

ASTON LE WALLS PARISH COUNCIL - STANDING ORDERS

1] **QUORUM** No business is to be transacted at any meeting of the Parish Council unless at least one-third of the full number of members are present, the quorum however cannot be less than three. The full Parish Council is seven members.

2] **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Any Chairman shall, if elected, serve for a maximum of three consecutive years (if no other nominations are forthcoming within that period). After the third consecutive year, he/she shall not stand for re-election. If there are no other nominations put forward from within the Parish Council, any elected Vice Chairman within that period shall agree to be nominated as Chairman and will be duly elected. However, if no other Councillor is willing to stand as Chairman, then the retiring Chairman can be nominated to stand again (if willing), and can be duly elected even if three consecutive years have passed.

3] **FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS**

Meetings shall be held at monthly intervals of usually on the second Thursday of the month, unless the Village Hall is not available in which case a flexible period of 4 / 6 weeks can be used. There are normally ten meetings during the year.

4] **APOLOGIES** Apologies for non attendance should be notified to the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting and will be recorded in the Minutes. If Councillors fail to attend any meetings for a consecutive period of six months, an approved absence must be agreed by the Parish Council, otherwise a Councillor becomes disqualified and ceases to hold office.

5] **AGENDA** Items for inclusion on the Agenda should be requested via the Parish Clerk no less than seven days before a meeting.

No new agenda items shall be discussed after 9pm – meetings shall generally finish ***before / or by 9.30pm at the latest.***

Any specific items included on an Agenda but not discussed before the watershed of 9 pm will be carried forward to the next meeting.

No financial decisions can be made under Any Other Business, any expenditure items must appear as individual agenda items.

6] **FINANCES** No decision can be made on an item of expenditure unless the item has been placed on the agenda, discussed and voted on. A vote will be taken by a show of hands and the numbers recorded in the Minutes.

Any two of the approved signatories will be used on cheques raised on Parish Council bank account, Parish Clerk is authorized to make the necessary transfer of funds to cover cheques.

No Councillor shall authorise expenditure without the authority of the Parish Council.

All Invoices for approved expenditure should be addressed to ASTON LE WALLS PARISH COUNCIL to conform with Audit regulations.

All VAT is recorded and an annual reimbursement claim is submitted to HMRC.

The Parish Council will carry out an independent check of accounts at regular intervals and appoint an Internal Auditor in line with the Audit and Accounts Regulations.

7] **MINUTES** Any member of the public has access to **MINUTES** at any time by appointment with the Clerk. Draft minutes are published and are then subject to approval by the Council and signed by the Chairman. Copies of approved Minutes can be obtained on request at an agreed charge. Rules of Confidentiality should be observed by Councillors when a confidential item has been discussed and members of the public have been excluded. Confidential Minutes will be approved but not circulated, and held in the back of the Minute book appropriately marked

8] **CODE OF CONDUCT**

All Councillors will sign acceptance of and abide by The Code of Conduct of Aston le Walls Parish Council as required by the Localism Act 2011.

9] **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Each Councillor is required to sign a Declaration of Interest form as a requirement of the Local Government Act 2000 forming part of the Code of Conduct.

If a Councillor has any pecuniary interest direct or indirect in a contract or proposed contract or other matter, and is present at a meeting of the Council at which the contract is being considered, he must disclose the fact at the beginning of the meeting (after Apologies) having already seen the Agenda. The Councillor may not take part in the discussion or vote on any question with respect to that item or topic and will sit in the public gallery during the discussion. Each Declaration of Pecuniary or other Interest will be recorded by the Clerk in a Log Book specifically for the purpose.

In some cases it may be advisable to withdraw from the room or the meeting altogether, this will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

10] **CORRESPONDENCE**

Current correspondence will be dealt with at each meeting, and matters requiring immediate or special attention will be read aloud by the Parish Clerk as appropriate. The Clerk will endeavour to notify Councillors electronically of all correspondence received on behalf of the Council and if Councillors wish to read reports or correspondence, they can do so but should ensure that documents are returned to the Clerk by the next meeting for Parish Council files.

11] **PUBLIC TIME**

Members of the Public in attendance at monthly meetings are allowed to speak after the main formal business items on the agenda have been dealt with. Thereafter a member of the public should request permission to speak through the Chairman and this will be allowed at the Chairman's discretion. This should hopefully avoid random interruptions during Councillors' discussion of agenda items but allow constructive opinions, comments and information to be shared at an appropriate time during the meetings. *(unless at Chairman's discretion it is appropriate to close the business, invite public participation and then re-open the business meeting)*. Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is permitted without the Council's prior written consent. (The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014).

If a member of the public raises an issue of general concern, it will be placed on a future agenda for discussion. Agendas for meetings will be posted on the main village Noticeboard to indicate the business which will be discussed at any meeting. It may sometimes be necessary to call an **OPEN MEETING** to discuss a contentious issue and allow members of the public to speak and express their views at greater length.

12] QUOTATIONS AND TENDERS

When seeking quotations and tenders for work to be carried out for Parish Council, notices will be placed on the Village Noticeboard or suitably qualified individuals invited to submit quotations to clear specifications of work as directed by the Parish Council.

Careful consideration will be given to any quotation and acceptance will be based on a best deal/value for money basis. (This may not necessarily be the lowest price).

All Contractors undertaking work for the Parish Council must carry £5 million public liability insurance as required under Local Government Section 136 Agreement and undertake a risk assessment prior to commencement of work.

13] DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES

The Parish Council will agree to delegate areas of responsibility to share the workload and to enlist relevant expertise of members for specific areas. Each delegate should report all information at the meetings and should only carry out specified duties as laid down and agreed by the Parish Council.

Aston le Walls Parish Council operates a non confrontation policy of agreement by negotiation. In the event of any dispute Councillors should report back to the next meeting and advice will be sought from relevant bodies in order to resolve the situation.

14] COMMUNICATION

The Parish Council operates an open door policy and encourages residents to attend meetings and hear the business of the Council being discussed. Any other general information, including relevant websites, is posted on the website and main village noticeboard as appropriate.

PARISH COUNCIL Website – the ALWPC website will only be used for publishing the formal/statutory documentation of the Parish Council as required by the Transparency Code and will include that of other public bodies (e.g. Police, Public Utilities etc.) which are deemed relevant and informative to the residents of the parish and will include links to the SNC/NCC websites. Any other information can be sourced from individual websites and any village events will be referred to the ALW Village website or the monthly village newsletter.

15] FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

Freedom of Information requests by members of the public will be dealt with appropriately and correct procedures followed.