

# **GORING ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL**

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## **Standing Orders**

**and**

## **Regulations**

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## **Goring on Thames Parish Council standing orders**

Generally, these standing orders do not duplicate the content of legislation. Where it has been necessary to include or make reference to statutes or regulations the effects of the statutes or regulations are shown in **bold type**.

References in these standing orders to the conduct of meetings of council or committee(s) apply also, where the context allows, to advisory committees and sub-committees.

### **Meetings**

- 1 Meetings of the council shall be held in each year on such dates and times and at such place as the council may direct.

### **Statutory meetings**

- 2
  - a) In an election year, the statutory annual meeting shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors take office and
  - b) In a year which is not an election year, the statutory annual meeting shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.
- 3 At least three other statutory meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times and at such place as the council may direct.

### **Additional meetings and Cancellation of Meetings**

- 4
  - a) Additional council meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times and at such place as the council may direct.
  - b) To delegate the power to cancel meetings to the clerk in consultation with the chairman of the relevant meeting.

### **Annual parish meeting**

- 5 The chairman of the council will convene a parish meeting between the beginning of March and the end of April each year on such date and such time and at such place as the council may direct.

### **Chairman of the meeting**

- 6 The person presiding at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the chairman in relation to the conduct of the meeting.

### **Proper officer**

- 7 Where a statute, regulation or order confers a function or duty on the proper officer of the council in the following cases, he shall be the clerk or nominated officer:

To receive declarations of acceptance of office.

To receive and record notices disclosing interests at meetings.

To receive and retain plans and documents.

To sign notices or other documents on behalf of the council.

To receive copies of bye-laws made by another local authority.

To certify copies of bye-laws made by the council.

To sign and issue the summons to attend meetings of the council.

To keep proper records for all council meetings.

## **Quorum of the council and committees**

- 8 The quorum is three or one-third of the total membership, whichever is the greater, but where more than one-third of the members are disqualified, at the same time the quorum is either three or one third of the qualified members whichever is the greater, until such time as the membership has been increased to not less than two thirds of the total.

## **Voting**

- 9 Members shall vote by show of hands.
- 10 If a member so requires, the clerk shall record the names of the members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it. Such a request must be made before moving on to the next business.
- 11 a) Subject to (b) and (c) below the chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote and, in any case of an equality of votes, may give a casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.
- b) If the person presiding at the annual meeting would have ceased to be a member of the council but for the statutory provisions which preserve the membership of the chairman and vice-chairman until the end of their term of office, he may not give an original vote in an election for chairman.
- c) The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for chairman.

## **Order of business**

- 12 At each annual meeting the first business shall be:
- a) To elect a chairman of the council
- b) To receive the chairman's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.
- c) To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.
- d) To elect a vice-chairman of the council.
- e) To appoint representatives to outside bodies.



- 13 a) At every meeting other than the annual meeting, the first business shall be to appoint a chairman if the chairman and vice-chairman be absent and to receive such declarations of acceptance of office (if any) and undertaking to observe the council's code of conduct as are required by law to be made or, if not then received, to decide when they shall be received.**
- b) Should the chairman or vice-chairman cease permanently to hold office with more than one scheduled meeting of council remaining before the next annual meeting then there should be at the next meeting an election for the vacated office.
- 14** In every year, the council shall review the pay and conditions of service of existing employees. Standing order 33 must be read in conjunction with this requirement.
- 15** After the first business has been completed, the order of business, unless the council otherwise decides on the ground of urgency, shall be as follows:
- a) To read and consider the minutes of the previous meeting(s); provided that if a copy has been circulated to each member not later than the day of issue of the summons to attend the meeting, the minutes may be taken as read.
- b) After consideration, to approve the signature of the minutes by the person presiding as a correct record.**
- c) To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.**
- d) To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- e) To receive such communications as the person presiding decides to lay before the council.
- f) To answer questions from councillors.
- g) To receive and consider reports and minutes of committees.
- h) To receive and consider motions or recommendations in the order in which they have been notified.
- i) To authorise the sealing of documents.
- j) If necessary, to authorise the signing of orders for payment.
- k) To note matters for subsequent discussion.
- 16** If a meeting continues for an uninterrupted period of two hours, the chairman may suspend the meeting temporarily at the completion of an item of business.

