



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

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INDEX

Standing Order		Page
1	Meetings	3
2	Ordinary Council meetings	5
3	Committees and sub-committees, voting and reports and recommendations	7
4	Proper Officer	8
5	Motions requiring written notice	9
6	Motions not requiring written notice	10
7	Rules of debate	10
8	Code of conduct (England)	12
9	Code of conduct on complaints	13
10	Persistent Absence	13
11	Questions	13
12	Minutes	13
13	Disorderly conduct	14
14	Rescission of previous resolutions	14
15	Voting on appointments	14
16	Co-option policy	14
17	Expenditure	15
18	Execution and sealing of legal deeds	15
19	Committees	16
20	Sub-committees	16
21	Extraordinary meetings	16
22	Advisory committees	16
23	Accounts and Financial Statement	17
24	Estimates/precepts	17
25	Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors	17
26	Inspection of documents	17
27	Unauthorised activities	17
28	Confidential business	18
29	Power of well-being (England only)	18
30	Matters affecting council employees	18
31	Freedom of Information Act 2000	19
32	Relations with the press/media	19
33	Liaison with County, District and Unitary Councillors	19
34	Financial matters	19
35	Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders	20
36	Standing orders to be given to councillors	20
37	Civic and ceremonial aspects of the Town Council	20
38	Appointment of Mayor	21
39	Appointment of Deputy Mayor	21
40	Mayor Making and civic occasions	21
41	Freeman policy	22

Some of the standing orders are mandatory because they reflect requirements of Acts of Parliament and subsequent regulations. These standing orders are highlighted in **bold** and should not be ignored, suspended or substantively amended unless the legislation out of which they are born changes.

1 Meetings

Mandatory for full Council meetings	●
Mandatory for committee meetings	●
Mandatory for sub-committee meetings	●

- a Ordinary Meetings of the Council shall normally be held on Mondays at 7 o'clock in the evening. The venue will be published on the Agenda.
- b **Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- c **When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to councillors and the public, the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.**
- d **Meetings shall be open to the 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.**
- e Subject to standing order 1(d) above, members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.
- f The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing order 1(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes, although this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.
- g Subject to standing order 1(f) above, each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 3 minutes, although this may be altered at the Chairman's discretion.
- h In accordance with standing order 1(e) above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or debate.
- i In accordance with standing order 1(h) above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- j A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- k A member of the public shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chairman may at any time permit an individual to be seated when speaking.
- l Any persons speaking at a meeting shall identify themselves and address their comments to the Chairman.

- m Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Chairman shall direct the order of speaking.
- n **Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior (written) consent.**
- o **In accordance with standing order 1(d) above, the press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- p **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman (if any).**
- q **The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- r **Subject to standing order 1 (aa) below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors present and voting thereon, save to appoint an honorary freeman (see standing order 41).**
- s **The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote. (See also standing orders 2 (i) and (j) below.)**
- t **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**
- u If a member so requests, a vote shall be by secret ballot, except in cases where a vote is taken for an election to office within the Council, when it shall always be by secret ballot and the numerical results will be announced along with the outcome of the secret ballot.
- v **The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present and absent.**
- w **The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors in respect of the entire meeting.**
- x **An interest arising from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes. (See also standing orders 8 and 9 below.)**
- y **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 3.**

- z Nine members of the Council shall constitute a quorum at full Council meetings and at Planning meetings, with five members constituting a quorum at Finance & Staffing, Town & General Purposes and Recreation & Amenities committees (*see also standing order 3(j)*).
- aa **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be adjourned. Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be transacted at a following meeting.
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- bb Meetings shall not exceed a period of 3 hours.

2 Ordinary Council meetings

See also standing order 1 above

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.**
- e **The election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.**
- f The Chairmen of the Council Committees, including the Vice Chairmen of Planning, will be elected at the first Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council and the Vice-Chairmen will be elected at the first Meeting of the Committee following the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council.
- g **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- k The role of Chairman of Council and the Town Mayor are normally held by the same councillor. However it can, in exceptional circumstances, on the ruling of Council, be two separate roles as can the Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor roles. (*See also standing orders 38-39*).

