BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 for England (revised March 2025)

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Twinned with Preetz, Germany

Twinned with Mortain, France

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Model standing orders that are in bold type contain statutory requirements.

1. Rules of Debate at Meetings

a. Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.

b. A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.

c. A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.

d. If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

e. An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.

f. If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.

g. An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.

h. A councillor may move an amendment to their 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.

i. If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chairman.

j. Subject to standing order 1(k) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.

k. One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.

l. A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

m. The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.

n. Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply not exceeding 3 minutes either at the end of debate of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

o. Unless permitted by the chairman 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 they last spoke;
   iii. to make a point of order;
   iv. to give a personal explanation; or
   v. in exercise of a right of reply.

p. During the debate of 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 they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.

q. A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and their decision shall be final.

r. 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 requirements.

s. Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman 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 understanding order 1(r) above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

u. The Chairman shall ensure that the Proper Officer or any person appointed to advise the Council shall have the opportunity to speak on any item and for their advice to be recorded in the Minutes.

v. Only one councillor is permitted to speak at a time (except when ‘p’ above applies). If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

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 chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

b. If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or 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) above is ignored, the chairman 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.

3. Meetings Generally

Ordinary Meetings of the Council shall normally be held on Mondays at 7 o'clock in the evening. The time and venue will be published on the Agenda.

X Full Council meetings
Y Committee meetings
Z Sub-committee meetings

X 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.**

X 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.**

Y 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.**

Public Participation (d-k)

X Y d. **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.**

e. Subject to standing order 3(d) above, 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 and should inform the Chairman of the meeting of the subject matter prior to the start of the meeting.

f. The period of time designated for public participation during the public session at the start of a meeting, in accordance with standing order 3(e) above, shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

g. Subject to standing order 3(f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes, although this may be altered at the Chairman's discretion.

h. In accordance with standing order 3(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman 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 Chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

j. A person who speaks at a meeting shall identify themselves and direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting.

k. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

X Y 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.**

At the beginning of each meeting, the Chairman of the meeting will remind everyone in attendance and those participating in the meeting that they may be filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise reported about.

Any member of the public in attendance that objects to a-c above and children/vulnerable adults must inform the Chairman and an area within the meeting will be designated to them.

X Y Any member of the public or press carrying out a-c above must ensure that their activities do not disrupt the proceedings of the meeting or they may be asked to stop or leave.

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.**

X Y n. **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**.

X o. **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if any).**

X p. **The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**

X Y Z q. **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting,** save to appoint an honorary freeman, co-option of a Councillor or Chairman/Vice Chairman of Council (see also 8).

X Y Z r. **The chairman 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 their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.**
See standing orders 5(i) and (j) below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.

X s. **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.** An individual may request that their vote be recorded and such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

t. 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 present and 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.

X Y Z u. **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 their right to participate and vote on that matter.**

X v. **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.**

X Y Z w. **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.

x. A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 hours.

4. Committees, sub-committees and working groups

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 standing committees or other committees 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 full 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) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, 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 2 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman 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 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.

e. The Town & General Purposes Committee and the Recreation & Amenities Committee shall consist of 7 members plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council (Total 9).

f. The Finance & Staffing Committee shall include, the Chairmen of the Town & General Purposes Committee and Recreation & Amenities Committee plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and 5 other members (Total 9).

g. If any Councillor acts in a dual role i.e. Vice Chairman of Council and Chairman of a Committee then the number will be made up by the election of additional members at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

h. At the Annual Meeting of the Town Council the Council shall elect for each Standing Committee a chairman and vice chairman who shall hold office until the next Annual Meeting and shall not hold that position for more than three consecutive years. In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Chairman of Council or Vice Chairman of Council shall chair the committee. The programme of meetings for each Standing Committee shall be approved at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

i. The Chairman of a committee or the Chairman of Council may summon a special meeting of that committee at any time with due notice. A special meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than two 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.

j. Every committee may appoint sub-committees for purposes to be specified by the committee.

k. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee shall be members of every sub-committee appointed by a committee unless they signify that they do not wish to serve.

