

BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

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1. Meetings of the Town Council

- (a) Meetings of the Council shall be held at 7:00 pm unless the Council otherwise decides.
- (b) At least three clear days (but preferably one week) before a meeting of the Town Council:
 - (i) A summons to attend the meeting, specifying the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting and signed by the Town Clerk shall be left or sent by first class post to the usual place of residence of every member of the Town Council or, with the agreement of a member, may be sent by email provided that any such email shall contain the electronic signature of the Town Clerk.
 - (ii) Notice of the time and place of the intended meeting shall be fixed at the Town Hall and all other Council notice boards, and where the meeting is called by members of the Town Council the notice shall be signed by those members and shall specify the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting,
 - (iii) For want of service of any summons as referred to in paragraph 1(b)(i) above on any member of the Town Council shall not affect the validity of the meeting.

When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to councillors and the public, 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 shall not count

- (c) The Town Mayor in consultation with the Leader of the Council may call an extraordinary meeting of the Town Council at any time subject to it being in accordance with paragraph 1(b) above.
- (d) If the Town Mayor refuses to call a meeting of the Town Council after a requisition for that purpose, signed by at least two members of the Town Council has been presented to the holder of the aforementioned Office, or if, without so refusing, the Town Mayor does not call a meeting within seven days after such a requisition has been presented, any two members of the Town Council on that refusal or on expiration of the seven days may forthwith proceed and convene a meeting of the Town Council subject to it being in accordance with paragraph 1(b) (i) and/or (ii).
- (e) In addition to the Statutory Annual Town Council meeting at least three other meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times and at such place as the Council may direct.

2. Annual Town Meeting

Each year an Annual Meeting of the Parish of Bridport shall be held at such place and time as the Town Council may direct, between 1 March and 1 June and not before 6pm on the selected date. At the meeting the Town Mayor, Leader of the Council and the Town Clerk will present their annual reports. This is not a meeting of the Town Council although all members are invited to attend.

3. Town Council Meetings - General

- (a) At meetings of the Town Council the Town Mayor, if present, shall preside.
- (b) If the Town Mayor is absent from a meeting of the Town Council, the Deputy Town Mayor if present shall preside.
- (c) If the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are absent from a meeting of the Town Council, such Councillor as chosen by members of the Town Council shall preside.
- (d) The Councillor presiding at a meeting of the Town Council may exercise all the powers and duties of the Town Mayor in relation to the running and conduct of the meeting.
- (e) The ruling of the Chairman of a meeting of the Town Council (in which he/she shall have the benefit of the advice of the Town Clerk) as to the construction or application of the Council's Standing Orders shall be final. The Chairman may at any time if he/she thinks it is desirable in the interest of order, adjourn the meeting or suspend a sitting of the Town Council for a time and date to be named by him/her.

4. Annual Town Council Meeting

- (a) In an ordinary election year the Annual Town Council meeting shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
- (b) In a year, which is not an election year, the Annual Town Council meeting shall be held on such a day in May as the Council may direct.
- (c) At each Annual Meeting the first business shall be:
 - (i) To elect a Chairman of Council (Town Mayor).
 - (ii) To receive the Town Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.
 - (iii) To elect a Vice-Chairman of Council (Deputy Mayor).
 - (iv) To receive the Deputy Town Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.
 - (v) To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.
 - (vi) To elect a Leader of the Council.
 - (vii) To receive the Leader of the Council's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.

- (viii) To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees.
- (ix) To approve the membership of the committees and to facilitate Council business, any sub committees or working groups.
- (x) In the ordinary year of election of the Council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reason of insufficient nominations.
- (xi) Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees and other local authorities.
- (xii) Appointment of committees, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors)
- (xiii) Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.
- (xiv) In a year of elections, if a Council's period of eligibility to exercise the power of competence expired the day before the annual meeting, to review and make arrangements to reaffirm eligibility.
- (xv) Setting the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the Council and its committees and sub committees for the year ahead.