### **Urgent business**

- 17** a) To delegate the power to deal with urgent matters which could not go before the council or committee to the clerk in consultation with the council chairman or vice chairman.
- A motion to vary the order of business on the ground of urgency:
- b) May be proposed by the chairman or by any member and, if proposed by the chairman, may be put to the vote without being seconded, and
- c) Shall be put to the vote without discussion.

**Motions moved on notice**

- 18** Except as provided by these standing orders, no motion may be moved unless business to which it relates has been put on the agenda by the clerk or the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has delivered the notice to the clerk at least ten clear days, excluding the day of the meeting, before the date of the meeting at which it is to be moved.
- 19** The clerk shall date every motion when received by him and shall record it and make it available to inspection by any member of the council.
- 20** The clerk shall insert in the summons for every meeting all motions or recommendation properly given in the order in which they have been received unless the member giving a notice of motion has stated in writing that he intends to move at some later meeting or that he withdraws it.
- 21** If a motion or recommendation specified in the summons is not moved either by the member who gave notice of it or by any other member, it shall, unless postponed by the meeting, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
- 22** If the subject matter of a motion comes within the terms of reference of a committee of the council, it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to that committee or to such other committee as the council may determine for report; provided that the chairman, if he considers it to be a matter of urgency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.
- 23** Every motion or recommendation shall be relevant to some subject over which the council has power or duties and which affects its area.

**Motions moved without notice**

- 24** A motion dealing with any of the following matters may be moved without notice:
- a) To appoint a chairman of the meeting.
  - b) To correct the minutes.
  - c) To approve the minutes.
  - d) To alter the order of business.
  - e) To proceed to the next business.
  - f) To close or adjourn the debate.
  - g) To refer a matter to a committee.
  - h) To appoint a committee or any members thereof.
  - i) To adopt a report.
  - j) To authorise the sealing of a document.
  - k) To amend a motion.
  - l) To give leave to withdraw a motion or amendment.
  - m) To extend the time limit for speeches.
  - n) To exclude the press and public. (See standing order 47)
  - o) To silence or eject from the meeting a member named for misconduct. (see standing order 30)

- p) To give the consent of the council where such consent is required by these standing orders.
- q) To suspend any standing order temporarily. (see standing order 62)
- r) To adjourn the meeting.

### **Question**

- 25** Any question of which notice has not been given may only be raised during the public forum (if raised by a member of the public) or during the part of the meeting set aside for “matters for future discussion” (if raised by a member of the council or the committee).

### **Rules of debate**

- 26** No discussion of the minutes shall take place except upon their accuracy. A correction to the minutes shall be made by resolution.
- 27**
- a) A motion or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and, if not proposed by the chairman, seconded. Unless proper notice has already been given, a motion or amendment shall, if required by the chairman, be reduced to writing and handed to him before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.
  - b) A member when seconding a motion or amendment may, if he then declares his intention to do so, reserve his speech until a later period of the debate.
  - a) A member shall direct his speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a question of order.
  - b) No speech by a mover of a motion shall exceed five minutes and no other speech shall exceed three minutes, except by consent of the council.
  - e) An amendment shall not have the effect of negating the motion before the meeting.
  - f) If an amendment is carried, the motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
  - g) A further amendment shall not be moved until the meeting has disposed of every amendment previously moved.
  - h) The mover of a motion shall have a right to reply immediately before the motion is put to the vote. If an amendment is proposed, the mover of the amendment shall be entitled to reply immediately before the amendment is put to the vote. A member exercising a right of reply shall not introduce a new matter. After the right of reply has been exercised or waived, a vote shall be taken without further discussion

- i) A member, other than the mover of a motion, shall not, without leave of the meeting, speak more than once on any motion except to move an amendment or further amendment, or on an amendment, or on a point of order, or in personal explanation, or to move a closure.
  - j) A member may speak on a point of order or a personal explanation. A member speaking for these purposes shall be heard forthwith. A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by him that may have been misunderstood.
  - k) A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the consent of the meeting, which shall be signified without discussion.
  - l) When a motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except the following:
    - i) To amend the motion.
    - ii) To proceed to the next business.
    - iii) To adjourn the debate.
    - iv) That the vote now be taken.
    - v) That a member named be not further heard.
    - vi) That a member named leaves the meeting.
    - vii) That the motion be referred to a committee or to a later meeting.
    - viii) To exclude the public and press.
    - ix) To adjourn the meeting.
- 28** a) The ruling of the chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- b) Members shall address the chairman. If two or more members wish to speak, the chairman shall decide who to call upon.
- c) Whenever the chairman speaks during a debate, all other members shall be silent.

