

SESSAY PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

1. Councillors

1.1. Following election or co-option to the Council, each Councillor will be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders of the Council. They will sign the form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk to the Council.

1.2. All Councillors will observe the Code of Conduct which was approved by the Council on 15 December 2021 at all times when on Council business and no member will act in such a way that will bring the Council into disrepute, behave inappropriately in meetings or obstruct the Council's business.

1.3. The Code of Conduct adopted by the Council will define when a Councillor shall declare a personal or prejudicial interest in an item for discussion at a Council meeting; the declaration must be made before the item is discussed. When the item is discussed, the Councillor must withdraw from that part of the room where the Council is in session but may remain in the area set aside for the general public; the Councillor may only speak if the Chairman allows comments from the public. The Councillor must withdraw from the room when the decision is to be made.

1.4. In the event of the resignation of a councillor the Clerk is to report the resignation to the Electoral Services Officer, Hambleton District Council and follow the process to establish whether an election should be called. If no election is required, then the Council will co-opt a new member. Notices are to be displayed for a minimum of a week inviting eligible persons to volunteer for co-option to the council; applicants should provide a résumé to the Clerk in support of their application. The applicant(s) will be invited to address the Council (for a maximum of 5 minutes) at the next Council meeting. Once a decision is taken by the Council the Chairman will announce the successful candidate who will immediately be co-opted onto the Council, and he/she/they will sign the form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk to the Council.

2. Clerk to the Council

2.1. The Council will appoint a Clerk to the Council which will be on an employed basis, unless the Clerk is a member of the Council acting in an unpaid capacity.

2.2. The Clerk will act as the Proper Officer of the Council, and he/she will: receive the Declarations of Acceptance of Office and notices disclosing interests; sign documents on behalf of the Council; issue agendas and notices of meetings; receive and distribute plans and documents on behalf of the Council and also advise the bank of changes to mandates with the bank.

2.3. The Clerk will act as Responsible Financial Officer of the Council.

2.4. As an employee of the Council the Clerk is covered by employment legislation dealing with employment rights, discrimination in employment, unfair dismissal, redundancy and similar matters. The Clerk will therefore have a contract of employment stating the terms and conditions under which he/she is employed. This will effectively be administered by the Chairman or designated Councillor acting with the authority of the Council.

3. Annual Meetings

3.1. If the Annual Meeting of the Council is in an election year it must be held within 14 days after that election. If it is not an election year, then the Annual Meeting will take place on an appropriate day in May.

3.2. The retiring Chairman will report on the activities of the Council for the preceding year.

3.3. If the outgoing Chairman is available, then he/she will preside until a new Chairman has been elected. The first business of the Annual Meeting will be the election of the Chairman (and Vice Chairman, if appropriate) and to receive the Chairman's acceptance of office.

4. Ordinary Meetings

4.1. Meetings will be held in appropriate, accessible accommodation; normally the meetings will be held in the Village Hall, Sessay.

4.2. A draft Agenda based on the outstanding items from the last meeting to be sent to all members 10 days before the meeting date. Councillors' comments to be received by the Clerk 7 days before the meeting date. The agenda for the meeting will be agreed by the Clerk and Chairman / Vice Chairman as appropriate. The agenda will always include an item to enable Councillors to declare interests.

4.3. Ordinary Meetings will normally be held on the third Wednesday of alternative months and councillors will be advised of the meetings by the issue of a summons and agenda delivered by email, post or by hand. Public notices will be posted on the Sessay Parish Council website and the Parish Council notice boards informing members of the public of the venue, time, date and business to be transacted at the meeting.

4.4. The notice of Council Meetings will be posted at least five clear working days before the meeting. (For the Annual Meeting for Parishioners this period is to be 7 clear days).

4.5. The Chairman of the Council will preside at the meeting and will be responsible for the conduct of that meeting. If the Chairman is not present, then the Vice Chairman will preside. If neither is present, then the first matter on the agenda will be the election of an appropriate Councillor who will chair the meeting. Whoever chairs the meeting will assume the duties of the Chairman for the meeting.