(In an election year councillors should, prior to the commencement of the Annual Council Meeting, complete a Declaration of Acceptance of Office including acceptance of the Code of Conduct. The declaration to be witnessed by the Proper Officer, authorised by the Council to take such declaration)

- (d) A person shall not be normally appointed as Town Mayor for more than two years in succession.
1. Prior to the penultimate Town Council meeting of the municipal year, the Town Clerk shall invite all members to submit nominations for the posts of Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Leader of the Council. The nominations received are then reported to the penultimate meeting of the Council in the municipal year, as a public agenda item. At that meeting, the Council to be invited to approve its preferred candidates to go forward to the Annual Town Council meeting (Mayor Making), where the elections to these posts shall take place.
 2. In a year where there are Town Council elections a preferred candidate for any of the posts referred to in (1) above is not chosen and nominations shall be sought immediately following the elections, and voted upon at the Annual Town Council meeting. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor will be elected at the Annual Town Council meeting but the Mayor making and civic reception shall take place at a separate ceremony within two weeks of the Annual Town Council meeting.

5. Ordinary Town Council Meetings - Order of Business

- (a) Prior to the start of each ordinary Council meeting, there will be an Open Public Forum of up to 45 minutes for electors or residents in the parish of Bridport or adjoining parishes. This will be in two parts:
 - a public discussion on a particular issue of current interest. Items for discussion, which shall be introduced by a councillor, shall be agreed by a previous Council meeting. There will be no time limits on public contributions in this section of the Open Forum.

- public questions or statements, primarily in respect of items on the agenda of the Town Council meeting but also in the interests of wider public discussion. The Chairman shall have discretion to decide whether the issues raised in this part of the Open Forum are relevant to an agenda item or in the interests of wider public discussion relating to Council business. Each question/contribution under this section will not exceed three minutes in duration. If there are a number of people attending to speak on the same subject, a spokesperson will be appointed by them so as to avoid unnecessary repetition. No debate or discussion may take place on questions or statements raised in this section and they shall not require a response. However, the Chairman may direct that a response be made either by the Leader of the Council or the Town Clerk, which may be made orally or subsequently in writing.

After the Open Forum has been concluded, the Council meeting reconvenes and the order of business, unless the Council otherwise decides on the ground of urgency, shall be as follows:-

- (b) 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.
- (c) After consideration to approve the signature of the Minutes by the person presiding as a correct record.
- (d) To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- (e) To answer questions from Councillors.
- (f) To receive and consider reports and minutes of committees.
- (g) To receive and consider reports from officers of the Council.
- (h) To consider resolutions or recommendations in the order in which they have been notified.
- (i) To receive such communications as the Leader / Town Mayor and / or the Town Clerk may wish to lay before the Council.
- (j) Any other business specified in the summons.

6. Committee Minutes and Reports

Committee minutes/reports shall be submitted by the Chairman of that particular Committee and considered on the motion "That the minutes/report be received". Each page of the minutes shall then be noted and members able to ask questions on resolved matters although no motion or amendment shall be moved. Each recommendation in the minutes shall be moved separately by the Chairman of the Committee and a seconder sought prior to consideration by the Town Council. A reference back motion containing instructions and any amendments must be submitted in writing and either circulated beforehand or read on moving.

7. Quorum of the Town Council

Three members or one third of the total membership, whichever is the greater shall constitute a quorum at meetings of the Town Council.

If a quorum is not present when the Town Council meets or if during a meeting the number of councillors present and not debarred by reason of a declared personal prejudicial interest 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 fix.

The power to grant dispensations is delegated to the Town Clerk, who in each case shall report on the circumstances to the relevant committee, prior to the item being considered. The provisions to grant a dispensation are that if, having had regard to all relevant circumstances, it is considered that:-

- a) without the dispensation, the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business, or
- b) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area, or
- c) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

A dispensation, when granted, must specify the period for which it has effect, and the period specified may not exceed 4 years.

