



WISWELL PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

September 2026

These Standing Orders have been prepared for Wiswell Parish Council and are based on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Standing Orders (England), incorporating the 2025 updates and amendments required to reflect current legislation.

They should be read together with the Council's Financial Regulations

Where a Standing Order reflects a statutory or legal requirement, that requirement must not be suspended or amended in a way that conflicts with the law.

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

1. Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order in which they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair.
2. A motion, including an amendment, shall not be progressed unless it has been proposed and seconded.
3. A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chair as withdrawn.
4. If a motion, including an amendment, has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
5. An amendment is a proposal to remove, add or alter words in the original motion. It shall not negate the original motion.
6. If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion as amended becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendments may be moved.

7. An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the Chair, the amendment is provided in writing.
8. A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If the motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be made with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
9. If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be considered in the order directed by the Chair.
10. Only one amendment shall normally be moved and debated at a time.
11. A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
12. The proposer of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of the debate on that amendment.
13. The proposer of the original motion shall have a right of reply at the end of the debate immediately before the motion is put to the vote.
14. Unless permitted by the Chair, a councillor may speak once in a debate on a motion except:
 - to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
 - to raise a point of order;
 - to give a personal explanation; or
 - to exercise a right of reply.
15. During debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or personal explanation.
16. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the Standing Order or other procedural requirement that they believe has been breached.
17. A point of order shall be decided by the Chair, whose decision shall be final unless challenged by a substantive motion.
18. When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
 - to amend the motion;
 - to proceed to the next business;
 - to adjourn the debate;

- to put the motion to a vote;
 - to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - to refer the matter to a committee or sub-committee;
 - to exclude the public and press;
 - to adjourn the meeting; or
 - to suspend a Standing Order which is not a mandatory statutory or legal requirement.
19. Before a motion is put to the vote, the Chair shall be satisfied that the matter has been sufficiently debated and that the proposer has exercised or waived their right of reply.
20. Contributions by councillors shall relate only to the matter under discussion and should normally not exceed ten minutes without the consent of the Chair.
-

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

1. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively, abusively or improperly.
 2. If this Standing Order is ignored, the Chair shall request the person to moderate or improve their conduct.
 3. If the person disregards the request, the Chair or any councillor may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting.
 4. Such a motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
 5. If a resolution made under this Standing Order is ignored, the Chair may take reasonable steps to restore order, including temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.
-

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

1. **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other suitable premises are available free of charge or at reasonable cost.**
2. **At least three clear days' notice of a meeting shall be given. Clear days do not include the day on which notice is issued, the day of the meeting,**

Sundays, days during the Christmas or Easter break, bank holidays or days appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.

3. **Public notice of the time, place and agenda of a meeting shall be given at least three clear days before the meeting, subject to any statutory provisions permitting shorter notice.**
4. **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business or for other special reasons. The exclusion of the public shall be by resolution stating the reason for exclusion.**
5. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of business on the agenda.
6. The Council shall normally provide up to **15 minutes** for public participation unless the Chair considers that a longer period is appropriate.
7. A member of the public shall normally speak for no more than five minutes.
8. A question asked during public participation does not require a response at the meeting and shall not automatically initiate a debate. The Chair may direct that an oral or written response be provided.
9. A person wishing to speak shall indicate to the Chair and, where practicable, stand when speaking. Appropriate adjustments shall be made where required because of disability or other reasonable circumstances.
10. A person speaking at a meeting shall address their comments through the Chair.
11. Only one person shall speak at a time.
12. **A person attending a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting while it is open to the public, including by filming, photographing, audio recording, or other means of enabling persons not present to see or hear the proceedings.**
13. A person may not provide an oral report or oral commentary on the meeting as it takes place without the permission of the Chair.
14. The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for reporting meetings.
15. **The Chair shall preside at meetings when present. If the Chair is absent, the Vice-Chair, if there is one, shall preside. If both are absent, the councillors present shall choose a councillor to preside.**
16. **Subject to the meeting being quorate, questions shall be decided by a majority of those councillors present and voting.**

17. The Chair may vote on any matter. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chair may exercise a casting vote whether or not they used an original vote.

18. Voting shall normally be by show of hands.

19. At the request of a councillor, the vote shall be recorded in the minutes so that it shows how each councillor present and voting voted.