l. Except where ordered by the Council the quorum of a committee shall be 5.

m. The Standing Orders on rules of debate and the Standing Order on disclosable interests and other matters shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings.

n. Voting in committees and sub-committees shall be as for Town Council meetings (see also standing order 3p-r above, 8b and 12a below).

o. A member who has proposed a resolution which has been referred to any committee of which they are not a member, may explain their resolution to the committee but shall not vote. Any Council Member shall be entitled to be present at the meetings of any Committee or Sub Committee of which they are not a member and unless they have a disclosable interest may speak but not vote.

p. It is intended that most of the Council's business will be transacted in the Council's Standing Committees. The Minutes of each committee shall set out the decisions of the committee on those matters which are delegated to it and the recommendations of the committee on those matters which require a resolution of the Council. For the avoidance of doubt, where the approved budget of a committee provides for expenditure, the committee may make that expenditure without further resolution of the Council. Minutes of each committee shall be circulated to each member of the Council before the next ensuing Council meeting.

q. At the Council meeting the Chairman of each committee shall bring the individual recommendations, to be proposed, seconded and voted upon by Council. Council will be given the opportunity, should they so wish, to debate the recommendation before it is put to the vote. The Chairman of Council continues to manage the meeting throughout.

r. At the Council meeting members may ask questions of the Committee Chairman to clarify the Minutes before the Council but there shall be no debate on them.

s. The Chairman of each committee shall then move that the Minutes of that Committee be RECEIVED by the Council.

t. Committees and full Council may appoint Working Groups when deemed absolutely necessary but clear criteria must be established, which should include:
   (a) The purpose of the working group.
   (b) A named convenor.
   (c) The members of the group.
   (d) The date when the group should report back to Committee/full Council.
   (e) Whether delegated authority for expenditure within a committee's budget is permitted.
   (f) Whether non-members should be invited to form part of the working group but without voting rights, unless otherwise agreed by Committee/full Council.

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 new councillors elected take office.**

b. **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.**

c. **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 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 directs.**

e. **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council.**

f. **The Chairman of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.**

g. **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.**

h. **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, they shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

i. **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

j. The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Council Committees, including Planning, will be elected at the first Annual Meeting. The Committee Chairmen will be elected by full council and the Committee Vice Chairmen will be elected by committee members.

k. Newly elected Council and Committee Chairmen and Vice Chairmen are encouraged to attend the DAPTC training session for new Chairmen.

l. At a full Council meeting the order of business shall be as follows.
   i. Public Session
   ii. To receive and consider reports from County and District Councillors
   iii. Apologies for absence
   iv. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
   v. To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the previous meeting and after consideration, to approve the signing of the Minutes as a correct record of the meeting by the person presiding and crossing through the DRAFT stamp. This shall include the initialling of each page and any amendments or corrections shall also be made and initialled at the meeting by the person presiding.
   vi. To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.
   vii. To receive Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence.
   viii. To receive the Mayor's Civic Report.
   ix. To receive and consider recommendations and minutes of committees.
   x. To receive and consider reports from officers of the Council.
   xi. To authorise the sealing of documents.
   xii. When necessary to authorise the signing of orders for payment.
   xiii. To consider resolutions or recommendations in the order in which they have been notified.
   xiv. To receive updates from working groups and project boards.
   xv. To receive and consider reports from Representatives of Community and Local Organisations.

m. At a Corn Exchange meeting of the full Council the order of business shall be as follows.
   i. Public Session
   ii. Apologies for absence
   iii. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
   iv. To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the previous meeting and after consideration, to approve the signing of the Minutes as a correct record of the meeting by the person presiding and crossing through the DRAFT stamp. This shall include the initialling of each page and any amendments or corrections shall also be made and initialled at the meeting by the person presiding.
   v. To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.
   vi. To receive Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence.
   vii. To receive and consider reports from officers of the Council.
   viii. To receive and consider updates/reports from external consultants.

n. Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:
   i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman 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 Chairman of the Council of their 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 above;
   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. Review the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the General Power of Competence and confirm that the Town Council still meets the criteria of The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012;
   xiii. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
   xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured 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;
   xviii. Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
   xix. Review of the council's employment policies and procedures; and
   xx. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council.

6. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees

a. **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.**

b. **If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to 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 must be signed by the two councillors.**

c. The chairman 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 chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 2 members of the committee [and the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee [and a sub-committee].

7. Previous Resolutions

a. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 9 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee or in light of new information material effecting the outcome.

b. When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

8. Voting on Appointments

a. 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 chairman of the meeting.

b. The Chairman/Vice Chairman of Council shall be elected by an absolute majority, by written ballot.

c. If a member is unopposed, a vote must still be taken.

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 which it is tabled for 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 and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 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) above, 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) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least 7 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 chairman 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. Subject to standing order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

g. Motions received shall be recorded in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.

h. Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their 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 approve the absences of councillors;
   ii. to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting;
   iii. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
   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 appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
   viii. to dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last 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 receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee;
   xiv. to dissolve a committee or sub-committee;
   xv. to note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or sub-committee;
   xvi. to consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a sub-committee or an employee;
   xvii. to consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant;
   xviii. to authorise legal deeds;
   xix. to authorise the payment of monies in line with the Financial Regulations;

xx. to amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration, which shall not have the effect of nullifying it;
xxi. to extend the time limits for speaking;
xxii. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
xxiii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
xxiv. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
xxv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
xxvi. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
xxvii. to give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders;
xxviii. to appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies;
xxix. to answer questions from councillors;
xxx. to adjourn the meeting; or
xxxi. to close a meeting.

b. If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a committee or sub-committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such committee or sub-committee or employee provided that the Chairman may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience.

11. Management of Information

See also standing order 20.

a. **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.**

b. **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).**

c. **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.**

d. **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

e. A councillor in breach of the above may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council.

12. Draft Minutes

a. The Minutes shall record the number of votes taken on any resolution to show those in favour, against, abstentions and non-votes. If all Councillors present vote in favour of a resolution then it will be recorded as unanimous.

b. 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.

c. 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)(ii) above.

d. The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

e. If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

"The chairman 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 their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

f. 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 of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. Code of Conduct and Dispensations

See also standing order 3(u) above.

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

b. Unless they have been 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 they have been 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 they 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.

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.

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) above, dispensation requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.

h. **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:**
   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 or
   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.

i. All councillors should undertake induction training in the code of conduct and other matters organised by the DAPTC (or any other appropriate body) within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.

j. On receipt of a formal notification that there has been a verifiable breach of the Code of Conduct the Proper Officer shall consider referring it to the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with either the Chair of Council or Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee, if appropriate.

k. The Register of Members' Interests is to be updated prior to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council and made available if requested.

l. The Attendance Register should be noted with a declaration of specific interest according to the Agenda item.

14. Code of Conduct Complaints

a. **Upon notification by the Dorset 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/her. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

b. Advice for Councillors on Staff Line Management (refer to sections 17 & 18 of the Councillors' Information Folders).

15. Proper Officer

a. 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.

b. The Proper Officer shall:
   i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee** and a sub-committee:
      - **serve on councillors, 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).** If the agenda is delivered by email it must contain the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.

- **Provide in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them);**

See standing order 3(b) above for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) above for a meeting of a committee.

ii. subject to standing order 9 above, 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 their withdrawal of it;
iii. **convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;**
iv. **facilitate inspection of the minutes by local government electors;**
v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
vi. retain declarations of acceptance of office forms from councillors;
vii. retain 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 and subject to the council's relevant policies and procedures;
ix. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
x. 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);
xi. arrange for legal deeds to be executed (see also standing order 23 below);
xii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;
xiii. record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority;
xiv. refer a planning application received by the council to the Chairman or in their absence Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the council;
xv. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
xvi. retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
xvii. action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.
xviii. manage the employees in line with the council's Employee Manual.

16. Responsible Financial Officer

a. The council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) when the RFO is absent and the Town Clerk will assume the title of RFO.