8. Proper Officer

Where a statute, regulation or order confers functions or duties on the proper officer of the Council in the following cases, he/she shall be the Town Clerk:

The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following.

- i. Sign and serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee and sub-committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting. With the agreement of a member, the summons may be sent by email provided that any such email shall contain the electronic signature of the Town Clerk.
- ii. Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).
- iii. Include in 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.
- iv. Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office.
- v. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.
- vi. Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.
- vii. Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.
- viii. Retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.
- ix. Keep proper records required before and after meetings;
- x. Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.
- xi. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
- xii. Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.

- xiii. Arrange for legal deeds to be sealed using the Council's common seal
- xiv. Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations
- xv. Retain custody of the seal of the Council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
- xvi. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.

In any other case the proper officer shall be the person nominated by the Town Clerk or in default of nomination by the Town Council.

9. Voting

- (a) Members shall vote by show of hands, or (on appointments required to be made by the Town Council where more than one person has been nominated only) if at least two members so request and having put the motion to the Council, it is agreed by a majority, the vote will be by way of marked ballot papers.
- (b) If at least two members so require on a vote by show of hands, the Town Clerk shall record the names of the members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it or abstained.
- (c) Subject to (d) and (e) below the Presiding Person / Chairperson 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 / she gave no original vote.
- (d) 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 Town Mayor until the end of their term of office he/she may not give an original vote in an election for Town Mayor.
- (e) The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for the Town Mayor.
- (f) The Leader of the Council shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, working parties, ad hoc bodies appointed by the Council and Committees and if so chooses can exercise the right to vote.

Voting on Appointments

- (g) If there is not an absolute majority in favour of one person, the chairman of the meeting has the right to exercise his/her casting vote.
- (h) Where more than two persons have been nominated for any position to be filled by the Town 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.

10. Urgent Business

A motion to vary the order of business on the grounds of urgency may be proposed by the Leader / Town Mayor / Chairman or by any member and, if proposed by the Leader / Town Mayor / Chairman, may be put to the vote without being seconded, and shall be put to the vote without discussion.

11. Motions Moved on Notice

- (a) 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 Town Clerk or the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has delivered the notice to the Town Clerk on or before 12:00 noon on the same day of the previous week of the Council meeting (normally when agenda(s) are despatched).
- (b) The Town Clerk shall date every notice of motion or recommendation when received by him/her, shall number each notice 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 Town Council.
- (c) The Town Clerk shall insert in the summons for every meeting all notices of motion or recommendation 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/she intends to move at some later meeting or that he/she withdraws it.
- (d) If a motion or recommendation 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 Town Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
- (e) Unless bearing a total of six signatures, motions may not propose a course contrary to a Council decision taken within six months.
- (f) If a motion proposes extra expenditure or loss of income (other than a purely nominal sum) it shall call first for a report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- (g) If the subject matter of a motion comes within the province of a committee of the Town Council, it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to such committee or to such other committee(s) as the Council may determine for report; provided that if the Presiding Person / Chairperson considers it to be a matter of urgency or expediency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.
- (h) Every motion or recommendation shall be relevant to some subject over which the Town Council has power or which affects its area.
- (i) Motions that merely call for a report on a given subject must also bear the signatures of another two members; they shall be placed on the agenda paper and passed without debate. The Committee shall report within four months unless the Council agrees to a longer interval.

12. Motions moved without Notice

Motions dealing with the following matters may be moved without notice:-

- (a) To appoint a Town Mayor / Presiding Person 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 members 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 an amendment.
- (m) To extend the time limit for speeches.
- (n) To exclude the public.
- (o) To silence or eject from the meeting a member named for misconduct.
- (p) To invite a member having a personal interest in the subject matter under debate to remain.
- (q) To give the consent of the Council where such consent is required by these Standing Orders.
- (r) To suspend any Standing Order(s).
- (s) To adjourn the meeting.

