

ASHBY ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

These orders follow those prepared by Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC). The orders produced by NALC are all embracing in order to meet the requirements of all Councils whether great and small.

This document takes into account the fact that Ashby St Mary is a very small village. These Orders are designed to meet the general working requirements of Ashby St Mary Parish Council.

Any actions that may arise and that are not covered by these Orders, the NALC documents will be used for guidance on the appropriate action.

General.

1. Councillors

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

2. Code of Conduct

2.1 The following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of Councillor in accordance with the public trust placed in the Councillors.

- a. To act with integrity and honesty.
- b. To act lawfully.
- c. To treat all persons fairly and with respect.
- d. To lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor.

2.2 In undertaking the role as Councillors:

- a. To impartially exercise responsibilities in the interests of the local community.
- b. To not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person.
- c. To avoid conflicts of interest.
- d. To exercise reasonable care and diligence.
- e. To ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with the local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

3. Meetings

3.1 Meetings will be held in appropriate and accessible accommodation.

3.2 Annual Meetings

- a. If the Annual Meeting 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.
- b. The first business of the Annual Meeting will be the election of the Chairman and to receive the acceptance of the office.
- c. An agreed frequency of meetings will be decided at the Annual Meeting.

3.3 Meetings General.

- a. Public notices will be posted in conspicuous places informing members of the public of the venue, time, date and business to be transacted at the meeting. The notice will be posted at least three clear working days before the meeting.
- b. Meetings shall be open to the press and 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.
- c. The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the completion of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
 - d. 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.
 - e. The agenda for the meeting will be agreed by the Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman as appropriate. The agenda will always include an item to enable Councillors to declare interests. An opportunity for public questions will be made available immediately before the commencement of each meeting.
The Council may only take decisions on items clearly specified on the agenda; if agreed by the Chairman, any urgent items which are not on the agenda may be discussed, but no decision may be made at that meeting.
 - f. Discussions/debate on the Agenda Items shall be in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
 - g. Voting at the meeting shall be by a show of hands.
 - h. In cases of equal votes the Chairman (or other person presiding) will have a second or casting vote.
 - i. Minutes of the meeting shall be drafted containing details of all decisions. After circulation and consideration by Councillors, the minutes will be corrected if necessary and then approved at the next meeting.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1.0 General

These Regulations govern how the Council conducts its financial affairs.

The Responsible Financial Officer(RFO) shall be the Council Clerk.

These orders will be reviewed annually and when approved, signed by the Chairman/Vice Chairman.

2.0 Accounting and Audit

2.1 The RFO shall be responsible for managing the Council's budget and completing end of year accounts and the relevant sections of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR).

2.2 An independent Auditor shall be appointed by the Parish Council as its Internal Auditor to annually review the councils financial control systems and report their findings to the Council and then complete the relevant sections of the AGAR.

2.3 The completed AGAR and the Auditing Report shall be considered by the Parish Council together with the end of year accounts and, if adopted, signed the Chairman.

2.4 All reports by the Internal Auditor shall be considered by the Parish Council and any recommendations implemented or reasons noted in the minutes why they are not.

3.0 Budget

3.1 The Budget for the coming year shall take into account the previous year, the current year and the plans for the coming two years.

3.2 On approval by the Parish Council the data will be used to submit the Precept Request to the South Norfolk District Council in January each year.

3.3 The RFO will regularly report to Parish Council meetings the actual spending against the budget, highlighting significant variances.

4.0 Authority to Spend

4.1 Expenditure may be authorised by the Clerk provided this has been included in the budget.

4.2 Urgent expenditure up to £200.00 may be authorised by the Clerk notwithstanding any budgetary provision after consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman. Such spending to be reported to the next Parish Council Meeting for formal approval.

5.0 Banking

5.1 Funds received should be banked regularly by the RFO. Handling of cash should involve two people.

5.2 Direct Debit and Standing Orders payments are permitted subject to approval by the Parish Council for regular items, such as Utility Bills, ICO fees or Payroll.

6.0 Payments

6.1 Invoices for payment should be checked by the RFO and submitted for approval by the Parish Council.

6.2 Payments may be made by either cheque or BACS and authorised by two Parish Councillors.

6.3 Payments may be made between Parish Council Meetings subject to the payment being included in the budget, details to be reported at the next Parish Council Meeting.

7.0 Salaries

7.1 The RFO must ensure that all salary and other payments comply with PAYE and other HMRC rules.

8.0 Receipts

8.1 The RFO should issue invoices promptly.

8.2 Irrecoverable amounts should be written off by the Parish Council, following a report by the RFO.

8.3 VAT claims and returns should be completed promptly by the RFO. (At least Annually)

9.0 Orders

9.1 Before placing orders for approved expenditure for items costing £500-£1000 two quotes should be obtained. For items costing in excess of £1000 three written quotes are required.

10.0 Assets

10.1 An Asset Register shall be kept and maintained by the RFO and reviewed annually.

10.2 Surplus assets should be disposed of, with the approval of the Parish Council, for best possible cost.

11.0 Insurance

11.1 The Parish Council Insurance Policy should be reviewed annually and include Employer's Liability, Public Liability, Assets and Fidelity Guarantee.

12.0 Risk Assessment

12.1 A Risk Management Document shall be prepared. showing the risks that have been assessed and the action taken to minimise the risk. This will normally be managed through Insurance, Inspections and Risk Assessments.

The RFO will be responsible for its preparation and implementation.