



RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

**STANDING ORDERS
AS TO MEETINGS**

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1. Interpretation

In these Standing Orders:-

'Committee' means any Committee appointed by the Council.

'Advisory Committee' means any group, whether or not called an advisory committee, which is appointed by the Council or a Committee for the purposes of advising the Council or a Committee on any matter and includes persons who are not Councillors.

'He' 'His' 'Him' and 'Himself' includes 'She' 'Her' and 'Herself'

'Sub-Committee' means any group, whether or not called a sub-committee, which is appointed by the Council or a Committee and which has delegated powers.

'Year' means municipal year which starts with the Annual Council meeting in May and ends with the Annual Council meeting in the following year.

2. Meetings

(a) Meetings of the Council shall be held on such dates and times and at such place as the Council may determine.

(b) By not later than the date of the Annual Council Meeting of the Council, the Council shall determine a Schedule of Council and Standing Committee meeting for the ensuing municipal year.

(c) Unless otherwise directed by Council:-

(i) Meetings of the Council shall be held at the Public Offices, Christchurch Road, Ringwood and shall commence at 7pm.

(ii) Meetings shall be held monthly with the Council meeting normally being held on the last Wednesday in the month.

(d) Smoking shall not be permitted at any meeting of the Council.

3. The Statutory Annual Meeting

(a) **In an election year the Annual Town 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 Town Council Meeting shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.**

4. **In addition to the Statutory Annual Town Council Meeting at least three other statutory meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times and at such place as the Council may direct.**

5. Chairman of the Meeting

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

b) In relation to the person presiding at meetings of the Council any reference to the Chairman shall be construed as reference to the Town Mayor and reference to Vice-Chairman shall be construed as reference to the Deputy Town Mayor.

6. Proper Officer
- a) Where a statute, regulation or order confers function or duties on the proper officer of the Council in the following cases, he shall be the Town Clerk or nominated officer:-
- 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.
- b) In any other case the Proper Officer shall be the person nominated by the Council and in default of nomination, the Town Clerk.

7. Quorum of the Council

- (a) **Three members or one-third of the total membership, whichever is the greater, shall constitute a quorum at meetings of the Council.**
- (b) 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 Chairman may fix.

8. Standing Order No. 53(c) relates to the quorum for a committee or sub-committee.

9. Voting

- (a) Members shall vote by show of hands or, if at least two members so request, by ballot.
10. **If a member so requires, the Town 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.**
11. (a) **Subject to (b) and (c) below the Chairman 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.**
- (b) **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 Chairman and Vice-Chairman until the end of their term of office he may not give an original vote in an election for Chairman.**
- (c) **The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for Chairman.**

12. Order of Business

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

- a) **To elect a Chairman (Town Mayor) of the Council whose term of office shall not exceed two consecutive years.**
- b) **To receive the Chairman'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 Vice-Chairman (Deputy Town Mayor) of the Council whose term of office shall not exceed two consecutive years.**
- f) **To appoint representatives to outside bodies.**
- g) **To appoint standing committees and sub-committees.**
- h) **To consider the payment of any subscriptions falling to be paid annually if not previously approved.**
- i) **To inspect, if necessary, any deeds and trust investments in the custody of the Council,**

and shall thereafter follow the order set out in the Standing Order 14

(Note: In an election year Councillors must execute Declarations of Acceptance of Office in each other's presence, or in the presence of the Proper Officer (Town Clerk) previously authorised by the Council to take such declarations, before commencement of the Annual Meeting)

13. **At every meeting other than the Annual Town Council Meeting the first business shall be to appoint a Chairman if the Chairman and Vice-Chairman 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.**
14. **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 receive 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 and consider reports and minutes of committees including advisory committees that report direct to Council.
- f) To receive and consider resolutions or recommendations in the order in which they have been submitted.
- g) To receive and consider reports from officers of the Council.
- h) Any other business specified in the summons.
- i) If necessary to authorise the sealing of documents.
- j) If necessary, to authorise the signing of orders for payment.
- k) To receive such communications as the person presiding may wish to lay before the Council.
- l) To answer questions from Councillors.
- m) To receive reports of District and County Councillors.

15. Urgent Business

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

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

16. Motions (Resolutions) Moved On Notice

Except as provided by these Standing Orders, no Motion may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been put on the Agenda by the Town Clerk or the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has delivered the notice to the Town Clerk at least 7 clear working days before the next meeting of the Council.

- 17. The Town Clerk shall date every notice of Motion when received by him, shall number each notice in the order in which it was received and shall enter it in a book which shall be open to the inspection of every member of the Council.
- 18. Subject to Standing Order 22 below, the Town Clerk shall insert in the summons for every meeting all notices of motion 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 it at some later meeting or that he withdraws it.
- 19. If a notice of Motion 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.
- 20. If the subject matter of a Motion 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 Chairman, 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.