- l At a full Council meeting the order of business shall be as follows.
 - i. Public Session
 - ii. To receive and consider reports from County and District Councillors
 - iii. Apologies for absence
 - iv. Declarations of interests
 - v. To consider the Minutes of the previous meeting and **after consideration, to approve the signing of the Minutes as a correct record of the meeting by the person presiding and crossing through the DRAFT stamp. This shall include the initialling of each page and any amendments or corrections shall also be made and initialled at the meeting by the person presiding.**
 - vi. **To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.**
 - vii. To receive Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence.
 - viii. To receive the Mayor's Civic Report.
 - ix. To receive and consider recommendations and minutes of committees.
 - x. To receive and consider reports from officers of the Council.
 - xi. To authorise the sealing of documents.
 - xii. When necessary to authorise the signing of orders for payment.
 - xiii. To consider resolutions or recommendations in the order in which they have been notified.
 - xiv. To receive and consider reports from Representatives of Community and Local Organisations.

- m At the statutory annual meeting of the Council, the order of business shall be as follows.
 - i. The election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council.
 - ii. In an election year, delivery by councillors of their declarations of acceptance of office.
 - iii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees.
 - iv. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees and other local authorities.
 - v. Review of the terms of references for committees.
 - vi. Receipt of nominations to existing committees.
 - vii. Appointment of any new committees, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them.
 - viii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.
 - ix. Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.
 - x. Review of representation and subsequent appointment on external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.
 - xi. In a year of elections, if a Council's period of eligibility to exercise the power of well being expired the day before the annual meeting, to review and make arrangements to reaffirm eligibility.
 - xii. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment.
 - xiii. Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
 - xiv. Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.
 - xv. Establishing or reviewing the Council's complaints procedure.
 - xvi. Establishing or reviewing the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
 - xvii. Establishing or reviewing the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media.
 - xviii. Confirming the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council for the year ahead.

3 Committees, sub-committees, voting, reports and recommendations

- a The Council will at the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council, 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 shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council, and may, subject to the provisions of Order 42, at any time dissolve or alter the membership of a committee.
- b At the April Council Meeting (or, in an election year, following the day of election and prior to the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May) a list of Standing Committees will be circulated to all members asking them to state their preference for committee service for submission to the Statutory Annual Council Meeting in May for approval/voting upon.
- c The Town & General Purposes Committee and the Recreation & Amenities Committee shall consist of 7 members plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council (Total 9).
- d The Finance & Staffing Committee shall include ex officio, the Chairmen of the Town & General Purposes Committee and Recreation & Amenities Committee plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and 5 other members (Total 9).
- e If any Councillor acts in a dual role i.e. Vice Chairman of Council and Chairman of a Committee then the number will be made up by the election of additional members at the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council.
- f At the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council the Council shall elect for each Standing Committee a chairman who shall hold office until the next Statutory Annual Meeting. The Vice Chairman shall be elected at the first committee meeting following the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council. In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Chairman of Council or Vice Chairman of Council shall chair the committee. The programme of meetings for each Standing Committee shall be approved at the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council.
- g The Chairman of a committee or the Chairman of Council may summon a special meeting of that committee at any time with due notice. A special meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than two 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.
- h Every committee may appoint sub-committees for purposes to be specified by the committee.
- i 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.
- j Except where ordered by the Council the quorum of a committee shall be 5.
- k The Standing Orders on rules of debate and the Standing Order on interests of members in contracts and other matters shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings.
- l Voting in committees and sub-committees shall be as for Town Council meetings (*see also standing order 1r-u and 12a*).
- m A member who has proposed a resolution which has been referred to any committee of which he/she is not a member, may explain his resolution to the committee but shall not vote. Any Council Member shall be entitled to be present at the meetings of any Committee or Sub Committee of which he/she is not a member and unless they have a personal or prejudicial interest may speak but not vote.

