

WHITESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

The Parish Council consists of ten elected members assisted by one appointed official, the Parish Clerk. Normally the Council is elected for a term of four years. If a casual vacancy occurs during a four-year term this shall be properly advertised and an individual member may be co-opted by the Council, unless ten or more electors ask for a bye-election to be held.

1. Meetings of the Council shall be held on the second Thursday of every month at 7,30pm (with the exception of the month of August) at the Whitestone Parish Hall unless the Council decides otherwise at a previous meeting.

2. The Statutory Annual Meetings

(a) In an election year the Annual Parish Council Meeting shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the Councillors elected take office.

(b) The Annual Parish Meeting shall be held on the last Thursday in April at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall.

3. Election of the Chairman

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting the first business shall be to elect the Chairman.

4. The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for Chairman

5. Appointment of a Chairman

At every meeting other than the Annual Parish Council meeting the first business shall be to appoint a Chairman, if both the Chairman and Vice Chairman are absent.

6. Chairman – Exercise of Duties

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

7. Quorum

Three members shall constitute a Quorum. If a quorum is not present when the Council meets or if during a meeting the number of Councillors present falls below the quorum, the business not transacted at that meeting shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the chair directs.

8. Voting

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

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 item.

The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in any instance of an equality of votes must give a casting vote whether or not they cast an original vote.

A decision of the Council (whether affirmative or negative) shall not be reversed within six months except by a special resolution, the written notice of which bears the names of at least three members of the Council. When such a resolution has been disposed of no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

9. Appointment of Standing Committees

The Council may at the Annual Parish Council Meeting appoint standing committees and may at other times appoint such other committees as are deemed necessary.

10. Admittance of the Public and Press to meetings
The Public and Press shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees. Members of the Public/Press may be temporarily excluded if it is deemed that an item to be discussed is considered to be of a sensitive or confidential matter.
11. Public Participation
Each Parish Council Meeting will be preceded by and end with Public Participation during which individual members of the public may speak for a maximum of three minutes on any topic that they wish. Unless already on the agenda issues so raised will not be voted on or added to the agenda of the current meeting. Each Public Participation will be limited to a maximum of twenty minutes.
12. Order and Conduct of Business
The order of business shall normally be as follows:-
- (i) To read and consider the minutes of the previous meeting, and if necessary make any alterations that may be agreed. To then approve the signature of those minutes by the Chairman as a true record of that meeting.
 - (ii) To consider any planning applications.
 - (iii) To allow for a report from both District and County Councillors
 - (iv) To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done and any other business requiring a decision by the Council.
 - (v) Business will be conducted in accordance with the Agenda for that meeting and voting limited to items already on that Agenda.
13. Code of Members Conduct
The Code of Conduct adopted by the Whitestone Parish Council must be observed by all members; this includes:
- (a) The need for Councillors to disclose "interests" defined by the code.
 - (b) The need for Councillors to register "disclosable pecuniary interests" and "other interests" set out in the Code and to notify the Monitoring Officer of Teignbridge District Council, in writing, of any changes to these "interests" within 28 days of becoming aware of any changes or new interests.
 - (c) Councillors with a declared interest relating to the Parish Hall or the Parish Plan Steering Group shall have dispensation and may speak and vote on these matters.
14. Authorisation of Payments
Orders for the payment of monies shall be authorised by resolution of the Council and signed by two authorised signatories. Relevant invoices should also be initialled by those signing the cheques. In the case of any item likely to be £500 or more three quotations should ideally be sought.
15. Specification for Major Works
Before approving any proposed building or contract scheme involving substantial sums of public money, an appropriately qualified person shall be appointed to act on behalf of the Parish Council in writing a specification and subsequently to monitor such works as may be approved.
16. Accounts and Financial Statement
The Financial Officer shall supply to each members as soon as practicable after the 31st March in each year a statement of the receipts and payments of the Council for the completed year. A financial statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis must be presented by the end of May.
17. Budget Setting and Setting of Precept
The Council shall following the practice of PBP as follows:-
- P Plan (October) to receive written estimates of expenditure requested.
 - B Budget (November) to set an initial/suggested budget.
 - P Precept (December) to set proposed Precept, based on the agreed budget discussions.

18. Financial Regulations
A copy of the financial regulations shall be given to each member, and shall be read in conjunction with items 13, 15, 16 and 17.
19. Planning Applications
(a) The Clerk shall, as soon as it is received, enter in a book kept for the purpose the following particulars of every planning application notified to the Council:-
(i) the date on which it was received
(ii) the name of the applicant
(iii) the place to which it related.

(b) The Clerk shall refer every planning application received to the Chairman/Chairman of the Council or in the Chairman's absence to the Vice Chairman within 48 hours of receipt.
20. Sealing of Documents
Any two members of the Council may seal, on behalf of the Council, any document required by law to be issued.
21. Public Availability of Minutes
All minutes kept by the Council and by any committee shall be open for inspection of any member of the Council and any elector.
22. Termination of Meetings
Council meetings shall normally be terminated by 10.30pm.