20. The minutes shall contain an accurate record of:

- the time and place of the meeting;
- councillors present and absent;
- interests declared;
- dispensations granted;
- whether any councillor left the meeting because of an interest;
- whether public participation took place; and
- the resolutions made.

21. Councillors and any non-councillors with voting rights shall comply with statutory restrictions and the Council's adopted Code of Conduct concerning interests.

22. No business shall be transacted unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and, in any event, the quorum shall not be less than three.

23. If a meeting becomes inquorate, no further business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed.

24. A councillor should give the Clerk as much notice as reasonably practicable if they are unable to attend a meeting.

25. Nothing in these Standing Orders authorises remote attendance or remote voting where such attendance or voting is not permitted by current legislation.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

1. The Council may establish committees and sub-committees as required.
2. The Council shall determine the terms of reference, membership, powers and delegated responsibilities of each committee.

3. A committee may appoint a sub-committee where authorised by the Council or where the committee's terms of reference permit it.
 4. The Council shall determine the quorum of a committee or sub-committee, which shall not be fewer than three unless legislation provides otherwise.
 5. Membership of a committee may include non-councillors where legally permitted.
 6. A committee responsible for regulating and controlling the Council's finances shall consist only of persons legally entitled to vote on such matters.
 7. The Council shall appoint the Chair of a standing committee unless it determines otherwise.
 8. An advisory committee may include non-councillors where appropriate.
 9. The Council may dissolve a committee or sub-committee at any time.
-

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. **In an election year, the Annual Meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which councillors elected take office.**
2. **In a year which is not an election year, the Annual Meeting shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
3. If no other time is fixed, the Annual Meeting shall take place at 6.00 pm.
4. In addition to the Annual Meeting, the Council shall hold at least three other ordinary meetings in each year.
5. **The first business at the Annual Meeting shall be the election of the Chair.**
6. The Council may also elect a Vice-Chair.
7. The Chair shall continue in office until a successor is elected, unless they resign or become disqualified.
8. The Vice-Chair, if there is one, shall hold office until the election of the next Chair unless they resign or become disqualified.
9. In an election year, the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the outgoing Chair shall apply.
10. Following the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Annual Meeting should include, as appropriate:
 - acceptance of office;

- confirmation of the previous Annual Meeting minutes;
- receipt of committee minutes;
- consideration of committee recommendations;
- review of delegation arrangements;
- review of committee terms of reference;
- appointment of committee members;
- review and adoption of Standing Orders;
- review and adoption of Financial Regulations;
- review of arrangements with other organisations;
- review of external representation;
- consideration of eligibility for the General Power of Competence;
- review of the Council's assets;
- confirmation of insurance arrangements;
- review of subscriptions;
- review of the complaints procedure;
- review of Freedom of Information arrangements;
- review of data protection arrangements;
- review of the media/communications policy;
- review of employment policies;
- review of expenditure under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or under the General Power of Competence, where applicable; and
- determination of the dates and times of ordinary meetings until the next Annual Meeting.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

1. The Chair may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.
2. **If the Chair does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of receiving a written request from two councillors, any two councillors may convene the meeting in accordance with statutory requirements.**

3. The public notice of an extraordinary meeting convened by councillors shall be signed by those councillors.
 4. The Chair of a committee may convene an extraordinary committee meeting.
 5. If the Chair of a committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within five days of receiving a written request from two committee members, any two members may convene the meeting.
-

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

1. A resolution shall not normally be reversed within six months except:
 - by a special motion for which the required written notice has been given; or
 - by a motion arising from a committee recommendation.
 2. Once a motion under paragraph 1 has been disposed of, a similar motion shall not normally be considered for a further six months.
 3. This Standing Order does not prevent the Council from correcting an error, complying with legislation or reconsidering a matter where circumstances have materially changed.
-

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

1. Where more than two persons have been nominated for an appointment and none receives an absolute majority, the person with the fewest votes shall be removed from consideration and another vote taken.
 2. This process shall continue until one person receives a majority.
 3. A tie may be resolved by the casting vote of the Chair where legally permitted.
-

