

CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

COUNCILLORS (CLLRS)

The Parish Council shall consist of nine Cllr members, remaining in post for a four year term.

With nine or fewer nominations for election to the Council, those persons will duly become Cllrs. Where there are fewer than nine Cllrs, the Council has the right to co-opt a village resident onto the Council at the beginning of the four year term or during the parish term, should a Cllr resign or leave the Council. The Parish Clerk must inform the Borough Council who will advertise the vacancy for six weeks. Should there be ten or more applicants, a public vote is required.

Should there be fewer than ten applicants, the elected Cllrs shall nominate their preference through a confidential, single transferrable vote, handed to the Clerk, either at the May public Council meeting at the beginning of the Parish term or at an agreed public Council meeting, having duly considered the candidates. Where two or more 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. A tie in vote may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chairman of the Council meeting.

To stand for the office of Parish Councillor (Cllr), the person must:

- Be an elector of the Parish or;
- have occupied during the whole of the previous 12 months, either as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the Parish or;
- hold their principal or only place of work in the Parish.

MEETINGS

The statutory Annual Parish Meeting shall (a) be held on the first Thursday following the day in May of elections of Cllrs to the Council for their four year term of office and (b) in the subsequent three years on the second Thursday in May. The three other statutory meetings shall be held on the second Thursday in the months of January, March and September and seven additional meetings shall be held on the second Thursday in the months of February, April, June, July, October, November and December. The Council shall not meet in August.

The Parish Council shall also convene extraordinary planning meetings outside of the monthly Council meetings where an application requires a decision that falls within the 21 days statutory limit but before the date of the next monthly Parish meeting.

QUORUM

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 three. If a meeting is or becomes inquorate, no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

AGENDA

The agenda for each public Parish Council meeting must be published on paper and displayed on the Parish Council noticeboard a clear three working days before the day of the meeting. An online version of the agenda shall also be uploaded onto the Parish Council page of the village website www.castleacre.info within the same timeframe.

CONTRACTS

Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £1,000 but not exceeding £10,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works, the Clerk shall give at least three weeks public notice of such an intention in the same manner as public notices of the Council are given. The Clerk will endeavour to obtain three quotations for any contractual work and, where possible, will request local businesses to submit a quote, though they shall not be favoured, if their quotes are more expensive.

CHAIR OF MEETING

The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting and may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chairman in relation to the conduct of the meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one) and if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Cllr, as chosen by the Cllrs present at the meeting, shall preside at the meeting.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

At the first Council meeting after the election of Cllrs for their four year term of office, members shall:

- (a) Elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside until their successor is elected at the following May meeting of the Council.
- (b) Election of Officers. Nominate Cllrs with responsibility for: Finance; Health and Safety; Trees and Allotments. Nominate Cllrs for liaison with: Highways; Castle Acre Playing Field Association, Primary School; village hall.

At each Council meeting the order of business shall be:

- (a) To receive apologies.
- (b) To declare an interest in any agenda item.
- (c) To approve the draft Minutes of the previous monthly Parish Council meeting as a correct record and by signature of the person presiding. To be nominated and seconded by two Cllrs.
- (d) To report on any Health & Safety matters.
- (e) To consider actions required from previous meetings.
- (f) To consider matters requested by Councillors.
- (g) To consider & vote on any planning application before the Council.
- (h) To review any written or e-mail correspondence received.
- (i) To consider verbal or written reports from village organisations, Highways and the Borough Council.
- (j) To consider and authorise expenditure accounts, being only those stated on the monthly agenda. Payment cheques to be signed by two Cllrs, so authorised by the receiving bank.
- (k) To call for attending members of the public to speak.

VOTING

At each Council meeting the procedure for Cllrs' voting shall be:

1. No motion may be moved at a meeting unless the matter is on the agenda.
2. For any resolution so nominated by a Cllr and seconded by another, to express their vote for or against the motion or to abstain by a show of hand. The Clerk shall record the names of members who voted on any resolution in the Minutes of the meeting.
3. Any vote not made by one or more Cllrs for or against a motion should be recorded as abstaining, including that of the Chairman.
4. The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may give a casting vote, even though s/he gave no original vote on planning applications.
5. A Cllr with voting rights, who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest, as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting, is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his/her right to participate and vote on that matter.

INTERESTS

All Cllrs agree to be bound by the model Code of Conduct issued to them and duly signed. The Clerk shall maintain a record of any notice given by any member or any officer of the Council of a pecuniary interest in a contract, and this record shall be open for inspection by any member.

PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS

All past Agendas, Minutes and financial records kept by the Council shall be open for inspection by any member of the Council and by the public, both through their display on the village noticeboard and on the Parish Council page of castleacre.info

ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS TO MEETINGS

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. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

PROPER OFFICER

The Proper Officer shall be either the Clerk or other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

The Proper Officer shall:

- Convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council. occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office.
- Facilitate inspection of the Minute Book by local government electors.
- Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.
- Hold acceptance of office forms from Councillors.
- Hold a copy of every Councillor's register of interest.

- Assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures.
- Liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one).
- Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
- Assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council, in paper and electronic form, subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).
- Arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations.
- Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in the Council's Minutes

RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Council shall appoint an appropriate staff member to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer. The officer shall ensure that:

- All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, shall provide each Cllr with: a) a statement summarising the Council's income and expenditure for the last quarter and the year to date for information; b) the accounting statements for the year to 31 March in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- Present a completed draft annual governance and accountability return to all Cllrs at least 14 days prior to its anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to internal and external audit (if required) including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June each year

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:

- Keeping accounting records and systems of internal controls.
- The assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council.
- The work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor which shall be required at least annually.
- The inspection and copying by Cllrs and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments.

Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.

STAFF GRIEVANCE MATTERS

Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's Clerk shall contact the Chairman of Council or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman of the Council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of Council. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council, this shall be communicated to another member of the Council, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council. Any persons

responsible for all or part of the management of the Clerk shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to his/her performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.

RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his/her personal data. The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach. The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken. The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date. The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS UPDATED AND APPROVED AT ITS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2020