### **Closure**

- 29** At the end of any speech a member may, without comment, move “that the vote now be taken”, “that the debate be now adjourned” or “that the meeting do now adjourn”. If such motion is seconded, the chairman shall put the motion but, in the case of a motion “that the vote now be taken”, only if he is of the opinion that the matter before the meeting has been sufficiently debated. If the motion “that the vote now be taken” is carried, the chairman shall call upon the mover to exercise or waive his right of reply and the vote will be taken immediately 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.

## **Disorderly conduct**

- 30** a) All members must observe the code of conduct which was adopted by the council on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 , a copy of which is attached as appendix D to these standing orders and any subsequent amendment required to be observed by statute or regulation.
- b) No member shall at a meeting persistently disregard the ruling of the chairman, wilfully obstruct business, or behave irregularly, offensively, improperly or in such a manner as to bring the council into disrepute.
- c) If, in the opinion of the chairman, a member has broken the provisions of paragraph (b) of this standing order the chairman shall express that opinion to the meeting and thereafter any member may move either that the member named be no longer heard or that the member named must leave the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
- d) If a resolution approved under the provisions of paragraph (c) is not obeyed by the member named, the chairman may adjourn the meeting or take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce the resolution.

## **Reversal or amendment or appeal of a decision**

### **31**

- a) A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the council may be reversed or amended only after the elapse of six months provided for in sub-paragraph (c) of this order or by the passing of a special resolution, the written notice of which bears the names of at least one-third of the members of the council or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
- b) When a special resolution or any other motion moved under the provisions of paragraph (a) of this standing order has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months, unless the chairman decides otherwise.
- c) A person who is not a member of the council who is affected by the decision of a committee may appeal to the full council to have that decision reviewed and, if the council thinks fit, reversed or amended. The decision of the council on that appeal will be final.

## **Voting on appointments**

- 32 Where more than two persons have been nominated for any position to be filled by the council and of the votes given there is not an absolute majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the lowest number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken, and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person.

## **Discussions and motions affecting employees of the council**

- 33 If at a meeting there arises any question relating to the appointment, conduct, promotion, dismissal, salary or conditions of service of any person employed by the council, it shall not be considered until the meeting has decided whether the press and public shall be excluded. (See standing order 47)

## **Sealing of documents**

- 34 a) A document shall not be sealed on behalf of the council unless its sealing has been authorised by a resolution.
- b) Any two members of the council named in a resolution moved under the provision of paragraph (a) of this standing order may seal, on behalf of the council and in the presence of the clerk, any document required by law to be issued under seal.

## **Committees and sub-committees**

- 35 The council shall at its first and third annual meetings during its four year term of office appoint members to its standing committees (the constitution and terms of reference of which are contained in Appendix B to these standing orders) and may at any other time appoint such other committees as are necessary but, subject to any statutory provision in that behalf:
- a) Shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next annual meeting when the members are normally due to be appointed.
- b) May appoint a person other than members of the council to any committee.
- c) May subject to the provisions of standing order 31 at any time dissolve or alter the membership of committee.
- 36 The chairman of council shall be *ex-officio*, member of all Committees & working groups but attendance will be at his discretion. *The chairman cannot serve as Chair or vice chair of any committee.*
- 37 Every committee shall at its first meeting in any council year, before proceeding to any other business, elect a chairman, vice-chairman who shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the council.
- 38 The chairman of a committee or the chairman of the council may summon an additional meeting of that committee at any time. An additional meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than one half of the 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.
- 39 A committee may appoint a sub-committee for a purpose or purposes to be specified by the committee.
- 40 The chairman and vice-chairman of a committee shall be members of every sub-committee appointed by it unless they signify that they do not wish to serve.

- 41 Except where ordered by the council in the case of a committee, or by the council or by the appropriate committee in the case of a sub-committee, the quorum of a committee or sub-committee shall be three or one-third of the total membership, whichever is greater, but where more than one-third of the members are disqualified at the same time the quorum is either three or one-third of the qualified members whichever is greater, until such time as the membership has been increased to not less than two-thirds of the total. The ex-officio member does not count in calculating the numbers required to be quorum but can be counted to achieve a quorum for a meeting.
- 42 The standing orders on rules of debate (except those parts relating to speaking more than once) and the standing order on interests of members in contracts and other matters shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings.