13. Petitions

Without debate, petitions shall be referred to the appropriate committee. The substance of a petition shall be briefly summarised by the member presenting it.

14. Questions

A Member may ask Question(s) on items not on the agenda by way of:

- (a) A notice given in writing to the Town Clerk at least two clear days before a Council meeting.
- (b) A member may ask the Leader of the Council or the chairmen of committees or the Town Clerk any question (not more than two in total) concerning the business of the Council, provided notice of the question complies with (a)
- (c) No question not connected with business under discussion shall be asked except during the part of the meeting set aside for questions.
- (d) Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.
- (e) A person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer.
- (f) Questions must be accompanied by any document to which they refer. If questions are unsuitable in form, frivolous or derogatory to the Town Council they shall be disqualified. Not more than two supplementary questions arising directly out of the reply shall be allowed by the Presiding Person / Chairperson and for the first of them the original questioner shall have priority.
- (g) Question time shall be restricted to 30 minutes.

15. Rules of Debate

No discussion shall take place upon the Minutes except upon their accuracy. Corrections to the Minutes shall be made by motion and must be initialled by the Presiding Person / Chairperson.

- (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 Presiding Person / Chairperson, be reduced to writing and handed to him / her before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.
- (b) A member when seconding a motion or amendment may, if he/she then declares his/her intention to do so, reserve his/her speech until a later period of the debate.
- (c) A member shall direct his/her speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a question of order.
- (d) No speech shall exceed 10 minutes except by consent of the Presiding Person / Chairperson.
- (e) An amendment shall be either: -
 - (i) To leave out words.
 - (ii) To leave out words and insert or add others.
 - (iii) To insert or add words.

- (f) An amendment shall not have the effect of negating the motion before the Council.
- (g) If an amendment is carried, the motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion 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 5 minutes.
- (j) A member, other than the mover of a motion, shall not, without the agreement of the Chairperson, 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 member may rise to make a point of order and shall state to which Standing Order his/her point is directed (if the Presiding Person / Chairperson so requires) or a personal explanation. A member rising for these purposes shall be heard forthwith. He/she shall confine a personal explanation to some material part of a former speech, which 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 member 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 does leave the meeting,
 - (vii) That the motion be referred to a committee,
 - (viii) To exclude the public and press,
 - (ix) To adjourn the meeting.
- (n) A member shall stand when speaking unless permitted by the Presiding Person / Chairperson to sit.
- (o) The ruling of the Presiding Person / Chairperson on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- (p) Members shall address the Presiding Person / Chairperson.
- (q) If two or more members rise, the Presiding Person / Chairperson shall call upon one of them to speak and the others shall resume their seats.

- (r) Whenever the Presiding Person / Chairperson rises during a debate all other members shall be seated and silent.

16. Closure

At the end of any speech a member 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 Presiding Person / Chairperson shall put the motion but, in the case of a motion "to put the question", only if he/she is of the opinion that the question before the Council has been sufficiently debated. If the motion "that the question be now put" is carried, he/she shall call upon the mover to exercise or waive his/her right of reply and shall put the question immediately after that 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.

(Note: Where a meeting is adjourned the subsequent proceedings are part of the original meeting and no new notices or agendas need be issued except a notification to members not present of the date of the continuation of the meeting)

17. Disorderly Conduct

- (a) No member shall at a meeting persistently disregard the ruling of the Presiding Person / Chairperson, 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.
- (b) If, in the opinion of the Presiding Person / Chairperson, a member has broken the provisions of paragraph (a) of this Order, the Presiding Person / Chairperson shall express that opinion to the Council and thereafter any member may move that the member named be no longer heard or that the member named leaves the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
- (c) If either of the motions mentioned in paragraph (b) is disobeyed, the Presiding Person / Chairperson may suspend the meeting or take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce them.
- (d) All members must observe the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

18. Right of Reply

The mover of a motion shall have a right to reply immediately before the motion 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 member exercising a right of reply shall not introduce new matter. After the right of reply has been exercised or waived, a vote shall be taken without further discussion.