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 the Finance & Staffing Committee as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
   i. the council's receipts and payments (or income and 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 and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

   This should be made available to all Councillors should it be requested.

d. 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 full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.

e. The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a 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. The annual governance and accountability return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

f. The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its meeting before the end of January.

g. Any committee wishing to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than the end of November.

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 of less than **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.

c. 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 and method 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 using methods detailed in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and all documents must be made available to candidates using electronic methods;
   iv. tenders are to be submitted using the methods detailed in the tender instructions and shall comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and may be submitted using electronic methods;
   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.

d. Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender. The purchasing member or officer is responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.

e. **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. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Finance & Staffing Committee or full council is subject to standing order 11 above.

b. Subject to the council's policy regarding absences from work, the council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee or, if they are not available, the vice-chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Finance & Staffing Committee at its next meeting.

c. The chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee and chairman of council shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Town Clerk. The appraisal shall be summarised by the Chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee and noted at the subsequent Finance & Staffing Committee meeting.

d. Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the council's most senior employee (or other employees) shall contact the chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee or in their absence, the vice-chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter and, if it is considered to

be required, this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Finance & Staffing Committee.

e. Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by [the employee's job title] relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Finance & Staffing Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Finance & Staffing Committee.

f. The Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer, is responsible for the employment of the staff and shall operate within the agreed employment practices, as detailed in the Employee Manual. The Chairman of Council shall have responsibility to line manage the Town Clerk.

g. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.

h. The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.

i. Only persons with line management responsibilities and the Responsible Financial Officer shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 19(g) and (h) above if so justified.

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. **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 have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.**

b **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**

c **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.**

d **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.**

e **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)(xi) and 10(a)(xviii) above.

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

b. **Subject to standing order a. above, the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.**

24. Communicating with Dorset Council 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 Dorset Council representing the area of the council.

b. Staff are required to keep Dorset Council councillors informed by way of regular updates and, where necessary, a copy of each letter/e-mail sent to the Dorset Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the council.

25. Restrictions on Councillor Activities

a. Unless duly authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall issue orders, instructions, directions or inspect/visit any land, property and/or premises owned or leased by the Town Council, which the Council has a right to inspect.

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

i. write letters on behalf of the Town Council unless authorised by Council to do so.

ii. make comments or write letters to the press/media or any social networking site purporting to represent the Town Council unless specific authority has been granted to do so.

In normal circumstances the Council Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Town Clerk are permitted to speak on behalf of the Town Council and Committee/Working Group Chairmen on subjects relating to their particular committee. Any person speaking on behalf of the Council must ensure that their statements are consistent with Council policy and resolutions.

c. Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of their official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees shall be available for inspection by councillors.

26. Persistent Absence

a. If a member fails throughout six consecutive months to attend any meetings of the Council or of its committees or sub-committees of which they are a member, they cease automatically to be a member of the Council unless either they have a "statutory excuse" or their failure is due to a reason approved by the Council. The period begins with the last meeting attended.

b. Absences from Council and Standing Committees shall be recorded in Minutes and an annual register of attendance shall be published as part of the annual newsletter in June each year.

27. Questions

a. A councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided 7 clear days' notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.

b. Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the public session.

28. Co-option Policy

Co-option agenda template approved at 27th November 2023 full council meeting and saved under Elections & Co-options / Co-option 2023

a. When a casual vacancy has been declared (e.g. on receipt of a letter of resignation, death, ineligibility or a seat has been left vacant because no eligible candidate stood for election) the Town Clerk will immediately notify the Returning Officer at the Dorset Council, issue the public notice and advise council members accordingly.

b. If the required 10 electors of a ward have not called for a poll within the legally specified time period (currently 14 days), following public notification of a Notice of Vacancy, the Returning Officer will notify the Town Clerk who will then instigate the following co-option procedure:

   i. Advise council members by memo/email that a poll has not been claimed and that the co-option process is being activated by the Town Clerk.
   ii. Prepare notices for Town Council notice boards, the website and social media platforms.
   iii. Place advertisement in local press/publications, including the following information:
      - The method by which applications can be made
      - The closing date for all applications
      - The date of the Town Council meeting at which co-option will occur
      - A contact point to obtain more information
      - A link to the website with further information

c. Legal requirements to be a local councillor are as follows (*check for any amendments prior to any publication*):