21. Every Notice of Motion shall be relevant to some subject over which the Council has power or duties, which affects its area.
22. Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Orders 16-21 No Member may submit no more than three notices of Motion for consideration at any meeting.
23. In the event of a Member submitting more than three Motions, the Town Clerk shall only include the first 3 submitted by the Member unless the Member gives written notice to the Town Clerk not less than 7 clear working days before the meeting, details of the Notices of Motion the Member wishes to have included on the summons for the meeting.
24. Each Notice of Motion shall only seek to deal with one issue and if, at the meeting, the Chairman determines that a Motion seeks to avoid the intent of this Standing Order, he shall disallow it if the sum of the issues raised gives rise to the Member submitting more than the number of Motions permitted under Standing Order 22.
25. A Notice of Motion shall not be included on the Agenda for an extraordinary or special meeting of the Council unless, in the Town Clerk's opinion after consultation with the Town Mayor, it is relevant to a subject specified or to be specified on the summons for that meeting. If in his opinion it is not relevant, the Town Clerk shall set it out in the summons for the next ordinary Council meeting.

26. Resolutions Moved Without Notice

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

- (a) To appoint a Chairman 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 Standing Order 60 below)
- (o) To silence or eject from the meeting a member named for misconduct. (See Standing Order 39 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 Standing Order 67 below)

(r) To adjourn the meeting.

27. Questions

A member may ask the Chairman of the Council or the Town Clerk any question concerning the business of the Council, provided 7 clear working days notice in writing of the question has been given to the person to whom it is addressed.

28. Any question of the Town Clerk shall relate to matters of fact and not opinion.

29. No Member may ask more than a total of 3 questions under Standing Order 27.

30. Each question under Standing Order 27 shall not exceed 100 words, including any preamble.

31. Each question shall only seek an answer to one issue and, if at the meeting, the Chairman determines that a question seeks to avoid the intent of the Standing Order 27 he shall dismiss the question.

32. A Member may, with or without notice, ask the Chairman of a Committee any questions upon the minutes of the Committee when those minutes are presented to Council.

33. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

34. A person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer or give notice that a written response has been tabled at the meeting or will be circulated to all Members at a later date.

35. Questions under Standing Order 27 shall not be put to the Annual Council Meeting.

36. Rules of Debate

(a) Subject to the right of Members to ask a question under Standing Order 32 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 Chairman.

37. (a) A resolution or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded, and, unless proper notice has already been given, it shall, if required by the Chairman, 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 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 be carried, the resolution, as amended, shall take the place of the original resolution and shall become the resolution (the substantive motion) 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 Council, 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.
38. A member may be seated when speaking unless requested to stand by the Chairman.
39. (a) The ruling of the Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- (b) Members shall address the Chairman. If two or more members wish to speak, the Chairman shall decide who to call upon.
- (c) Whenever the Chairman rises or speaks during a debate all other members shall be silent.
40. Closure
- (a) 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”.
- (b) If such motion is seconded, the Chairman 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.
- (c) 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.
- (d) The adjournment of a debate or of the Council shall not prejudice the mover’s right of reply at the resumption.
41. Disorderly Conduct
- (a) **All members must observe the Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 24 April 2002, a copy of which is annexed to these Standing Orders as Appendix 1.**
- (b) 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.**
- (c) If, in the opinion of the Chairman, a member has broken the provisions of paragraph (b) of this Standing Order, the Chairman 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, that member is under a duty to report the breach to the Standards Board (England) or the Local Commissioner (Wales).**

- (d) If either of the motions mentioned in paragraph c is disobeyed, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting or take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce them.

42. 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.

43. Alteration of Resolution

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

44. Rescission of Previous Resolution

- (a) A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except either :
 - (i) by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 4 members of the Council, or
 - (ii) 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 Standing Order has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

45. Voting On Appointments

- (a) 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.

46. 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 No. 60.)

47. Time Limit on Meetings

- (a) All meetings shall end by 9.00pm or, on a majority vote of the Members present, at such other time as may be determined.
- (b) Any business not transacted when a meeting is adjourned shall be considered at another meeting of the same body, held at a time and place the Chairman fixes when a meeting is adjourned. If the Chairman does not fix a

time and place, the business shall be considered at the next ordinary meeting of the Council or of the Committee or Sub-Committee as appropriate.

48. Resolutions on Expenditure

Any resolution (which is moved otherwise than in pursuance of a recommendation of the Policy & Finance Committee or of another committee after recommendation by the Policy & Finance Committee) and which, if carried, would, in the opinion of the Chairman, 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, to enable the Policy & Finance Committee to consider the matter and report thereon. Any other committee affected by the decision may also consider whether it wishes to report thereon to Policy & Finance Committee and Council.

