

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL Standing Orders

1. Meetings

- a) Meetings of the Council shall be held on the third Tuesday in each month (no meeting in August and December) at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Moorlands House, Stockwell Street, Leek or on such dates, place and time as the Council directs.

2. The Statutory Annual Meeting

- a) In an election year the Annual Council Meeting shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office and
- b) in a year which is not an election year the Annual Council Meeting shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.

3. Chair of the Meeting

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

4. Proper Officer

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

- To receive declarations of acceptance of office.
- To receive and record notices disclosing interests at meetings.
- To receive and retain plans and documents.
- To sign notices or other documents on behalf of the Council.
- To receive copies of bylaws made by another local authority.
- To certify copies of bylaws made by the Council.
- To sign and issue the summons to attend meetings of the Council.
- To keep proper records for all Council meetings, including committees, sub-committees and working groups.

In any other case the proper office shall be the person nominated by the council and in default of nomination, the Town Clerk.

5. Quorum of the Council

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

If a quorum is not present or if during a meeting the number of councillors present (not counting those debarred by reason of a declared interest) falls below the required quorum, the meeting shall be adjourned and business not transacted shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the Chair may fix.

For a quorum relating to a committee or sub-committee, please refer to Standing Order 44.

6. Voting

Members shall vote by show of hands or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot.

7. If a member so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of the members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it. Such a request must be made before moving on to the next business.
8. (1) Subject to (2) and (3) below the Chair may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in any case of an equality of votes may give a casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.
(2) 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 Chair and Vice-Chair until the end of their term of office he may not give an original vote in an election for Chair.
(3) The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for Chair.

9. Order of Business

At each Annual Council Meeting the first business shall be:-

- a) To elect the Mayor, who shall be the Chair of Council, and the Chair of the Council's General Purposes Committee.
- b) To receive the Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.
- c) In the ordinary year of election of the Council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reason of insufficient nominations.
- d) To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received
- e) To elect a Deputy Mayor and a Vice-Chair of the Council.
- f) To appoint representatives to outside bodies
- g) To establish or re-establish committees and sub-committees.
- h) To consider the payment of any subscriptions falling to be paid annually.
- i) To inspect any deeds and trust investments in the custody of the Council as required;
- j) To appoint Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees and Sub-Committees who shall be serving Councillors

and shall thereafter follow the order set out in the Standing Order 12

10. **At every meeting other than the Annual Council Meeting the first business shall be to appoint a Chairman if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be absent and to receive such declarations of acceptance of office (if any) and undertaking to observe the Council's code of conduct as are required by law to be made or, if not then received, to decide when they shall be received.**
11. In every year, not later than the meeting at which the estimates for next year are settled, the Council shall review the pay and conditions of service of existing employees. Standing Order 34 must be read in conjunction with this requirement.
12. After the first business has been completed, the order of business, unless the Council otherwise decides on the ground of urgency, shall be as follows:-
 - a) To read and consider the Minutes; provided that if a copy has been circulated to each member not later than the day of issue of the summons to attend the meeting, the Minutes may be taken as read.
 - b) **After consideration to approve the signature of the Minutes by the person presiding as a correct record.**
 - c) **To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.**

- d) To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- e) To receive such communications as the person presiding may wish to lay before the Council.
- f) To answer questions from Councillors.
- g) To receive and consider reports and minutes of committees.
- h) To receive and consider resolutions or recommendations in the order in which they have been notified.
- i) To authorise the sealing of documents.
- j) If necessary, to authorise the signing of orders for payment.

13. Urgent Business

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

- a) May be proposed by the Chair or by any member and, if proposed by the Chair, may be put to the vote without being seconded, and
- b) Shall be put to the vote without discussion.

14. Resolutions Moved On Notice

Except as provided by these Standing Orders, and subject to Standing Order 71, no resolution may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been put on the Agenda by the Clerk or the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has delivered the notice to the Clerk on the Monday preceding the week of the meeting.