### **Advisory committees**

- 43 a) The council may create advisory committees, whose name and number of members and the bodies to be invited to nominate members, shall be specified.
- b) The clerk shall inform the members of each advisory committee of the terms of reference of the committee.
- c) An advisory committee may make recommendations to the council.
- d) An advisory committee may consist wholly of persons who are not members of the council.

### **Voting in committees and sub-committees**

- 44 Members of committees and sub-committees entitled to vote, shall vote by show of hands.
- 45 Chairman of a committee or sub-committee shall in the case of an equality of votes have a second or casting vote.

### **Presence of non-members of committees at committee meetings**

- 46 A member who has proposed a motion, which has been referred to a committee of which he is not a member may explain his motion to the committee but shall not vote.

### **Admission of the public and press to meetings**

- 47 The public and press shall be admitted to all meetings of the council and its committees and sub-committees, which may, however, temporarily exclude the public and press by approving the following resolution:
- “That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw”
- 48 If a person’s advice or assistance is needed, he may be invited (by name) to remain after the meeting has resolved to exclude the public or press.
- 49 At all meetings of the council and committees, in addition to during discussion of the agenda item, the chairman may at his discretion and at a convenient time in the transaction of business, allow any members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business to be transacted at that meeting.
- 50 Each member of the public wishing to speak will normally be allowed to speak for not longer than three minutes. The chairman may, at his discretion, enable a response to be given immediately but otherwise each matter will be formally referred to a

committee or be placed on the agenda of a later meeting of council or responded to by the clerk or simply noted, so that there is no discussion at the meeting on a matter for which prior notice has not been given in the agenda.

- 51 The clerk shall afford to the press reasonable facilities for the taking of their reports of any proceedings at which they are entitled to be present<sup>52</sup> If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the chairman may, after warning, order that he be removed from the meeting and may adjourn the meeting for such period as is necessary to restore order.

### **Confidential business**

- 53 No member of the council or of any committee or sub-committee shall disclose to any person not a member of the council any business declared to be confidential by the council, the committee or the sub-committee as the case may be excluding the minute relating thereto.

### **Liaison with county and district councillors**

- 54 The agendas of all meetings, including invitations to attend, shall be sent to the county councillor for the appropriate county division and to the district councillor or councillors for the appropriate district ward.

### **Planning applications**

- 55 a) The clerk shall, as soon as it is received, record the following particulars of every planning application notified to the Council:
- i) the date on which it was received
  - ii) the name of the applicant
  - iii) the place to which it relates.
- b) The clerk shall refer every planning application received to the chairman of the Planning Committee or, in the chairman's absence, to the vice-chairman.

### **Financial matters**

- 56 All financial transactions shall be dealt with in accordance with the council's financial regulations (attached as Appendix A to these standing orders).

### **Procurement**

- 57 All procurements shall be dealt with in accordance with the council's procurement regulations (attached as Appendix C to these standing orders).

### **Whitehill burial ground**

- 58 Whitehill burial ground shall be managed in accordance with the council's burial ground regulations (attached as Appendix F to these standing orders).

### **Freedom of Goring**

- 59 A proposal to confer the Freedom of Goring shall be dealt with in accordance with Appendix G to these standing orders.



**Maladministration**

- 60 The council shall deal with complaints of maladministration allegedly committed by the council or by any officer or member.

**Code of communication with the news media and public**

- 61 A member may communicate with the media or public officially on behalf of the council only in accordance with the code of communication conduct attached as Appendix E to these standing orders.

**Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders**

- 62 Any or every part of the standing orders except those printed in **bold type** may be suspended temporarily by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.
- 63 A motion to add, vary or revoke a standing order permanently shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the council.

**Review of standing orders**

- 64 Standing orders shall be reviewed at least once during each term of the council.

**Standing orders to be given to members**

- 65 A copy of these standing orders, including the appendices, shall be given to each member by the clerk upon delivery to him of the member's declaration of acceptance of office. The clerk shall ensure that any subsequent change resulting from the review carried out under standing order 63 is also given to each member.