   To be eligible to stand for election you must be:
   - 18 or over on the day of nomination
   - And a UK, Commonwealth or EU citizen

   You must also be a registered voter in the electoral area or:
   - registered as a local government elector for the area of the parish; or

- during the whole of the 12 months preceding that day or those days occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the parish; or
- principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been in the parish; or
- during the whole of those 12 months resided in that parish or within 4.8 kilometres of it.

d. Copies of applicants' letters and CVs to be circulated to all Councillors with a minimum of 7 days' notice of the full Town Council meeting.

e. All applicants to be invited to the full Council meeting to give a brief address of up to five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to the Councillors, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Town Council. They must then answer any questions asked by serving Councillors and the Town Clerk.

f. If a Candidate is a relative of a Councillor, that Councillor may declare a prejudicial interest and withdraw from the meeting.

g. The process will be carried out in a public session and there must be no discussion between members prior to a vote being taken. However, where the council are discussing the merits of a candidate and personal attributes, this could be prejudicial, and the Town Council should resolve to exclude members of the press and public, prior to Councillors voting by written ballot and the outcome being announced.

h. The person co-opted must receive an absolute majority of the votes of those councillors present and voting at the meeting where the co-option takes place. Where there are more than two candidates for one vacancy, this rule means that a person must get a majority of votes over all the other candidates. Thus, where candidate A receives four votes, and candidates B and C each receive two, A is not elected because he has the same number of votes as B and C put together and does not have a majority over their combined votes. Where there are more than two candidates it is desirable to eliminate the candidate with the least number of votes, so that the final vote is between two candidates only.

i. After the vote has been taken, the chair should declare the candidate who received the highest number of votes duly elected.

j. The person elected must make a declaration of Acceptance of Office before, or at, the first meeting of the Town Council following their election in the presence of a member of the Town Council or the proper officer. The declaration is then retained in the council records.

k. The person elected will also need to undertake to abide by the Town Council's code of conduct and must complete an electronic declaration of Interests form which is submitted to, and published by, the Dorset Council's monitoring officer.

l. The council should also consider what induction, training, and other support should be given to the new councillor.

m. The Town Council is not obliged to co-opt to fill any vacancy. Even if the council invites applications for co-option it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates that apply. However, it is not desirable that electors in a particular ward be left partially or fully unrepresented for a significant amount of time.

29. General Power of Competence

a. The General Power of Competence (GPC) is a power of first resort, giving a local authority "the power to do anything that individuals generally may do" where permitted by the Localism Act 2011 s1-8.

b. Before exercising the General 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.

c. To be eligible, the number of councillors elected at the last election (or subsequent by-election) must equal or exceed two thirds of the total numbers of seats on the council and the council must have a qualified clerk. It must confirm it remains eligible at every annual meeting of the council after ordinary elections and can use the GPC as long as it does not break other laws.

30. 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. The standing orders shall be reviewed annually. However, 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, seconded and agreed by a majority of councillors.

c. The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after they have delivered their acceptance of office form.

d. The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

31. Civic and Ceremonial Aspects of the Town Council

See standing orders below and the Civic Section of the Councillors' Information Folder re. Civic Guidelines and Protocol.

a. Councillors must wear their robes for civic events as requested/advised and must not wear badges or regalia from other organisations on their robes, unless otherwise agreed.

b. When representing the Town Council in robes, Councillors must fulfil that role only and not represent any other organisation.

32. Appointment of Chairman of Council/Mayor

See also standing order 8.

a. The role of Mayor and Chairman are one of the same, and cannot be separated, as per s245(6) Local Government Act 1972.

b. The Chairman may assume the role of Mayor once they have been elected by their Councillors at the Statutory Annual Meeting in May. This is the first item on the agenda.

c. The Mayor Making Ceremony/reaffirmation shall be held as soon as possible thereafter.