19. Alteration of Motion

A member may, with the consent of his seconder, move amendments to his own motion.

20. Rescission of Previous Resolution

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

21. Appointments to Outside Bodies and Representatives of the Council

- (a) During an election year, all previous appointments will be null and void and the Council will approve a new list of members to be appointed to outside bodies and representatives of the Council. Such appointments will be for the duration of the municipal period, except those members who have been appointed as Trustees for a specific period of office.
- (b) The approved list will be reviewed annually so as to permit changes to be made as and when appropriate.

22. Discussions and Motions affecting Employees of the Council

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 Town Council, it shall not be considered until the Council or Committee (as the case may be) has decided whether or not the public and media shall be excluded.

23. Motions on Expenditure

Any motions which is moved otherwise than in pursuance of a recommendation of the Finance and General Purpose Committee or of another committee after recommendation by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and which, if carried, would, in the opinion of the Leader of the Council / Presiding Person or Chairperson acting on the advice of the Town Clerk, substantially increase the expenditure on 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 Town Council, and the Finance and General Purposes Committee shall report on the financial aspect of the matter.

24. Expenditure

Orders for the payment of money and to supplier(s) shall be authorised by resolution of the Council or the Finance and General Purposes Committee and signed by two members.

25. Committees and Sub Committees

- (a) The Town Clerk shall each year, prior to the Annual Town Council meeting, seek nominations from all councillors as to their preferences for committee,

sub committee and standing working group memberships. Each member shall be entitled to serve on at least one main committee.

- (b) The Town Clerk, in consultation with representatives of all political groups on the Council, shall seek to give effect to members' wishes and constitute member level bodies in line with the political balance of the Council, as far as possible. The proposed memberships to be reported for approval to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.
- (c) The Town Council may, at its Annual Meeting appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as are necessary but subject to any statutory provision on that behalf:-
 - (i) shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting,
 - (ii) may subject to the provisions of (a) above at any time dissolve or alter the membership of a committee,
 - (iii) The Leader of the Town Council shall be an ex-officio member of every Committee and sub Committee and if so chooses can exercise the right to vote,
 - (iv) Every committee 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.
 - (v) The Chairman of a committee or the Town Clerk may summon an additional meeting of that committee 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.
 - (vi) Every committee may appoint sub-committees and working groups for purposes to be specified by the committee. To facilitate the business of sub committees and working groups, the Council meeting may also appoint sub committees and other working groups.
 - (vii) Except where ordered by the Council in the case of a committee, working party or ad hoc body, or by the appropriate committee in the case of a sub-committee or working party, the quorum of a committee or sub-committee/working party shall be one third of its members, but can include an ex-officio member(s).
 - (viii) The Standing Orders on rules of debate (except those parts relating to standing and to speaking more than once) and the Standing Order on interests of members and other matters shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings,
 - (ix) No person may be chairman of more than one of the standing main committees (currently Environment & Social Wellbeing, Finance & General Purposes and Planning),

- (x) A person shall not normally be the chairman of the same committee for more than two years in succession,

26. Additional Members

A Committee or sub committee, other than the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Planning Committee, may include as additional members persons who are not members of the Council, but at least two thirds of the members appointed to any such committee/sub committee shall be members of the Council. Additional members shall have the same powers and duties as other members save that they shall not have a vote, serve as chairman or vice chairman of a committee/sub committee or subsidiary body or act on their behalf. Working Groups shall be able to co-opt relevant stakeholders.