**Recording and Reporting of Procedures by the Media and General Public**

66

Audio and visual recordings of a meeting of the Council, Committees and other Council bodies by the general public, or the media, is permitted. It would be helpful if those wishing to record could contact the Council before the meeting so that we can ensure the necessary facilities are in place. The Chair of the meeting will advise the public that the meeting is being recorded. A request to record a meeting shall only be refused if the Chair of the meeting believes recording would disrupt the meeting. The purpose of these standing orders is to provide guidance for members of the press, or public, on the taking of photographs and/ or the audio / visual recording of any Council meeting which is held in public.

There are no restrictions on anyone at a council meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar social media provided that the Chair does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

**Limitations**

Although there is a statutory right to photograph and record Council meetings the proceedings of that meeting must not be disrupted by the use of media tools and must not inhibit community involvement in the proceedings.

**Audio and Visual Recording - Your Obligations**

Any member of the public, or of the media, wishing to photograph or record a meeting is asked to comply with the following:

- a) Any photography or audio / visual recording takes place from a fixed position in the meeting room approved by the Chair so as to reduce disruption to the proceedings;
- b) Use of flash photography or additional lighting is for a limited period only during the meeting at a point in the proceedings agreed in advance with the Chair;
- c) If the Chair feels that any photography, audio or visual recording is disrupting the meeting in any way, or any pre-meeting agreement has been breached, then the operator of the equipment will stop;
- d) If, during the meeting, a motion is passed to exclude the press and public, because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, then all rights to record the meeting are removed and the operator of the equipment will be required to stop recording and /or photography;
- e) If a meeting is adjourned by the Chair then the operator of the equipment should stop any recording or photography at the point at which the meeting is adjourned;
- f) Any request made by the Chair regarding respecting the public's right to privacy is complied with;
- g) People seated in the public seating area should not be photographed, filmed or recorded without the consent of the individuals concerned. Public notices will confirm that recording may take place and it is for the public to inform the council, or the person recording, if they object.
- h) Use must not be made of an image or recording if consent is refused by a member of the public featured in that recording or image;
- i) Photographs, audio, and visual recordings should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.

Notices will be displayed in the room advising the public that meetings can be recorded legally. The Chair will also make an announcement that the meeting will be photographed and /or recorded or filmed. The Council may, on occasion, audio record meetings for minuting purposes only. The relevant Chair will make an announcement to this effect

### **Audio and Visual Recording - Your Rights**

If, as a member of the public, you do not wish to be photographed, filmed or recorded please inform the Clerk in attendance at the meeting or the Chair of the meeting when notice is given that a request to photograph / record has been received.

### **Procedure Prior to the Meeting for those Wishing to Record or Photograph a Meeting**

It would be appreciated if requests to take photographs or to record meetings open to the public, either by members of the public or by the media, were, wherever possible, made to the Clerk for the meeting concerned before the meeting. Contact details are:

It would be helpful for the request to include the following information:

- a) Which meeting the request refers to;
- b) The name, organisation (if applicable) and contact details of the person making the request;
- c) What equipment it is intended will be used (to determine what facilities might be required);
- d) What the photographs, or audio / visual recording will be used for and / or where the information is to be published (this is helpful for the Chair to be able to inform the public).

Any equipment required for recording purposes should be set up before the meeting starts to avoid disturbance.

### **Social Media**

There are no restrictions placed on anyone at the meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar “social media” provided that the Chair does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

If the Chair feels the use of social media is disrupting the proceedings the Councillor, member of the public or media representative using social media may be required to stop.

If use continues the Chair will ask the person to leave the meeting. If the person refuses to leave then the Chair may adjourn the meeting or make other appropriate arrangements for the meeting to continue without disruption.



## Appendices

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## Appendix A

# Financial regulations



*Note: these financial regulations have been prepared as required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and in accordance with the recommendations of The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).*

### General

- A1 These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the council.
- A2 The responsible financial officer (RFO) under the policy direction of the Council shall be responsible for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs.
- A3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

### Annual estimates

- A4 Detailed estimates of income and expenditure on revenue services, and receipts and payments on capital account, shall be prepared each year by the RFO and circulated in draft form to all members for information.
- A5 The Council shall review the estimates in November and confirm not later than January in each year and shall recommend the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.
- A6 The annual capital and revenue budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

### Budgetary control

- A7 Expenditure on the revenue account may be incurred up to the amounts included in each approved budget by Council.
- A8 No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the appropriate revenue budget unless a virement has been approved by the Council. (A10)
- A9 The RFO shall provide the Council with a quarterly statement of income and expenditure to date under each heading of the approved annual revenue and capital budgets. This report should be available as soon as practicably possible after the end of each quarter.