9. MOTIONS REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

1. A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the Council and to its statutory functions, powers, duties or an issue specifically affecting the Council's area or residents.
2. **A motion may only be moved at a meeting if it is on the agenda and the proposer has given written notice of the wording to the Proper Officer at least seven clear days before the meeting.**

3. The Proper Officer may correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors before the motion is placed on the agenda.
 4. If the wording is unclear, the Proper Officer may require the proposer to clarify and resubmit it.
 5. If the wording or subject matter appears improper or outside the Council's functions, the Proper Officer shall consult the Chair and, where appropriate, seek professional advice before deciding whether it should appear on the agenda.
 6. Motions received shall be recorded in the order received.
 7. Motions rejected shall be recorded together with the reason for rejection.
-

10. MOTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

The following motions may be moved at a meeting without prior written notice:

1. to correct an inaccuracy in draft minutes;
2. to move to a vote;
3. to defer consideration;
4. to refer a matter to a committee;
5. to appoint a person to preside;
6. to change the order of business;
7. to proceed to the next business;
8. to require a written report;
9. to appoint a committee and its members;
10. to extend speaking time;
11. to exclude the press and public where legally permitted;
12. to require a person to be no longer heard;
13. to exclude a person for disorderly conduct;
14. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
15. to suspend a non-statutory Standing Order;
16. to adjourn the meeting; or

17. to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

1. The Council shall maintain appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect information and personal data held in paper and electronic form.
 2. Access to personal data shall be limited to those who require it for legitimate Council business.
 3. Appropriate security measures shall be used, including passwords, access controls and encryption where appropriate.
 4. The Council shall maintain a document retention and destruction policy.
 5. Information shall not be retained for longer than is reasonably necessary unless a legal, regulatory or other legitimate reason requires longer retention.
 6. Agendas, reports and minutes shall not disclose confidential information or personal data unless there is a lawful basis for doing so.
 7. Councillors, employees, contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without lawful authority.
-

12. DRAFT MINUTES

1. Where draft minutes have been circulated with the agenda, they shall be taken as read.
2. Discussion of draft minutes shall be limited to their accuracy.
3. A correction to the draft minutes shall be proposed in accordance with Standing Order 10.
4. **The minutes shall be confirmed by resolution and signed by the Chair of the meeting at which they are approved.**
5. Where the Chair believes the minutes are inaccurate but the meeting resolves otherwise, the Chair may sign the minutes with an appropriate statement recording their disagreement.
6. **Where the Council's gross annual income or expenditure, whichever is higher, does not exceed £25,000, draft minutes shall be published on a publicly accessible website not later than one month after the meeting, subject to lawful redaction.**

7. Approved minutes and associated recordings shall be retained in accordance with the Council's retention policy and legal obligations.
-

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

1. All councillors and any non-councillors with voting rights shall comply with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.
 2. A councillor who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or other relevant interest shall comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and relevant legislation.
 3. Where the Code of Conduct or legislation requires a councillor to withdraw from a meeting, they shall do so unless a lawful dispensation applies.
 4. Dispensation requests shall be made in writing to the Proper Officer as soon as practicable before the meeting, or, where this is not possible, at the start of the meeting.
 5. A request for a dispensation shall state:
 - the nature of the interest;
 - whether participation in discussion, voting, or both is requested;
 - the meeting or period for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - the reason for requesting the dispensation.
 6. A dispensation may only be granted where permitted by law and by the body or person legally authorised to grant it.
-

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

1. Upon notification by the relevant principal authority that it is dealing with an allegation that a councillor has breached the Code of Conduct, the Proper Officer shall report the notification to the Council, subject to data protection and confidentiality requirements.
2. The Council may:
 - provide information or evidence where lawful and necessary;
 - seek information from the principal authority or other body with responsibility for the matter; and
 - consider any action available to the Council following the outcome.