- n It is intended that most of the Council's business will be transacted in the Council's Standing Committees. The Minutes of each committee shall set out the decisions of the committee on those matters which are delegated to it and the recommendations of the committee on those matters which require a resolution of the Council. For the avoidance of doubt, where the approved budget of a committee provides for expenditure, the committee may make that expenditure without further resolution of the Council. Minutes of each committee shall be circulated to each member of the Council before the next ensuing Council meeting.
- o At the Council meeting the Chairman of each committee shall move that individual recommendations, as proposed and seconded by committee members, be voted upon by Council. Council will be given the opportunity, should they so wish, to debate the recommendation before it is put to the vote.
- p Members may ask questions of the Committee Chairman to clarify the Minutes before the Council but there shall be no debate on them.
- q The Chairman of each committee shall then move that the Minutes of that Committee be RECEIVED by the Council.
- r Committees and full Council may appoint Working Groups when deemed absolutely necessary but clear criteria must be established. This criteria should include:
 - (a) The purpose of the working group.
 - (b) A named convenor.
 - (c) The members of the group.
 - (d) The date when the group should report back to Committee/full Council.
 - (e) Whether delegated authority for expenditure within a committee's budget is permitted (only if appropriate).
 - (f) Whether non-members should be invited to form part of the working group but without voting rights.

4 Proper Officer

- a The Council's Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or such other employee as may be nominated by the Council from time to time or (ii) such other employee appointed by the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer during the Proper Officer's absence. The Proper Officer and the employee appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in standing orders.
- b The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following.
 - i. **Sign and serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee and sub-committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting.**
 - ii. **Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee or a sub- committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
 - iii. Subject to standing orders 5(a)–(e) below, include in the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 7 clear days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it.
 - iv. **Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office, in accordance with standing order 3(b)i above.**

- v. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.
 - vi. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
 - vii. **Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.**
 - viii. Retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.
 - ix. Keep proper records required before and after meetings;
 - x. Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.
 - xi. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
 - xii. Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.
 - xiii. Arrange for legal deeds to be sealed using the Council's common seal or to be signed by 2 councillors and witnessed (*see also standing orders 18(a) and (b)*).
 - xiv. Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
 - xv. Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority.
 - xvi. Retain custody of the seal of the Council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
 - xvii. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.
 - xviii. Manage the employees in line with the council's Employee Manual.
- c The Finance & Staffing Committee shall be responsible for all staff related matters, oversee the management of staffing by receiving written and verbal reports from the Town Clerk and making recommendations to Council.

5 Motions requiring written notice

- a In accordance with standing order 4(b)(iii) above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the next meeting.
- b The Proper Officer may, before including a motion in the agenda received in accordance with standing order 5(a) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- c If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 5(a) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer in clear and certain language at least 7 clear days before the meeting.
- d If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda.
- e Having consulted the Chairman or councillors pursuant to standing order 5(d) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.
- f Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

6 Motions not requiring written notice

- a Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.
- i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
 - ii. To approve the absences of councillors.
 - iii. To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - iv. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - v. To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
 - vi. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
 - vii. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
 - viii. To close or adjourn debate.
 - ix. To refer by formal delegation a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee.
 - x. To appoint a committee or sub-committee or any councillors (including substitutes) thereto.
 - xi. To receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee.
 - xii. To dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
 - xiii. To note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or sub-committee.
 - xiv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a sub-committee or an employee.
 - xv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant.
 - xvi. To authorise legal deeds [to be sealed by the Council's common seal] OR [signed by two councillors] and witnessed (*see standing orders 18(a) and (b) below*).
 - xvii. To authorise the payment of monies in line with the Financial Regulations.
 - xviii. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration, which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
 - xix. To extend the time limit for speeches.
 - xx. To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
 - xxi. To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
 - xxii. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.
 - xxiii. To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.**
 - xxiv. To adjourn the meeting.
 - xxv. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.
 - xxvi. To answer questions from councillors.
- b If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a committee or sub-committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such committee or sub-committee or employee provided that the Chairman may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience.

7 Rules of debate

- a Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Chairman's direction for reasons of expedience.
- b Subject to standing orders 5(a)–(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- c Subject to standing order 4(b)(iii) above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.