- 15. The Clerk shall date every notice of resolution or recommendation when received by him and shall number each notice in the order in which it was received.
- 16. The 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 intends to move at some later meeting or that he withdraws it.
- 17. If a resolution 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 Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
- 18. If the subject matter of a resolution comes within the province of a committee of the Council, it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to such committee or to such other committee as the Council may determine for report; provided that the Chair, if he considers it to be a matter of urgency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.
- 19. Every resolution or recommendation shall be relevant to some subject over which the Council has power or duties, which affects its area.

20. Resolutions Moved Without Notice

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

- a) To appoint a Chair 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 resolution or amendment.
- m) To extend the time limit for speeches.
- n) To exclude the press and public. (see Order 65 below)
- o) To silence or eject from the meeting a member named for misconduct. (see order 30 below)
- p) To give the consent of the Council where such consent is required by these Standing Orders.
- q) To suspend any Standing Order. (see Order 73 below)
- r) To adjourn the meeting.

21. Questions

21.1 A member of the Council may ask the Chair of a committee any question upon an item of the report of a committee when that item is under consideration by the Council.

21.2 A member of the Council may:

a) ask the Chair or the Chair of any committee any question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Council.

b) with the permission of the Chair, put to him or the Chair of any committee, any question relating to urgent business, of which such notice has not been given.

22. No questions not connected with business under discussion shall be asked except during the part of the meeting set aside for questions.

23. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion, unless the Chair rules otherwise.

24. A person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer.

25. Rules of Debate

No discussion of the Minutes shall take place except upon their accuracy. Corrections to the Minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Chair.

26. a) A resolution or amendment shall not be decided on unless it has been proposed and seconded, and, unless proper notice has already been given, it shall, if required by the Chair, be reduced to writing and handed to him before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.

b) A member when seconding a resolution or amendment may, if he then declares his intention to do so, reserve his speech until a later period of the debate.

c) A member shall direct his speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a question of order.

d) No speech by a mover of a resolution shall exceed 5 minutes and no other speech shall exceed 5 minutes except by consent of the Council.

e) An amendment shall be either:-

i) To leave out words.

ii) To leave out words and insert others

- iii) To insert or add words.
 - f) An amendment shall not have the effect of negating the resolution before the Council.
 - g) If an amendment is carried, the resolution, as amended, shall take the place of the original resolution and shall become the resolution 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 resolution or of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding 5 minutes.
 - j) A member, other than the mover of a resolution, shall not, without leave of the Chair, speak more than once on any resolution 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 speak on a point of order or a personal explanation. A member speaking for these purposes shall be heard forthwith. A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by him 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 resolution is under debate no other resolution shall be moved except the following:-
 - i. To amend the resolution.
 - 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 leave the meeting.
 - vii. That the resolution be referred to a committee.
 - viii. To exclude the public and press.
 - ix. To adjourn the meeting.
27. a) the ruling of the Chair on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- b) Members shall address the Chair. If two or more members wish to speak, the Chair shall decide whom to call upon.
- c) Whenever the Chair speaks during a debate all other members shall be silent.

28. 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 Chair shall put the motion but, in the case of a motion “that the question be now put”, only if he 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 shall call upon the mover to exercise or waive his 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.

29. Disorderly Conduct

- a) **All members must observe the Council's Code of Conduct. All members of Council on their election or co-option will be supplied with a copy of the Code of Conduct and will be required to sign, as part of their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, that they agree to be bound by the Code of Conduct.**

No member shall at a meeting persistently disregard the ruling of the Chairman, wilfully obstruct business, or behave irregularly, offensively, improperly **or in such a manner as to bring the Council into disrepute.**

- b) If, in the opinion of the Chair, a member has broken the provisions of paragraph (b) of this Order, the Chair 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 do leave the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion. **If a member reasonably believes another member is in breach of the Code of Conduct, the breach should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.**
- c) If either of the motions mentioned in paragraph c is disobeyed, the Chair may adjourn the meeting or take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce them.