33. Appointment of Vice Chairman/Deputy Mayor

a. Councillors shall elect from among their own number a Vice Chairman who can act as Deputy Mayor who shall assist the Mayor in the performance of their duties.

b. The appointment (election) of a Vice Chairman will be at the Statutory Annual Meeting (as above).

34. Mayor Making and Civic Occasions

a. The Mayor-Making ceremony shall normally take place within fourteen days of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. At the ceremony, following prayers by the Chaplain if there be one, and the receiving of apologies, the order of business shall be:
   i. To receive an address by the retiring Mayor.
   ii. To reaffirm the appointment of Town Mayor.
   iii. To hand over the Mayoral Robe and Town Regalia to the new Mayor.
   iv. To receive the Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office.
   v. To receive an address by the new Mayor.
   vi. To reaffirm the appointment of Deputy Town Mayor.
   vii. To hand over the Deputy Mayor's Robe and Badge of Office to the new Deputy Mayor.
   viii. To receive the Mayor's choice of the person to be Chaplain (if applicable).
   ix. To receive the Mayor's choice of the person to be Mayoress or Mayor's Escort and to hand over the Chain of Office.
   x. To receive the Mayor's choice of uniformed youth representative (e.g. scout, guide, cadet) if applicable.
   xi. To receive the Deputy Mayor's choice of the person to be Deputy Mayoress or Deputy Mayor's Escort and to hand over the Badge of Office.
   xii. To make any special announcements

b. It is expected that at Civic Services and other Civic occasions all Councillors shall wear robes of office (hats optional). When robes are worn, no non-Councillor other than the Clerk and Mace Bearer shall accompany Councillors in procession other than at the invitation of the Mayor. The Clerk shall ensure that Councillors walk in procession in order of seniority (or in reverse order if appropriate).

35. Freeman Policy

See also sections 248-249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Eligibility

a. Blandford Forum Town Council shall admit to be Honorary Freemen of the Town, persons or organisations (e.g. regiment) who, in the opinion of Council, have rendered eminent service to the community. This recognition should only be made upon rare and exceptional occasions.

b. In keeping with the special nature of the award it shall be strictly limited to those who have made a very significant voluntary contribution to the community of Blandford Forum and who have demonstrated "service above self", or a significant national contribution relative to the Town of Blandford Forum.

c. Preference will be given to a person who performs in a voluntary capacity, but this should not preclude the honour being awarded to a person whose dedication and contribution is significantly above that expected from their occupation.

d. The honour shall be awarded for the individual's lifetime and not as a hereditary award, although a widow/er of a Freeman shall continue to be invited to civic events.

e. The maximum number of Freemen at any one time is not restricted.

f. Any nominated Town Councillor should have retired from the post. It would be expected that the nominee will have given extensive and distinguished service to the community which transcends local government i.e. service to other organisations, voluntary and community groups, in a largely voluntary capacity and not usually for long service on the Town Council.

g. The nominee must have made an outstanding contribution to the Town and must involve one or more of the following factors:
   - A significant allocation of the person's time in serving members of the community for the improvement of their wellbeing.
   - The promotion, achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal contribution has been made.
   - Whilst difficult to define, the contribution must be outstanding in that it can be seen to stand above the contributions of most other persons.

<u>Nomination Procedure</u>

<u>Stage 1</u>

i. Any individual councillor or member of the public who resides in Blandford Forum and is on the electoral register may make a nomination.
ii. A proposed nomination to be forwarded in CONFIDENCE to the Town Clerk with written testimonial giving reasons why the individual or organisation is worthy of nomination.
iii. The matter is to be raised in CONFIDENTIAL session at the next Town Council meeting and the agenda will not name the nominee.
iv. If the nominee is a currently serving Councillor who is present at the time, they will be requested to leave the chamber during this discussion.
v. The nominator may present their supporting information and answer any questions at this confidential meeting before leaving the meeting prior to discussion and voting taking place.
vi. A proposer and seconder will be required and a vote taken as to whether further investigation is considered necessary or, if not, it will be raised in CONFIDENTIAL session at the next Town Council meeting for the purpose of voting on the award (see Stage 2 below).