3. The Council shall not purport to impose sanctions which it has no legal power to impose.
 4. Any action taken by the Council shall comply with the relevant Code of Conduct, legislation and guidance.
-

15. PROPER OFFICER

1. The Proper Officer shall normally be the Clerk.
2. The Council may appoint another suitably authorised person to act as Proper Officer when the Clerk is absent.
3. The Proper Officer shall:
 - **serve the summons and agenda for meetings in accordance with statutory notice requirements;**
 - publish the required public notices;
 - include properly submitted motions on the agenda;
 - convene a meeting for the election of a new Chair where required;
 - facilitate lawful inspection of the Council's minute book;
 - retain acceptance of office forms;
 - retain councillors' declarations and registers of interests as required;
 - assist with Freedom of Information requests;
 - assist with data protection requests;
 - liaise with the Council's Data Protection Officer where one has been appointed;
 - receive and send correspondence on behalf of the Council;
 - maintain Council records;
 - arrange the lawful execution of deeds;
 - arrange payments in accordance with Council resolutions and Financial Regulations;
 - maintain records of planning applications and responses;
 - refer planning applications to councillors promptly where an extraordinary meeting may be necessary;

- manage access to Council information through the publication scheme; and
 - retain custody of the Council's seal, if one exists.
4. The Proper Officer shall act within the authority delegated to them by the Council and shall not make decisions reserved to the Council.
-

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. The Council shall appoint a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).
 2. The RFO shall be responsible for the Council's accounting arrangements and financial administration in accordance with legislation, proper practices, the Council's Financial Regulations and Council resolutions.
 3. The Council shall appoint an appropriate person to undertake the RFO's duties during any absence.
-

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

1. "Proper practices" shall mean the current applicable statutory guidance and the latest edition of the **Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – Practitioners' Guide**, as applicable.
2. **All payments shall be authorised, approved and made in accordance with legislation, proper practices, Council resolutions and the Council's Financial Regulations.**
3. The RFO shall provide regular financial information to councillors, including:
 - income and expenditure;
 - year-to-date figures;
 - bank balances;
 - comparison with the approved budget; and
 - actual or potential overspends.
4. The RFO shall provide year-end accounting information required for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
5. **The Council shall consider and approve its Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements within the statutory timetable.**

6. The Council shall maintain appropriate records supporting the accounts.
 7. Where the Council qualifies as a smaller authority, it shall comply with the relevant arrangements for the Certificate of Exemption and the Transparency Code.
-

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

1. The Council shall adopt and annually review Financial Regulations.
2. The Financial Regulations shall cover:
 - accounting records;
 - internal controls;
 - financial risk management;
 - internal audit;
 - authorisation of payments;
 - banking arrangements;
 - purchasing and procurement;
 - contracts;
 - assets;
 - reserves;
 - payroll;
 - insurance; and
 - inspection and publication of financial information.
3. **The Council shall comply with the Procurement Act 2023, Procurement Regulations 2024 and any subsequent procurement legislation applicable to the Council.**
4. The Council shall not artificially divide contracts in order to avoid procurement requirements.
5. The estimated value of a procurement shall be calculated in accordance with applicable procurement legislation and shall include VAT where the legislation requires this.

6. For procurements at or above the applicable statutory threshold, the Council shall follow the procedures required by the Procurement Act 2023 and associated regulations.
 7. For below-threshold procurements, the Council shall comply with the applicable below-threshold provisions of the Procurement Act 2023, together with its Financial Regulations.
 8. Where a below-threshold contract is a **notifiable below-threshold contract**, the Council shall comply with the applicable publication requirements, including publication on the Government's central digital platform where required.
 9. For ordinary small purchases below the statutory procurement thresholds, the Council shall follow its Financial Regulations and obtain quotations or tenders where those regulations require them.
 10. The Council shall seek value for money, fairness, transparency and proportionality when purchasing goods, works and services.
 11. Where competition is required, the Council shall normally:
 - prepare an appropriate specification;
 - identify the evaluation criteria;
 - obtain quotations or tenders in accordance with its Financial Regulations;
 - maintain an audit trail;
 - avoid conflicts of interest;
 - evaluate bids consistently against the published criteria; and
 - make the award by properly authorised Council decision.
 12. The Council is not required to accept the lowest quotation or tender where another option provides better value or otherwise meets the published evaluation criteria, provided the decision is lawful, properly documented and consistent with the procurement process.
 13. Councillors and staff shall not improperly influence suppliers or prospective suppliers.
 14. The Council shall maintain records of procurement decisions appropriate to the value and nature of the contract.
 15. The Financial Regulations shall be reviewed at least annually and whenever procurement legislation changes.
-

