

# **Preston Bissett Parish Council**

## **Abridged Standing Orders \***

**Last Reviewed by Council 7 March 2024**

**Next Review March 2025**

### **Meetings**

The Statutory Annual Meeting held a) in election year, shall be within 14 days following the day on which Councillors were elected to take office or b) in a year which is not an election year, on the first Thursday in May.

In addition to the Statutory Annual Meeting, there shall be a minimum of 3 other ordinary meetings each year as decided by the Council. Such meetings shall be held on the first Thursday of the relevant month.

Meetings of the Council shall normally be held at the Old School, Preston Bissett or at an alternative venue.

Where the Chair or Clerk believes there is an exceptional need between meetings, for example to approve payments or to make representations by a due date before the next meeting, then the Chair or Clerk may deal with this by email exchange and any agreements made will be ratified at the next Meeting.

The Clerk will discuss the Agenda for every meeting with the Chair or Vice Chair before its publication which shall be at least 3 clear days before each meeting.

As this Council's gross income is less than £25,000 the Clerk shall publish draft minutes on the publicly accessible Village website not later than one month after the meeting has taken place

### **Chair of Meetings**

The person presiding over the meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chair in relation to the conduct of the meeting.

### **Quorum**

Three Members shall constitute a quorum including the Chair.

### **Voting**

Members shall vote by a show of hands.

If a Member so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of the Members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it.

Subject to a) and b) below the Chair may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes, may exercise his/her casting vote whether or not he /she gave no original vote.

a) If the member 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 Chair and Vice Chair until the end of their office, he/she may not be given an original vote in the election of the Chair.

b) The person presiding must give the casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for Chair.

### **Order of Business**

In an election year Elected Councillors should exercise Declarations of Acceptance of office in each other's presence.

At each Annual Meeting the first business shall be:

- To elect a Chair and Vice Chair

- To receive the Chair's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not received, to decide when it shall be received.
- In the ordinary year of election of the council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reason of insufficient nominations.
- To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.
- After consideration, to approve signature of the minutes by a person presiding as a current record.
- To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.

#### **Voting on Committees**

Chair of committees shall in the case of an equality of votes have a second or casting vote.

#### **Interests**

The Clerk shall record in a book or electronic file to be kept for the purpose, particulars of any notice given by any member or officer of the council of a pecuniary interest in a contract, and the electronic file shall be open [during reasonable hours of the day] upon request to the Clerk for inspection by any member.

Declaration of interests must be made at the start of every meeting and recorded in the minutes.

#### **Inspection of Documents**

All minutes kept by the Council and by any committee usually in electronic form shall be open for the inspection of any Member of the Council.

#### **Admission of Public and Press to Meetings**

The public shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees. Some meetings or part of meetings may require the temporary exclusion of the public or press. In which case the following resolution shall be made prior:

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

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

#### **Management of Information**

The Council shall have in place and keep under review

- a) measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper or electronic form
- b) policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper or electronic form

The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification

#### **Contracts**

Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £ 2000 but not exceeding £8000 in value for the supply of goods or materials and/or for the execution of works, the Clerk shall invite at least three parties to tender.

Where the value of the intended contract exceeds £ 8000 the Clerk shall give at least three weeks public notice of such intention in the same manner as public notice meetings of the Council. In addition, notice shall be given to all firms included in the appropriate standing approved list of contractors from the Buckinghamshire Council. If no such list is maintained, then in such newspapers or magazines circulating in the North Buckinghamshire area as the Council shall direct.

Notice of all contracts shall state the general nature of the intended contract and state the name and address of the person to whom tenders should be addressed and the last date by which tenders should reach that person in the ordinary course of post. Tenders shall be opened by the Chair and the Clerk prior to the meeting, listed and signed by both for Council consideration.

If no tenders are received or if all tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works as it thinks fit.

Chair and Chair of sub committees authorised to spend £20 without Councils approval; this is not to form part of larger contract. In case of emergency no expenditure limits.

### **Expenditure**

Orders for payment of money at each meeting shall be authorised by resolution of the Council. Payment will be made by a Bank Transfer set up by the Clerk and approved by the RFO and Chair they having been set up as the two bank signatories.

Between meetings, expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- the full Council for all items over £2,000;
  - the Chair and RFO( as authorised bank signatories) of the Council together for items or contracts over £400 and less than £2000;
- or
- the Clerk, for any items or contracts below £400.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the Chair.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

### **\*Important Note to these Standing Orders**

Where there is a need to provide greater clarity and definition to these Standing Orders reference will be made to the 'Model Standing Orders' produced by the National Association of Local Councils (as updated from time to time). When this is required, the Chair will, by default, use such Model Standing Orders to direct any decisions and the Clerk will record such actions and subsequent decisions.