4.6. The quorum for the Council will be one third of the total Councillor places but in any case, not fewer than 3. If there be insufficient members present, then no business will be transacted, and a fresh notice will be issued to reconvene the meeting at a later date.

4.7. If at any time during the meeting it ceases to be quorate then the meeting will be adjourned, and any further business carried forward to the meeting when next convened.

4.8. Voting at the meeting shall be by a show of hands unless a majority of Councillors wants a ballot. Only the proposer will be recorded in the minutes unless a Councillor requests that their vote is noted. A Councillor may also request that the Clerk records how each Councillor has voted, including abstentions. Any request of this nature will be made before moving on to the next business. In cases of equal votes, the Chairman (or other person presiding) will have a second or casting vote.

4.9. Minutes of the meeting will be kept by the Clerk or other nominated person in the Clerk's absence. The minutes will record any decisions made by the Council. Draft minutes will be circulated to Councillors within 48 hours of the meeting. Councillors will supply any suggested amendments within

the next 48 hours with copies to all Councillors when if suggested amendments are received the clerk will produce a final copy and circulate within 48 hours for official approval at the next meeting.

Following the approval of the minutes they will then be signed by the person presiding at that meeting and published on the website and notice boards within 2 days of the meeting.

4.10 The Agenda based on the items of the last meeting to be sent to all members 10 days before the meeting. All comments to the Clerk at least 7 days prior to the meeting agreed Agenda placed on the website and notice board 5 days prior to the meeting.

5. Access for Public and Press

5.1. Meetings will be open to the public and press but they may be temporarily excluded from the meeting if the business is regarded as confidential by the Chairman. (Confidential matters would normally comprise: engagement; terms of service; conduct and dismissal of employees; terms of contract and negotiations thereon; preparations in cases of legal proceedings; or the early stages of any dispute).

5.2. An opportunity for public questions will be made available immediately before the commencement of each meeting, with an overall time limit of 10 minutes and each speaker restricted to a maximum of 3 minutes. The Council is not able to take decisions on topics raised which are not agenda items; if such topics are introduced, they may, at the discretion of the Chairman, be discussed and subsequently included as an agenda item for the next Council meeting.

6. Rules for the Management of Recording at Council and Parish Meetings

6.1. Sessay Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its decision making. For the purpose of this policy the term "record" means any form of audio, visual or electronic recording. Such recording is permitted under the lawful direction of the council.

6.2. Any person wishing to record a meeting in any format whatsoever must contact, the Clerk prior to the start of the meeting.

6.3 All those recording a meeting are requested to focus only on recording councillors, officers and those members of the public who have not requested anonymity. They should avoid focusing on other members of the public, in particular those who have requested anonymity or who have been identified as under the age of 18 or as a vulnerable adult.

6.4. All recording must be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting).

6.5 The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if, in his/her opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.

7. Emergency Business

7.1. Should it not be appropriate to convene a special meeting then any emergency business will be handled by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and one other Councillor. Actions will be reported immediately to the Council.

8. Alteration or Reversal of previous decisions

8.1. Decisions of the Council will not be revised within 4 months, except where a special item is placed on the agenda bearing the name of two Councillors and is considered and approved by the Council.

9. Freedom of Information

9.1. The Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and has adopted the Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils. The Clerk will ensure the Council conforms to the requirements of the Act allowing public access to the appropriate documents. A schedule of available documents and the process for accessing them is held by the Clerk.

10. Standing Orders

10.1. These and any other Standing Orders will be reviewed annually by the Clerk and the Chairman, and any amendments will be decided by the Council.

10.2. During the course of meetings of the Council, the Chairman's decision as to the interpretation of the Standing Orders will be final. In cases of doubt, the Council will seek the advice of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association.

10.3. The Council may resolve to suspend a Standing Order, in order to progress the business of the Council, and such decision will be included in the minutes. The suspension will not be taken lightly, and it will be time limited.

Approved by the Council on29/04/2021.....

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. King', written over a horizontal line.

Signed..... (Chairman)