30. Right of Reply

The mover of a resolution shall have a right to reply immediately before the resolution 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 a new matter. After the right of reply has been exercised or waived, a vote shall be taken without further discussion.

31. Alteration of Resolution

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

32. 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 resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least three members of the Council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
- b) When a special resolution or any other resolution moved under the provisions of paragraph (a) of this Order has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

33. Voting On Appointments

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

34. Discussions and Resolutions 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 Council, it shall not be considered until the Council or committee (as the case may be) has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded. (See Standing Order 63.)

35. Resolutions on Expenditure

Any resolution (which is moved otherwise than in pursuance of a recommendation of the Finance Committee or of another committee after recommendation by the Finance Committee, or which, in the opinion of the Chair, requires an urgent decision) and which, if carried, would, in the opinion of the Chair, substantially increase the expenditure upon any service which is under the management of the Council or reduce the revenue at the disposal of any committee, or which would involve capital expenditure, shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, and any committee affected by it shall consider whether it desires to report thereon (and the Finance Committee shall report on the financial aspect of the matters).

36. Expenditure

Orders for the payment of money shall be authorised by resolution of the Council and signed by one Member and the Town Clerk. Payments to employees to be signed by two Members.

37. Committees and Sub Committees

The Council may at its Annual Meeting establish or re-establish standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as are necessary, but subject to any statutory provision in that behalf:-

- a) Shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting.
- b) May appoint persons other than members of the Council to any Committee; and
- c) may subject to the provisions of Standing Order 33 above at any time dissolve or alter the membership of committee.
- d) shall determine the committee's terms of reference.

38. All Councillors shall be voting members of every committee.

39. Every committee shall at its first meeting before proceeding to any other business, settle its programme of meetings for the year.

40. Each Committee will submit minutes of all meetings to the next available meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

41. Special Meeting

The Chair of a committee or the Mayor 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.

42. Sub-Committees

Every committee may appoint sub-committees and working groups for purposes to be specified by the committee.

43. The Chair and Vice-Chair-of the committee shall be members of every sub-committee appointed by it unless they signify that they do not wish to serve.
44. Except where ordered by the Council in the case of a committee, or by the Council or by the appropriate committee in the case of a sub-committee, the quorum of a committee or sub-committee shall be one-third of its members and in no case shall the quorum be fewer than three.
45. The Standing Orders on rules of debate-and the Standing Order on interests of members in contracts and other matters shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings.
46. Advisory Committees and Working Groups
- a) The Council may create advisory committees and working groups, whose name, and number of members and the bodies to be invited to nominate members shall be specified.
 - b) The Town Clerk shall inform the members of each advisory committee or working group of the terms of reference of the committee.
 - c) An advisory committee or working group may make recommendations and give notice thereof to the Council
 - d) An advisory committee or working group may consist wholly of persons who are not members of the Council, unless the committee or group is authorised to spend Council money without submitting individual bids, in which case it shall be chaired a Councillor who will be required to submit a report to each General Purposes Committee meeting.

Voting in Committees

47. Members of committees and sub-committees entitled to vote, shall vote by show of hands, or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot.
48. **Chairs of committees and sub-committees shall in the case of an equality of votes have a second or casting vote.**
49. Presence of Non-Members of Committees at Committee Meetings
A member who has proposed a resolution, which has been referred to any committee of which he is not a member, may explain his resolution to the committee but shall not vote.
50. Accounts and Financial Statement
- 1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this Standing Order or by statute, all accounts for payment and claims upon the Council shall be laid before the Council.
 - 2) Where it is necessary to make a payment before it has been authorised by the Council, such payment shall be certified as to its correctness and urgency by the appropriate officer. Such payment shall be authorised by the committee, if any, having charge of the business to which it relates, or by the proper officer for payment with the approval of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor of the Council.
 - 3) All payments ratified under sub-paragraph (2) of this Standing Order shall be separately included in the next schedule of payments before the Council.