- d An amendment shall not have the effect of negating the motion before the Council.
- e If an amendment be carried, the resolution, as amended, shall take the place of the original resolution and shall become the resolution upon which any further amendment may be moved. A further amendment shall not be moved until the Council has disposed of every amendment previously moved.
- f The mover of a resolution or of an amendment shall have a right of reply.
- g A Councillor may move amendments to his own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.
- h Any amendment to a motion shall be either:
 - i. to leave out words;
 - ii. to add words;
 - iii. to leave out words and add other words.
- i A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.
- j Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.
- k Subject to standing order 7(j) above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.
- l Pursuant to standing order 7(j) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a councillor, is limited to one.
- m If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.
- n If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- o The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding 3 minutes.
- p Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion at the very end of debate and immediately before it is put to the vote.
- q Subject to standing orders 7(o) and (p) above, a councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- r During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.
- s A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his decision shall be final.
- t The Chairman shall ensure that the Proper Officer or any person appointed to advise the Council shall have the opportunity to speak on any item and for their advice to be recorded in the Minutes.

- u With the consent of the seconder and/or of the meeting, a motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer. A councillor shall not speak upon the said motion or amendment unless permission for the withdrawal of the motion or amendment has been refused.
- v Subject to standing order 7(q) above, when a councillor's motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be silent or for him to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting;
 - ix. to suspend any standing order, except those which are mandatory.
- t In respect of standing order 7(v)(iv) above, the Chairman shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is seconded and put to the vote. The Chairman shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.

8 Code of conduct (England)

See also standing orders 1(e)–(j) above

Note: A revised statutory code of conduct is expected to come into force in 2010.

- a All councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.**
- b All councillors shall undertake induction training in the code of conduct within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.
- c If paragraph 12(2) of the code of conduct contained in the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 (SI No.1159) has been adopted by the Council or pursuant to relevant provisions in a statutory code of conduct in force at the time, councillors may exercise the rights contained in standing order 8(d) below only if members of the public are permitted to (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted.**
- d Councillors with a prejudicial interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting may (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must, thereafter, leave the room or chamber.**
- e The Register of Members' Interests is to be updated prior to the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council and made available at each Town Council and Committee Meeting for Councillors, Press and the public.
- f The Attendance Register should be noted with a declaration of specific interest according to the Agenda item.

9 Code of conduct on complaints

- a The Council shall deal with complaints of maladministration allegedly committed by the Council or by any officer or member in such a manner as adopted by the Council and in line with its Complaints Procedure except for those complaints which should be properly directed to the district council for consideration.
- b Advice for Councillors on Staff Line Management (refer to Councillors' Information Folders).

10 Persistent absence

- a If a member fails throughout six consecutive months to attend any meetings of the Council or of its committees or sub-committees of which he is a member, he ceases automatically to be a member of the Council unless either he has a "statutory excuse" or his failure is due to a reason approved by the Council or he attended as a representative of the Council at a meeting of any body such as a county association of local councils. The period begins with the last meeting attended.
- b Absences from Council and Standing Committees shall be recorded in Minutes and an annual register of attendance shall be published immediately after the last meeting of the Council in April each year.

11 Questions

- a A councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided 7 clear days notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.
- b Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.
- c Every question shall be put and answered without open discussion.

12 Minutes

- a The Minutes shall record the number of votes taken on any resolution to show those in favour, against, abstentions and non-votes. If all Councillors present vote in favour of a resolution then it will be recorded as unanimous.
- b If a copy of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting has been circulated to councillors no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting they are taken as read.
- c No discussion of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting shall take place except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes shall be raised in accordance with standing order 6(a)(iv) above.
- d Minutes, including any amendment to correct their accuracy, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- e Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, any previous draft minutes or recordings of the meeting shall be destroyed.

13 Disorderly conduct

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly.
- b If, in the opinion of the Chairman, there has been a breach of standing order 13(a) above, the Chairman shall express that opinion and thereafter any councillor (including the Chairman) may move that the person be silenced or excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
- c If a resolution made in accordance with standing order 13(b) above, is disobeyed, the Chairman may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce it and/or he may adjourn the meeting.