<u>Stage 2</u>

vii. At this second meeting, and for an award to be agreed, at least 75% of the membership of the Town Council then in office must be present and vote in favour of the award.
viii. When the Town Council has voted and agreed the honour, the Town Clerk will notify the nominee in CONFIDENCE and seek their agreement of acceptance.
ix. The Town Clerk will report to full council accordingly and arrangements will be put in hand for the Ceremony if the honour has been accepted.
x. Civic Ceremony – Confirmation of the Award of Honorary Freedom of the Town of Blandford Forum and Presentation of the Honorary Freeman Scroll (usually takes place during the Mayor Making ceremony, dependent on timing)
   - Refer to example of Order of Ceremony

- Register of Freemen to be completed
- Certification of Admission (Freeman Roll to be made to order)
- Costs to be met from Council Civic Budget

xi. Protocol

- Individual Freemen (Representative of Regiment/Organisation) to be invited to attend all Civic Functions.
- Hosts for the Freemen to be nominated from among the currently elected Councillors so as to ensure that they are accompanied and hosted throughout all civic functions.
- Freemen to be invited to other such functions as deemed appropriate (i.e. Remembrance Service, etc).
- Freemen to be acknowledged at ceremonies i.e. during the welcoming speech.
- Appropriate courtesy to be shown to Freemen i.e. seating arrangements (staff to escort to seats at Mayor Making Ceremony).
- Photographs to be on display in the Community Room (public awareness of the honour, to whom given).

36. Certificate of Appreciation Policy

Criteria

Blandford Forum Town Council shall present to members or organisations of the community who have worked tirelessly for Blandford Forum and its residents, in the opinion of the Council, a framed certificate of appreciation.

Nomination Procedure

a. Any individual may make a nomination.

b. A proposed nomination to be forwarded in CONFIDENCE to the Town Clerk with written testimonial giving reasons why the individual or organisation is worthy of nomination.

c. Nominations should be made by the end of March each year, except under special circumstances, to be agreed by the Council.

d. The matter is to be raised in CONFIDENTIAL session at the next Town Council meeting, in April each year, except under special circumstances, to be agreed by the Council, and the agenda will not name the nominee.

e. If the nominee is a currently serving Councillor**,** the nomination is dealt with privately by the officers via e-mail/ballot paper to Councillors, excluding the nominated person.

f. If the nominator is a Councillor they may take part in any discussion at this confidential meeting and will be entitled to take part in the vote.

g. A proposer and seconder will be required and a vote taken by show of hands.

Presentation

The outgoing Chairman of Council/Mayor will present any certificates to individuals at the Mayor Making ceremony each year, except under special circumstances, to be agreed by the Council.

Protocol

Recognition for receiving the Certificate of appreciation will be published in the next Town Council newsletter and on social media.

37. Certificate of Civic Recognition Policy

Criteria

Blandford Forum Town Council shall present a framed certificate of civic recognition to

members or organisations of the community for doing something exceptional during the civic year to better the town and/or its inhabitants (if supported by the Council). For example, this can be a single act of heroism, setting up a group/project to benefit the community, raising awareness of a significant issue within the community, fundraising beyond expectations, etc.

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g. A proposer and seconder will be required and a vote taken by show of hands.

Presentation

The outgoing Chairman of Council/Mayor will present any certificates to individuals at the Mayor Making ceremony each year, except under special circumstances, to be agreed by the Council.

Protocol

Recognition for receiving the Certificate of Civic Recognition will be published in the next Town Council newsletter and on social media.

38. Chairman of Council/Mayor's Commendations

The outgoing Chairman of Council/Mayor is permitted to select worthy individuals to be recognised for their contribution to the town during their Mayoral term and this should be presented at the Mayor Making ceremony. This award should not be considered in line with Certificates of Appreciation or Civic Recognition, because it is not voted on by Councillors and is entirely at the discretion of the Chairman of Council/Mayor.