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

1. Employment matters shall be handled confidentially and in accordance with employment law and the Council's employment policies.
 2. The Clerk or most senior member of staff shall notify the Chair, or Vice-Chair where appropriate, of absence in accordance with the Council's employment procedures.
 3. The Chair or another councillor authorised by the Council may undertake staff appraisal and performance review.
 4. Formal decisions concerning employment shall be made by the Council or properly delegated body.
 5. Grievances and disciplinary matters shall be dealt with fairly, confidentially and in accordance with the Council's adopted procedures.
 6. Where an employment matter concerns the Chair or Vice-Chair, another appropriate councillor shall be nominated to handle the matter.
 7. Records relating to performance, capability, grievance or disciplinary matters shall be treated as confidential.
 8. Access to staff records shall be limited to those with legitimate management responsibilities and others where legally required.
-

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

1. **The Council shall comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and other applicable information-access legislation.**
2. The Council shall maintain and publish an appropriate publication scheme.
3. **Where the Council's gross annual income or expenditure, whichever is higher, does not exceed £25,000, it shall comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.**
4. The Council shall publish the information required by that Code, including where applicable:
 - expenditure above £100;
 - end-of-year accounts;
 - annual governance statement;

- internal audit report;
 - councillor responsibilities;
 - public land and building assets; and
 - agendas, minutes and meeting papers.
5. Information shall be published subject to lawful redaction and data protection requirements.
-

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

1. **The Council shall comply with applicable UK data protection legislation, including the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.**
 2. The Council shall maintain appropriate policies and procedures for handling personal data.
 3. The Council shall respond to individuals exercising their statutory data protection rights.
 4. The Council shall maintain a procedure for identifying, reporting and managing personal data breaches.
 5. Personal data breaches shall be recorded appropriately and reported to the Information Commissioner's Office where legally required.
 6. The Council shall maintain an up-to-date privacy notice.
 7. The Council shall maintain appropriate records of processing activities where required.
 8. Personal data shall only be accessed, processed or disclosed where there is a lawful basis.
 9. Councillors shall not use Council-held personal data for private, political campaigning or other unauthorised purposes.
 10. Council email accounts and electronic systems shall be used in accordance with the Council's information-security requirements.
-

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS AND MEDIA

1. Requests from the press or other media for an official statement shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's communications/media policy.

2. The Chair may provide an official statement on behalf of the Council where authorised.
 3. Individual councillors may express their own personal views but should make clear when they are not speaking on behalf of the Council.
 4. The Clerk may provide factual administrative information within their delegated authority.
 5. No councillor or employee shall disclose confidential or legally protected information to the media.
 6. Council publicity shall comply with applicable law and the **Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity**.
-

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

1. **A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by resolution.**
 2. Subject to the resolution, any two councillors may sign the deed on behalf of the Council and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures, where required by law.
 3. The Council's seal, if one exists, shall only be used when authorised by resolution.
-

24. COMMUNICATION WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

1. Invitations to meetings may be sent to the relevant district and county councillors representing the parish.
 2. Copies of relevant correspondence to the district or county council may be provided to the appropriate ward councillor where the Council considers this useful.
 3. This Standing Order does not prevent the Council from communicating directly with any public authority.
-

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

1. Unless expressly authorised by the Council, no councillor shall:

- inspect land or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect on behalf of the Council; or
 - issue orders, instructions or directions to employees, contractors or other persons on behalf of the Council.
 - 2. Councillors shall not commit the Council to expenditure or contractual obligations unless properly authorised.
 - 3. Councillors shall not represent themselves as having authority to speak or act for the Council unless authorised.
-

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

1. **A Standing Order containing a mandatory statutory or legal requirement shall not be suspended.**
 2. Other Standing Orders may be suspended by resolution for a particular item of business where lawful and appropriate.
 3. A motion to add to, vary or revoke a Standing Order shall be proposed in accordance with the requirements for written notice of motions.
 4. The Proper Officer shall provide councillors with a copy of the current Standing Orders on request.
 5. The Council shall review these Standing Orders at least annually and whenever there is a significant change in legislation or recognised good practice.
 6. The Chair's decision on the application of these Standing Orders at a meeting shall be final, subject to the Council's legal obligations and the normal democratic procedures of the meeting.
-

ADOPTION

These Standing Orders were adopted by resolution of Wiswell Parish Council at a meeting held on: 9th September 2026