27. Public Participation

A Public Forum will be included on the agendas of the main committees and sub committees. Accordingly, immediately preceding these meetings, a period of up to 30 minutes, or less as the case may be, will be allowed for members of the public present, who are electors or residents in the parish of Bridport or adjoining parishes, to ask questions and make statements in respect of items on the agenda of these main committee meetings, but also in the interests of wider public discussion. The Chairman shall have discretion to decide whether the issues raised in the Public Forum are relevant to an agenda item or in the interests of wider public discussion relating to Council business.

28. Voting in Committees

- (a) Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman of Committees and sub Committees shall be undertaken by the members of the Committee/sub Committee concerned only and in accordance with SO 9.
- (b) Members of committees and sub-committees entitled to vote shall vote by show of hands, or (on appointments required to be made by the Town Council where more than one person has been nominated only), if at least two members so request and having put the motion to the committee, it is agreed by a majority, the vote will be by way of marked ballot papers.
- (c) Chairman of committees and sub-committees shall in the case of an equality of votes have a second or casting vote.

29. Quorum of Committees

No business shall be transacted at a meeting of a committee/sub committee, unless three members are present. Ex-Officio member(s) count towards a quorum.

30. Presence of Non Members of Committees at Committee Meetings

- (a) A member who has proposed a motion, which has been referred to any committee of which he/she is not a member, may explain his/her motion to the committee but shall not vote.
- (b) A member can attend any meeting of a committee and sub committee and may ask a question or make a comment but cannot propose a further motion and shall not vote. A member may attend any working group meetings.
- (c) At the Planning Committee, non committee members should sit, not in the public gallery, but separately from the Committee, so that the members of the public present could make a clear distinction between councillors on the Committee and those that were not. Non committee members should have the opportunity to speak on an item prior to the decision making, but it would be made clear that they were not entitled to vote.

31. Minutes

- (a) Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of a committee/sub committee shall be drawn up and shall be signed at the subsequent meeting of that committee/sub committee by the person presiding thereat. Minutes may be challenged/amended only on accuracy and by motion before they are signed.
- (b) The minutes of the subsidiary body must first be submitted to the appointing body for discussion and ratification, before any action required in those minutes can be undertaken.

32. Agenda Papers

- (a) Three clear days (but preferably one week) before a committee meeting the agenda paper(s) for the meeting and all supporting papers shall be sent to all Town Councillors and no other business shall be brought before the meeting.
- (b) Three clear days before a sub committee the agenda paper(s) for the meeting shall be sent to all Town Councillors. Supporting papers shall be sent only to members of the sub committee.
- (c) Committee and sub committee agendas and supporting papers shall be dispatched to Town Councillors by first class post.

No decisions shall be taken on items unless three days notice have been given.

33. Limits to delegation

- (a) Committees may act in matters within their terms of reference (reviewed annually on appointments to committees) except to levy a precept, borrow money, approve estimates, enlarge or contract the Council's powers,

pronounce on policy/procedural changes, frame bye laws or seek to lay the Council's views before the Government, a minister of the crown or government agency(ies).

- (b) Committees and their subsidiary bodies shall take definitive action if one third of the members present or three members of the Town Council within 24 hours require that the directions of their appointing body be first taken.
- (c) Delegation of any part of the duties of a subsidiary body needs authorisation of the appointing body.

34. Estimates and Accounts

- (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 Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- (b) No payment shall be made unless it has been approved by the appropriate Officer of the Town Council, certified by two members and authorised by the Finance and General Purposes Committee or is within the approved estimates.
- (c) All payments approved under sub-paragraph (b) of this Standing Order shall be separately included in the next schedule of payments laid before the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- (d) The Finance and General Purposes Committee shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its meeting in the month of January/February with a view to them being approved by the Town Council no later than February in order for the precept for the coming year to reach the District Council before 1 March.
- (e) The Finance and General Purposes Committee will review the estimates on a quarterly basis.

35. Code of Conduct

- (a) All councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- (b) All councillors shall undertake training in the code of conduct within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.
- (c) In addition to the requirements in the code of conduct, Councillors shall leave the meeting room when they have the following interests in an item:
 - an Interest under Appendix A – financial interests, the financial interests of a friend, relative or close associate or
 - an interest under Appendix B that relates to a direct financial or planning matter.