14 Rescission of previous resolutions

- a A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 9 councillors of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
- b When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 14(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

15 Voting on appointments

- a Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.

16 Co-option policy

When a casual vacancy has been declared e.g. on receipt of a letter of resignation, the Town Clerk will immediately notify the Returning Officer at NDDC, issue the public notice and advise council members accordingly.

If a poll is not claimed within 14 days of the public notification then the Returning Officer will notify the Town Clerk who will then instigate the following co-option procedure:

- a Advise council members by memo that a poll has not been claimed and that the co-option process is being activated by the Town Clerk.
- b Prepare notices for Town Council notice boards.
- c Place advertisement in local press under Public Notices for 2 consecutive weeks with the date for receipt of applications being no later than 7 days after the publication date of the second advertisement.

- d Local Government Guidelines regarding membership of Local Councils to be strictly adhered to including qualification as follows:
- i A person is qualified to be a member of the Council if he is a British citizen, other Commonwealth citizen, citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of another European Union State and if on the day he is nominated he has attained the legal eligible age
 - ii on that day and thereafter he continues to be a local government elector for the area of the authority; or
 - iii he has for the whole of the twelve months preceding his nomination occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the area of the authority; or
 - iv his principal or only place of work during the twelve months preceding his nomination day has been in that area; or
 - v he has, during the whole of the twelve months preceding his nomination resided in that area or within three miles of it;
and
 - vi he is not disqualified.
- e Copies of applicants' letters and CVs to be circulated to all Councillors with a minimum of 7 days notice of the full Town Council meeting.
- f All applicants to be invited to the full Council meeting to give a brief address.
- g Applicants will retire during the voting procedure, which will be by resolution. For a candidate to be successful he must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting.

17 Expenditure

- a Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
- b **The Council's financial regulations shall be reviewed once a year.**
- c **The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.**

18 Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing order 6(a)(xvi) above

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.
- b **In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 18(a) above, the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two members of the Council who shall sign the deed as witnesses.**

(The above is applicable to a Council with a common seal.)

19 Committees

See also standing order 1 above

- a The Council will, at its annual meeting, appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. may permit committees to determine the dates of their meetings;
 - iii. shall appoint and determine the term of office of councillor or non-councillor members of such a committee (unless the appointment of non-councillors is prohibited by law) so as to hold office no later than the next annual meeting;
 - iv. may in accordance with standing orders, dissolve a committee at any time.

20 Sub-committees

See also standing order 1 above

- a Unless there is a Council resolution to the contrary, every committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by resolution of the committee.

21 Extraordinary meetings

See also standing order 1 above

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee at any time.
- d If the Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee (or a sub-committee). The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by two councillors.

22 Advisory committees

See also standing order 1 above

- a The Council may appoint advisory committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.
- b Advisory committees and any sub-committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.

23 Accounts and Financial Statement

- a All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, which shall be reviewed at least annually.
- b The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor a financial position statement summarising the council's receipts and payments four times a year and the balances held. This statement should include a comparison with the budget for the financial year. A Financial Statement prepared on an income and expenditure basis for a year to 31 March shall be presented to each councillor for the June Finance & Staffing Committee meeting. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to external audit), including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for formal approval before 30 June.

24 Estimates/precepts

- a **The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year** at its meeting before the end of January.
- b Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than December.

25 Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors

- a Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.
- b A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.
- c This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

26 Inspection of documents

- a Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees shall be available for inspection by councillors.

27 Unauthorised activities

- a No member of the Council or of any committee or sub-committee shall in the name of or on behalf of the Council:

- i. write letters on behalf of the Town Council unless authorised by Council to do so.
 - ii. make comments or write letters to the press/media or any social networking site purporting to represent the Town Council unless specific authority has been granted to do so. In normal circumstances the Council Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Town Clerk are permitted to speak on behalf of the Town Council and Committee Chairmen on subjects relating to their particular committee. Any person speaking on behalf of the Council must ensure that their statements are consistent with Council policy.
- b Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee:
- i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

28 Confidential business

- a Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature.
- b A councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 28(a) above may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council.