51. The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each member as soon as practicable after 31 March in each year a statement of the receipts and payments of the Council for the completed financial year. A Financial Statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March shall be presented to each member before the end of the following month of May. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to external audit) shall be presented to Council for formal approval before the end of the following month of September.
52. Estimates / Precepts
- 1) The council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its January meeting.
 - 2) Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Town Clerk a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than 31st December.
53. Code of Conduct and dispensations
- All Members shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.**
- a Unless a Member has been granted a dispensation, he shall withdraw from a meeting when Council is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest.
 - b Dispensation requests should be submitted to the Town Clerk as soon as possible before the meeting or at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required. A decision on the granting of a dispensation shall be made by the Council.
54. **The Town Clerk will be required to compile and hold a register of members' interests in accordance with agreement reached with the Monitoring Officer of the Responsible Authority and/or as required by statute.**
55. If a candidate for any appointment under the Council is to his knowledge related to any member of or the holder of any office under the Council, he and the person to whom he is related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the 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. Where a relationship to a member is disclosed, Standing Order 53 shall apply as appropriate.
56. The Town Clerk shall make known the purpose of Standing Order 55 to every candidate.
57. Canvassing of and Recommendations By Members
- 1) Canvassing of members of the Council or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Town Clerk shall make known the purport of this sub-paragraph of this Standing Order to every candidate.
 - 2) A Member of the 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, any such member may give a

written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

58. Standing Order 55 & 57 shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

59. Inspection of Documents

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

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

61. Unauthorised Activities

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

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

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

62. Admission of the Public and Press to Meetings

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

"That in view of the [special] [confidential] nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw"

63. The Council shall state the special reason for exclusion.

64. At all meetings of the Town Council members of the public will be allowed to address the meeting. Fifteen minutes will be set aside for questions in relation to the responsibilities of the Town Council. Members of the public should notify the Town Clerk of the questions or statements by 11.00am on the Wednesday preceding the meeting.

65. The Town Clerk shall afford to the press reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of any proceedings at which they are entitled to be present. There shall be no audio or video recording or photographs of the meeting without the prior approval of the Chair.

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

67. Confidential Business

- 1) No member of the 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.

- 2) Any member in breach of the provisions of paragraph (1) of this Standing Order shall be removed any committee or sub-committee of the Council by the Council.

68. Planning Applications

- 1) The Town Clerk shall, as soon as it is received, record the following for every planning application notified to the Council: -

- a) the date on which it was received
- b) the name of the applicant
- c) the place to which it relates
- d) a summary of the nature of the application

- 2) The Town Clerk shall refer every planning application received to the Planning Committee.

- 3) Councillors who are members of the District Planning Committee shall not attend Town Planning meetings or participate in formal or informal discussion with other Councillors on planning applications.

69. Financial Matters

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

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

- a) the accounting records and systems of internal control;
- b) the assessment and management of risks faced by the Council;
- c) the work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor which shall be required at least annually;
- d) the financial reporting requirements of members and local electors and
- e) procurement policies (subject to (2) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value less than £25,000.

- 2) Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in (3) below.

- 3) Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:

- a) a public notice of intention to place a contract to be placed in a local newspaper;
- b) a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;
- c) tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Town Clerk by a stated date and time;
- d) tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Town Clerk and at least one member of Council;
- e) tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of Council or Committee.

- 4) The Council, nor any Committee, is not bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote. Any tender notice shall contain a reference to Standing Orders 55 and 57 regarding improper activity.
 - 5) The Financial Regulations of the Council shall be subject to regular review, at least once every four years.
70. Code of Conduct on Complaints
The Council shall deal with complaints of maladministration allegedly committed by the Council or by any officer or member in such manner as adopted by the Council except for those complaints, which should be properly directed to the Monitoring Officer at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for consideration.
71. Variation, Revocation and Suspension of Standing Orders
Any or every part of the Standing Orders except those printed in **bold type** may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.
72. A resolution permanently to add, vary or revoke a Standing Order shall when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
73. Standing Orders to be Given to Members
A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each member by the Clerk upon delivery to him of the member's declaration of acceptance of office and written undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.