
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.(*see also standing order 23*).

16. **RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- a A Parish Council Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is the statutory officer responsible for the lawful, proper, and efficient administration of a council's financial affairs under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Often the Parish Clerk, they manage budgets, financial records, audits, payroll, and VAT, ensuring compliance with legal frameworks and internal controls. Importantly they provide quarterly summaries and manage the budget according to expenditure to date within the financial year. They can advise Motions to be added to the agenda to support, uphold or amend the budget as is practicable and as part of ongoing financial controls.
- b The responsible financial officer (RFO) for this council is the Parish Clerk. These Standing Orders confirm the Parish Clerk's appointment as RFO.
- c The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each meeting the invoices for approval, monies received and the balances on the bank accounts.
- d Quarterly the Clerk as RFO will summarise:
 - i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income/expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported andwhich includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- e As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- f The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council.
- g The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required

at least annually;

- iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
- v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. The Clerk notes 10/02/2026 probable [New Thresholds \(Jan 2026\)](#): For sub-central bodies (which includes parish councils), the threshold for public contracts is set to change, for example, for certain services it will be £207,720 including VAT. This matter should be checked prior to project sign off.
- c. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a. This parish council has a Staffing Committee Terms of Reference and due accordance should be given to that alongside these Standing Orders.
- b. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Staffing committee and is subject to standing order 11. The number of councillors on

the staffing committee is 4, with 3 being the quorum for that committee.

- c Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of the Staffing committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to Council at its next meeting.
- d The chair of Staffing Committee or in his absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the committee.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chair of the Staffing committee or in his absence, the vice-chair of in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the committee.
- f Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk and RFO relates to the chair or vice-chair of the Staffing committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Council which shall be reported back to the next full council meeting.
- g Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- h In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. **RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**

See also standing order 21.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b *[If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000]*
The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

OR

[If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) exceeds £200,000]
The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

21. **RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

(Below is not an exclusive list). See also standing order 11.

- a **The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer. (In the case of this council that shall be the Proper Officer)**

- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.** . In this instance, the parish council Data Protection Policy & Information Security Policy AND Privacy Notice.
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

22. **RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

23. **EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS**

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii).

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.

Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed/lease required by law and the Proper Officer or District/Unitary Councillor shall witness their signatures. Alternatively, the Chair may sign any deed/lease in the presence of Full Council and properly witnessed by the Proper Officer or District/Unitary Councillor.

(Note: Above applies as this council does not have a common seal)

24. **COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the District and County Council OR Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.
- b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District and County Council OR Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.
- c As a courtesy, all ward councillors representing the area of the Council shall be invited to speak at parish council meetings and give an update on matters affecting the parish. To allow members of the public to respond, this session shall be within public open forum. Strictly, Financial Motions that become necessary as a result of information or advice given should be added to the next full agenda.

25. **RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES**

- a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect;

or

- ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. **STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY**

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least (3) councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

-end-

Parish Clerk, Proper Officer & Responsible Financial Officer Mrs Lisa Stevens, CiLCA,
c/o 9 The Limes, Kempsey, Worcs, WR5 3LG. Tel: 01905 820956 / 07950256363

Email: parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk

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Requests for this information in other languages/audio/large print will be reasonably considered.



IN COLLABORATION WITH SECC, NAAC, DPM, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS



View our new parish council website via the Q R Code above
or at

<https://severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk/>

Our parish council logo shows the Panorama Tower at Severn Stoke, offering views of the surrounding countryside to the public. Image recreated with permission of the National Trust.