49. Committees and Sub Committees

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

- (i) a member of a committee shall normally hold office for the whole of his term of office and expiring at the next election of Councillors. However the Council may alter a member's appointment at any time, or on receipt of a request from the Member.
- (ii) May appoint persons other than members of the Council to any Committee; and
- (iii) may subject to the provisions of Standing Order 44 above at any time dissolve or alter the membership of committee, and
- (iv) Any alteration in the membership of Committees, whether by the filling of casual vacancies or otherwise, shall be made by the Council either directly or on the recommendation of the Policy & Finance Committee.

50. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, ex-officio, shall be voting members of every committee.

51. Every committee shall at its first meeting before proceeding to any other business, elect a Chairman and may elect a Vice-Chairman who shall hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

52. Special Meeting

The Chairman of a Committee or the Chairman of the Council may summon a special meeting of that Committee at any time. A special 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.

53. Sub-Committees

(a) Every committee may appoint sub-committees for purposes to be specified by the committee.

- (b) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee shall be members of every sub-committee appointed by it unless they signify that they do not wish to serve.
- (c) 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 not less than three of its members.
- (d) The Standing Orders on rules of debate (except those parts relating to standing and to speaking more than once) and the Standing Order on interests of members in contracts and other matters shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings.

54. Advisory Committees

- (a) The Council or a Standing Committee may create advisory committees, whose name, and number of members and the arrangement for nomination of members shall be specified.
- (b) The Town Clerk shall inform the members of each advisory committee of the Terms of Reference of the committee.
- (c) Any recommendations from an advisory committee shall be made to the Council or the Standing Committee which appointed it, or otherwise as may be determined by Council.
- (d) An advisory committee may consist wholly or partly of persons who are not members of the Council.

55. Special Business for Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings

- (a) A Member of the Council who wishes to raise any special business in a Committee or Sub-Committee shall give the Town Clerk notice of his wish at least 7 working days before the meeting. If this requirement and that shown in Standing Order 55b are complied with, the Town Clerk shall place the subject matter on the agenda.
- (b) Where an item is included on the Agenda under Standing Order 55(a) above the Member shall, if he intends a decision to be made on the item, provide full details of the matter including any financial implications thereof and confirmation that any decision made would not conflict with any adopted policies of the Council.

56. Voting in Committees

- (a) Members of committees and sub-committees entitled to vote, shall vote by show of hands.
- (b) **Chairmen of committees and sub-committees shall in the case of an equality of votes have a second or casting vote.**

57. Presence of Non-Members of Committees at Committee Meetings

- (a) 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.
- (b) Any Council member who is not a member of a Committee or Sub-Committee, may attend a meeting of that Committee or Sub-Committee. At the invitation of the Chairman he may speak (but not vote) on any item of business discussed at that meeting.

58. Interests (ENGLAND)

- (a) **If a member has a personal interest as defined by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on (24th April 2002) then he shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the existence and nature of that interest as required.**
- (b) **If a member who has declared a personal interest then considers the interest to be prejudicial, he must withdraw from the room or chamber during consideration of the item to which the interest relates.**
- (c) **The Town Clerk may be required to compile and hold a register of members' interests in accordance with agreement reached with the Monitoring Officer or the Responsible Authority and/or as required by statute.**

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

60. Admission of The Public and Press to Meetings

- (a) **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"
- (b) The Council shall state the special reason for exclusion.

61. At all meetings of the Council the Chairman may at his discretion and at a convenient time in the transaction of business, adjourn the meeting so as to allow any members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business to be transacted at that meeting.

62. The Council may approve, and amend, a scheme or schemes allowing persons who are not Council members to speak at meetings. Any person who is not a Council member, or a co-opted member of a Committee or Sub-Committee which is meeting, may speak at meetings only under the scheme in force at the time of the meeting.

63. 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 express approval of the Council.

64. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Chairman 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.

65. Confidential Business

- (a) 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.
- (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Orders any member in breach of the provisions of paragraph (1) of this Standing Order shall be removed from any committee or sub-committee of the Council by the Council.
- (c) For the purposes of the Standing Orders any report issued by an Officer and circulated for discussion at a meeting and marked "Not for Publication" shall remain confidential and not be discussed outside the meeting or disclosed to any person or organisation unless and until the Council or Committee authorises its disclosure or publication.

66. Liaison with County and District Councillors

- (a) A summons and Agenda for each meeting shall be sent, together with an invitation to attend, to the County, Borough, Unitary or District Councillor for the appropriate division or ward.
- (b) Where a Committee or the Town Clerk decides it is appropriate, a copy of each letter ordered to be sent to the County or District Council shall be transmitted to the County Councillor for the division or to the District Councillor for the ward as the case may require.

67. 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.

68. 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.

69. Standing Orders to be Given to Members

- (a) A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each member by the Town 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.