29 Power of well-being (England)

- a **Before exercising the power to promote well-being, a meeting of the full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.**
- b **The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 29 (a) above was made and expires on the day before the annual meeting of the Council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections.**
- c **After the expiry of its preceding period of eligibility, the Council continues to be an eligible council solely for the purpose of completing any activity undertaken in the exercise of the power to promote well-being which was not completed before the expiry of the Council's preceding period of eligibility referred to in standing order 29 (b) above.**

30 Matters affecting council employees

- a If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council or a committee has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 1(d) above.
- b The Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer, is responsible for the employment of the staff and shall operate within the agreed employment practices, as detailed in the Employee Manual.
- c Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall keep written records of all meetings relating to their performance, and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters.
- d The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected.

- e Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.
- f Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records referred to in standing orders 30(d) and (e) above if so justified.
- g Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 30(d) and (e) above shall only be provided to the Proper Officer.

31 Freedom of Information Act 2000

- a All requests for information held by the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- b Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the chairman of the Town Council. The said committee shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 including exercising the powers of the Proper Officer in respect of Freedom of Information requests set out under standing order 4(b)(x) above.

32 Relations with the press/media

- a All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.
- b In accordance with the Council's policy in respect to dealing with the press and/or other media, councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media.

33 Liaison with District and County or Unitary Councillors

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the councillor of the District and County or Unitary Council representing its electoral ward.

34 Financial matters

- a The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the accounting records and systems of internal control;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments;
 - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 34(b) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value of less than the amount stipulated in the Financial Regulations.

- vi. **Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of the amount stipulated in the Financial Regulations shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 34(c) below.**
- b Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:
 - i. a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Proper Officer by a stated date and time;
 - iii. tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Proper Officer and at least one member of the Council;
 - iv. tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of Council or Committee.
- c Neither the Council, nor any committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.
- d **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No.5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with EU procurement rules.**

35 Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders

- a Any or every part of the standing orders, except those which are mandatory by law, may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.
- b A motion to permanently add to or to vary or to revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders not mandatory by law shall not be carried unless two-thirds of the councillors at a meeting of the Council vote in favour of the same.

36 Standing orders to be given to councillors

- a The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor upon delivery of his declaration of acceptance of office.
- b The Chairman's decision as to the application of standing orders at meetings shall be final.
- c A councillor's failure to observe standing orders more than 3 times in one meeting may result in him being excluded from the meeting in accordance with standing orders.

37 Civic and ceremonial aspects of the Town Council

See standing orders 37-41 below and also the Civic Section (20-21) of the Councillors' Information Folder re. Civic Guidelines and Protocol.

- a The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have no ex-officio standing regarding committees and sub-committees.

38 Appointment of Mayor

- a In a non election year the Deputy Mayor shall be confirmed as Mayor-Elect at the February Council meeting provided that:
 - i. the Deputy Mayor assents, and
 - ii. the Council approves
- b Should the Deputy Mayor not be confirmed as Mayor-Elect, nomination of other candidates shall be requested. Candidates shall be proposed and seconded by serving Councillors and shall assent in writing to their nomination. Nominations shall be submitted to the Clerk fourteen days prior to the March Council meeting, at which the Mayor-Elect shall be elected by secret ballot.
- c The Mayor Elect shall decide whether he/she wishes to appoint a Chaplain for the ensuing year.
- d In an election year, nominations will be required at the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council. It should be noted that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office must be taken before Councillors can propose or second a nomination. Nominees should assent verbally or in writing. The Mayor Making Ceremony shall be held as soon as possible thereafter.

39 Appointment of Deputy Mayor

- a Councillors shall elect from among their own number a Deputy Mayor who shall assist the Mayor in the performance of his/her duties.
- b Candidates shall be proposed and seconded by serving Councillors and shall assent in writing to their nomination. In a non election year nominations shall be requested by the Town Clerk at the February Council Meeting and submitted to the Clerk seven days prior to the following Council meeting, at which the Deputy Mayor Elect shall be elected by secret ballot.
- c In an election year, nominations will be required at the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council. It should be noted that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office must be taken before Councillors can propose or second a nomination. Nominees should assent verbally or in writing.