Members shall be allowed to speak prior to leaving the room with the exception of interests declared under Appendix A.

- (d) An interest arising from the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting, shall be recorded in the minutes.

36. Canvassing of and Recommendations by Members

- (a) Canvassing of members of the Town Council or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment.
- (b) A member of the Town Council or of any committee 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.
- (c) If a candidate for any appointment under the Town Council is to his/her knowledge related to any member of or the holder of any office under the Council, he/she and the person to whom he/she is related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Town Clerk. A candidate who fails so to do shall be disqualified for such appointment, and, if appointed, may be dismissed without notice. The Town Clerk shall report to the council or to the appropriate committee any such disclosure.
- (d) The Town Clerk shall make known the purport of this sub-paragraph of this Standing Order to every candidate.
- (e) Standing Orders shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

37. Inspection of Documents

- (a) A member may for the purpose of his/her duty as such (but not otherwise), inspect any document in possession of the Town Council or a committee, subject to such access not being in contravention of the Data Protection Act or other related legislation and if copies are available shall, on request, be supplied for the like purpose with a copy.
- (b) All minutes kept by the Town Council and by any committee shall be open for the inspection of any member of the Council.
- (c) All documents and records retained by the Town Council are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

38. Unauthorised Activities

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

- (a) Inspect any lands or premises which the Town Council has a right or duty to inspect; or

- (b) issue orders, instructions or directions, to staff, contractors unless authorised to do so by the Town Council or the relevant committee or sub-committee or the Town Clerk.

39. Admission of the Public and Press to Meetings

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

"That in view of the 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."

- (b) The Town Clerk shall afford to the press/media reasonable facilities for taking their report of any proceedings at which they are entitled to be present.
- (c) If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Presiding Person / Chairperson may, after warning, order that he/she be removed from the Council Chamber and/or the Committee meeting.
- (d) Members of the public are permitted to film or record Council meetings, to which they are permitted access, in a non-disruptive manner and in accordance with the Council's agreed Protocol. The Chairman of the meeting has the authority to stop a meeting and take appropriate action if any recording is deemed to be disruptive.

40. Confidential Business

- (a) No member of the Town Council or of 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, the committee or the sub-committee as the case may be.
- (b) Any member in breach of the provisions of paragraph (a) of this Standing Order shall be removed from any committee or sub-committee of the Town Council by the Council. The Councillor may also be in breach of the Code of Conduct.

41. Planning Applications

The Town Clerk shall, as soon as it is received, record particulars of every planning application notified to the Council and refer them to the next available meeting of the Planning Committee.

42. Code of Conduct on Complaints

The Town Council shall deal with complaints of maladministration allegedly committed by the Council or by any officer in line with the Town Council's own complaints procedure.

43. Power of Competence

- (a) Before exercising the power of competence, a meeting of the full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.
- (b) The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 43 (a) above was made.
- (c) The Council must confirm it continues to be an eligible council for these purposes at each subsequent annual meeting of the Council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections.

44. Variations, Revocation and Suspension of Standing Orders

A motion, (other than contained in a recommendation from a Committee), 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 Town Council.

45. Standing Orders to be given to Members

A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each member by the Town Clerk upon delivery to him of the member's declaration of acceptance of office or on their revision.

Whole document revision September 2010

Amendments:

Paragraphs 7 and 35 amended by the Town Council 18 September 2012

Paragraph 30 new paragraph (c) added by the Town Council 15 April 2014

Paragraph 39 (d) amended by the Town Council 23 September 2014

Paragraphs 1 (b) and 8 (i) amended by the Town Council 17 March 2015

Paragraphs 4 (xiv), 5, 14, 26 and 43 amended by the Town Council 12 April 2016

Adopted May 2016