

GENERAL STANDING ORDERS – STANSTEAD ST MARGARET'S PARISH COUNCIL

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1. General

1. These general standing orders apply to the working methods of Stanstead St Margaret's Parish Council. (SStMPC)
2. The general standing orders must be read and applied in conjunction with the Financial Standing Orders and any other standing orders of SStMPC.
3. Amendments to the general standing orders are agreed at a full meeting of SStMPC.

2. Election of Parish Council Members

1. The appointment of SStMPC members will follow the national procedures.
2. At the annual meeting of SStMPC the Chairman and Vice Chairman (if applicable) will be appointed for 1 year
3. At the annual meeting or thereafter parish councillors will be appointed to the committees of the SStMPC (if any).
4. The SStMPC will consist of 7 members either elected by vote or co-opted if insufficient candidates submit for election.

3. Code of Conduct

All councillors will abide by the current version of the Code of Conduct as produced by Easy Herts Council and adopted by SStMPC on 19th March 2013
And reviewed on the 10th February 2017.

4. Conduct of Meetings

4.1 Agenda

1. The Clerk will produce a schedule of meetings including the annual parish meeting and the annual meeting of SStMPC for the following year at the last SStMPC meeting in any calendar year.
2. The Clerk is responsible for summoning Councillors to a meeting and for compiling and issuing the agenda and any related documentation, reports etc. The order of items will where possible allow more important items to be discussed early in the meeting.
3. Councillors will submit reports to the Clerk for inclusion on the agenda according to a timetable provided by the Clerk

4. Councillors can request the Clerk to add agenda items relevant to the business of SStMPC (at least 7 days in advance of the meeting)
5. Except by special agreement of members present at a meeting items cannot be added to the agenda after the final agenda has been sent out with the summons. **No decision can lawfully be made on any matter not specified in the summons e.g. something raised under ‘any other business.**
6. The Clerk and the Chairman will discuss the agenda for each SStMPC meeting prior to a final version being sent out to councillors.
7. The Clerk will summons councillors to each meeting and provide the agenda and supporting papers at least 3 working days before the meeting not including the day of the meeting and the day on which it is dispatched.

The Council will sign and display the final agenda on the Parish Notice Board the other village notice boards and the Parish Council website

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8. at least 3 working days before the scheduled date of the meeting. Copies of the Agenda and supporting papers will also be provided on request.
9. The agenda of the last meeting in any calendar year will include an item on the estimates for the budget for the forthcoming year.

4.2 Meetings

1. Each meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. and finish by 10:00 p.m. except by agreement of members present at the meeting. Agenda items not dealt with will be carried over to the next meeting.
2. The general public and the press may attend meetings of SStMPC (and its Committees if any) but may not participate in the meetings. Where matters require it (e.g. items relating to personnel or commercial sensitivity) the general public and the press may, by resolution, be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst that item is discussed.
3. By agreement and notification to the Chairman a time of no more than 15 minutes will be made available on each agenda for the general public to address the Council on a topic of local importance. This will normally be the first agenda item. It does not form part of the legal meeting but a record of its occurrence may be made in the meeting minutes
4. Principal authority councillors and police officers attending will be invited to present a report under a specified agenda item at the meeting.

5. The meeting will be chaired by the Chairman or in the Chairman's absence the Vice Chairman. In the event that the Chairman and Vice Chairman cannot attend a meeting any other member may act as Chairman for the meeting.
6. The meeting will not start until a quorum of three members (including the Chairman) is present.
7. Councillors have a duty to attend SStMPC meetings but if they cannot attend for unavoidable reasons such as illness or work commitments they must contact the Clerk with an apology and a reason. Apologies for absence should be declared to the Clerk prior to the meeting. If a Councillor fails to attend any meetings for six months he/she must ask the council to accept the reason for continued non-attendance. Without formal council approval, a Councillor is disqualified in law.
8. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests (Localism Act 2011) must be made at the start of each meeting.
9. No resolution may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been placed on the agenda as a motion or recommendation.
10. Agenda items requiring the approval of SStMPC will be voted on by show of hands and passed by a simple majority. Councillors can abstain. Normally voters' names are not minuted but if necessary, Councillors can ask for names to be recorded.
11. Council decisions are corporate decisions, and therefore members will endeavour to search for constructive solutions and as much common ground as possible.
12. Councillors should keep contributions short and to the point. The extent and length of discussion is a matter for the Chair.
13. In the event of a tied vote the Chairman has a casting vote.
14. Members will respect the Chair at all times during any discussions and only speak to the meeting through the Chair.

4.3 Minutes

The draft minutes of the meeting will be circulated by the Clerk within 2 weeks of a meeting, and will be displayed on the Parish Council website

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1. SStMPC members must provide corrections to the Clerk, within two weeks of the date of the next meeting.
2. The final minutes will be approved by the council and signed by the Chairman at the next SStMPC meeting.

3. Final minutes cannot be changed but corrections can be recorded in the minutes of the following meeting.
4. Members having actions arising from a meeting are expected to complete them before the next meeting - except as agreed.
5. Councillors must report progress to the Clerk prior to the meeting so that the status can be reported by the Clerk.

5 Committees

1. The Parish Council may delegate activities to named Committees. The Committees may only make decisions themselves on behalf of the Parish Council when this has been agreed by the Parish Council and forms part of the terms of reference of the Committee.
2. Each Committee must consist of least three Parish Council members and may include non-members of the Parish Council.
3. Each committee will have a set of terms of reference defining its functions and activities.
4. Decisions are made by a majority vote with the Chairman having a casting vote.
5. Each Committee will agree a schedule of meetings or meet on a need basis and provide a record of each meeting held to the next Parish Council meeting.
6. All Committee meetings are open to the public and must publicly display agendas 3 days in advance of the meeting.
7. Each Committee may set up working parties consisting wholly of members of the general public to work on specific projects. Working parties cannot make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council.

6 Annual Parish Meetings

1. An Annual Parish Meeting will be held at an agreed time between 1st March and 1st June and separate from the Annual meeting of the Parish Council.
2. The Chairman of the Parish Council will Chair the Annual Parish meeting unless otherwise agreed.
3. All Parish Councillors are expected to attend the Annual Parish Meeting.

4. The agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting will be agreed by the Parish Council and will be posted by the Clerk at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.

7 Record keeping

1. The Clerk will retain copies of the standing orders with other Parish Council records.
2. Each new member of the Parish Council will be provided with a copy of the standing orders upon completion of the declaration of acceptance and agreement to follow the Code of Conduct.