



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Standing Orders Committee meeting held at 7pm in the parish office at Helsby Community Sports Club on Monday 29th November 2021

Present:

Cllr. Sarah Temple – Chair
Cllr. Terry O’Neill
Cllr. Peter Duffy
Cllr. Mike Branigan

Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Election of Chair. It was **RESOLVED** that **Cllr. Temple** be elected as **Chair of the Standing Orders Committee – SO01/21.**
2. Election of Vice-Chair. It was **RESOLVED** that **Cllr. Branigan** be elected as **Vice-Chair of the Standing Orders Committee – SO02/21.**
3. Public Participation – It was **RESOLVED** that **the meeting be suspended for public participation – SO03/21.** There being no matters brought to the Committee’s attention, it was **RESOLVED** that **public participation be closed and the meeting reconvened – SO04/21.**
4. Apologies for absence – none were received.
5. No declarations of disclosable interests were made.
6. Confirmation of previous minutes. It was **RESOLVED** that **the minutes of the Standing Orders Committee meeting held on 30th November 2020 be accepted as accurate and signed by the Chair – SO05/21.**
7. Matters arising from the previous meeting – prior to the meeting, it was noted that the Clerk had circulated the Local Government Association’s updated Councillor Code of Conduct model (dated 2020) along with the results from the related national consultation exercise and the accompanying guidance. It was noted that Cheshire West and Chester Council had yet to amend their Member’s Code of Conduct in line with the new LGA version and were still using a version dated December 2015, on which the Council’s own version was based. The Clerk outlined that she had contacted CW&C’s Monitoring Officer to find out when a review may take place. The Clerk also agreed to investigate how the NALC model version (dated 2018) related to the latest LGA version and to copy Cllr. Bowers into any further correspondence. It was **RESOLVED** to

recommend to Full Council not to amend the existing Code of Conduct at present and to await correspondence from CW&C on the matter – SO06/21.

Virtual Meetings Procedure - it was noted that this document had been drawn up during the pandemic and had expired when virtual meetings were no longer permissible after May 2021. It was **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to annotate on the document that it had been reviewed by this Committee and that whilst it was not applicable at the moment, it would be retained for possible future use – SO07/21.**

8. Review of Standing Orders

It was noted that the Clerk had carried out the latest review using the 2018 NALC Model Standing Orders (as revised in 2020) and the proposed amendments had been circulated to members for consideration prior to the meeting. Members agreed that the latest NALC model enabled Committee meetings to be held at the Council's own offices but there remained a requirement to hold Full Council meetings in an unlicensed premises.

It was acknowledged that all elements of NALC's model version which contained any legal and statutory requirements (as shown in bold type) should be incorporated into the Council's own document. The Clerk outlined that some of the additions made included the minimum notice period for holding meetings, legislation in relation to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and policies for the retention and destruction of information. It was also noted that the numbering system had been simplified to bring it more in line with the NALC version and it was suggested that an index could be included. Members noted that the changes made to the planning application review process in February 2021 had also been incorporated (i.e. a minimum of 2 rather than 3 ward members to review any applications).

The committee worked through the amended Standing Orders document. It was **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept the revised Standing Orders subject to the following – SO08/21:**

Page 2 – Clause 4b(i) - Clerk to check that an electronic signature is sufficient.

Page 3 – Clause 6a – Definition of a 'non-councillor with voting rights' to be inserted as a footnote.

Page 4 – Clause 6e – cross reference to Clause 29 (Interests)

Page 10 – Delete Clause 22 (Special Meetings) and replace with Clause 41 (Extraordinary Meetings)

Page 11 – Clause 26 (Delegation to the Clerk) – to increase maximum expenditure from £150 to £500 but to note that the Financial Regulations will also need to be amended in this respect.

Page 14 and 15 – Clause 34 (Management of Information) – delete clauses 34 (k, l and m) and note that additional policies may be required on retention of information and procedures for handling a data breach.

Page 16 – Clause 40 (Dispensations) – Clerk to check the status of any current dispensations in due course and to update any expired dispensations, where relevant.

Page 18 – under duties add ‘liaison with the relevant community contacts for the village planters’ and include ‘and other community events’ under duty 15.

Page 20 – under duties amend duty 2 to ‘commercial tenants’ and add ‘risk assessment’ to duty 3. Add repair and maintain CCTV and lighting on the parish field to powers.

Page 22 – Add review of fixed assets policy to duties.

Page 25 – Add additional duty - Chair of the Council and Chair of the HR Committee to agree annually who will act as the single point of contact for day-to-day HR issues with the Clerk for the forthcoming year.

Page 26 – delete 1d.

Page 27 – Clerk to check if training sessions need to be logged on the website. Clerk to check status of Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors document. To include committee list document on the website and the list of councillor membership on outside bodies. Councillor surgeries – add ‘CW&C Borough Councillor to be invited to attend surgeries’ and amend councillors from each ward to ‘at least 2 councillors to attend’.

9. Review of Publication Scheme - The committee worked through the current document. It was **RESOLVED that the Parish Council be recommended to accept the following changes to the existing Publication Scheme – SO09/21:**

Page 1 – To amend the Council’s address

Page 2 – remove reference to general assistant and update the Council’s address

Page 4 – reword document to ‘Financial Risk Assessment’ on the website

Page 5 – under ‘How we make decisions’, say that supporting papers for Council and Committee meetings will be made available on request.

Page 6 – Investigate the status of the ‘Training – Statement of Intent’ and Councillor Roles and Responsibilities’ documents. Put councillor surgery dates on calendar on website. Add Freedom of Information Policy, Fixed Asset Policy and Social Media Policy.

10. Date of next meeting – to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Chairman's signature Dated.....

DRAFT