40 Mayor Making and civic occasions

- a The Mayor-Making ceremony shall normally take place within seven days of the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council. At the ceremony, following prayers by the Chaplain if there be one, and the receiving of apologies, the order of business shall be:
 - i. To appoint the Town Mayor.
 - ii. To receive the Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office.
 - iii. To receive an address by the retiring Mayor.
 - iv. To hand over the Mayoral Robe and Town Regalia to the new Mayor.
 - v. To receive an address by the new Mayor.
 - vi. To appoint the Deputy Town Mayor.
 - vii. To hand over the Deputy Mayor's Robe and Badge of Office to the new Deputy Mayor.
 - viii. To receive the Mayor's choice of the person to be Chaplain (if applicable).
 - ix. To receive the Mayor's choice of the person to be Mayoress or Mayor's Escort and to hand over the Chain of Office.
 - x. To receive the Deputy Mayor's choice of the person to be Deputy Mayoress or Deputy Mayor's Escort and to hand over the Badge of Office.
 - xi. To make any special announcements

- b It is expected that at Civic Services and other Civic occasions all Councillors shall wear robes of office (hats optional). When robes are worn, no non-Councillor other than the Clerk and Mace Bearer shall accompany Councillors in procession other than at the invitation of the Mayor. The Clerk shall ensure that Councillors walk in procession in order of seniority (or in reverse order if appropriate).

41 Freeman Policy

See also sections 248-249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

a Criteria

Blandford Forum Town Council shall admit to be Honorary Freemen of the Town, persons or organisations (e.g. regiment) who, in the opinion of Council, have rendered eminent service to the community.

b Nomination Procedure

- i. Any individual councillor or member of the public who resides in Blandford Forum and is on the electoral register may make a nomination.
- ii. A proposed nomination to be forwarded in CONFIDENCE to the Town Clerk with written testimonial giving reasons why the individual or organisation is worthy of nomination.
- iii. The matter to be raised in CONFIDENTIAL session at the next Town Council meeting. The confidential agenda will name the nominee and be circulated with the usual statutory notice. If the nominee is a currently serving Councillor who is present at the time, he/she will be requested to leave the chamber during this discussion.
- iv. A proposer and seconder will be required and a vote taken as to whether to proceed to the next stage of investigation by Town Council (if considered necessary) or if not a meeting will be specially convened for the purpose of voting on the award.
- v. Under normal circumstances, for an award to be agreed a minimum of 12 councillors must be present and vote in favour of the award. In the event of there being fewer than 16 members of the Town Council at a time when an award is proposed at least 75% of the membership of the Town Council then in office must be present and vote in favour of the award.
- vi. When the Town Council has voted and agreed the honour, the Town Clerk will notify the nominee in CONFIDENCE and seek his/her/their agreement of acceptance.
- vii. The Town Clerk will report to full council accordingly and arrangements will be put in hand for the Ceremony if the honour has been accepted.

c Civic Ceremony - Confirmation of the Award of Honorary Freedom of the Town of Blandford Forum and Presentation of the Honorary Freeman Scroll

- i. Refer to example of Order of Ceremony
- ii. Costs to be met from Council Civic Budget
- iii. Register of Freemen to be completed
- iv. Certification of Admission (Freeman Roll to be made to order)

d Protocol

- i. Individual Freemen (Representative of Regiment/Organisation) to be invited to attend all Civic Functions.
- ii. Hosts for the Freemen to be nominated from among the currently elected Councillors so as to ensure that they are accompanied and hosted throughout all civic functions.
- iii. Freemen to be invited to other such functions as deemed appropriate (i.e. Remembrance Service, etc).
- iv. Freemen to be acknowledged at ceremonies i.e. during the welcoming speech.
- v. Appropriate courtesy to be shown to Freemen i.e. seating arrangements (staff to escort to seats at Mayor Making Ceremony).
- vi. Photographs to be on display in the Community Room (public awareness of the honour, to whom given).