- A10** The clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure. The clerk shall report the action to Council as soon as practicable.
- A11** Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- A12** No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving expenditure on capital account unless the council is satisfied that it is contained in the rolling capital programme and that the necessary capital funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained by the council.
- A13** All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

### **Accounting and audit**

- A14** All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.
- A15** The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual accounts of the council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them to and report thereon to the council.
- A16** The RFO shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with regulation 27 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011. Any member of the council shall, if the RFO requires, make available such documents of the council which relate to their accounting and other records as appear to the RFO to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall supply the RFO with such information and explanation as the RFO considers necessary for that purpose.

### **Banking arrangements and payment of accounts**

- A17** The council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO after approval by the council.
- A18** References in this appendix to "cheque" or "cheques" shall be interpreted to mean any form of payment permitted by law and approved by the council and references to the clerk shall be taken to include any assistant appointed for the time being.
- A19** Authorised cheque signatories shall be all councillors.
- A20** All payments shall be authorised by two councillors. Councillors signing cheques must initial the cheques stubs, initial the invoices and receive confirmation from RFO that he has checked the amounts to the budget.

- A21 A cheque shall not be signed by the payee.
- A22 Any payment in excess of budget provision shall be approved by the council before it is issued excluding the provisions of A10.
- A23 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO. Before certifying an invoice the RFO shall satisfy himself, that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved.

### **Payment of wages and salaries**

- A24 The payment of all salaries and wages shall be made by the RFO from the payroll account in accordance with the payroll records.
- A25 All time sheets shall be checked and approved by the RFO.

### **Loans and investments**

- A26 Changes to loans and investments shall be agreed by the Council at the earliest opportunity.
- A27 All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- A28 All borrowings shall be affected in the name of the council.
- A29 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

### **Income**

- A30 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- A31 The council shall review all fees and charges annually, following a report from the RFO.
- A32 Any bad debts shall be reported by the RFO to the council.
- A33 All receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers by the RFO as soon as practical.



A34 A reference to the related debt or otherwise, indicating the origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

A35 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.

### **Orders for work, goods and services**

A36 An official order or letter shall normally be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared for approval. Copies of orders issued shall be maintained.

A37 Orders shall be administered by the RFO.

### **Contracts**

A38 Procedures as to contracts are laid down in the council's procurement regulations.

### **Payments under contracts for building or other construction works**

A39 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO on receipt of authorised certificates from the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract works.

A40 Where a contract provides for payment by instalments, the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case when it is estimated that the total cost of works carried out under a contract, excluding fluctuation clauses, will exceed the contract sum by five per cent or more, a report shall be submitted to the appropriate committee.

### **Properties and estates**

A41 The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with the regulations of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

A42 No property shall be sold leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council or the relevant committee, save where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500.

### **Insurance**

A43 The RFO shall affect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.

A44 The RFO shall give prompt attention to all new risks, properties or vehicles which required to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurance.

A45 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances affected by the council and the property and risks covered by the insurances and carry out an annual review, including revaluation, as appropriate.

### **Review of financial regulations**

A46 These regulations shall be reviewed annually by Council.

**Appendix B**

# Constitution and terms of reference of committees



## **Constitution**

- B1 The following committees shall be the committees of the council:
- a) Planning Committee

## **Terms of reference**

- B2 There shall be delegated to the committees of the council the powers, duties and functions of the council as set out in the following clauses B4 to B8 inclusive. Any other matter will normally be submitted to the council as a recommendation for its decision.
- B3 No committee decision on expenditure shall cause the committee's budget to be exceeded without the prior approval of the council (clause A22 of the financial regulations refers).

## **Planning Committee**

- B4 To consider all planning applications referred to the council by SODC, the local planning authority except those made by Goring on Thames Parish Council.
- B5 To apply SODC's and national planning rules, regulations and guidance notes when considering planning applications.
- B6 To advise the clerk as to the comments to be sent to SODC on behalf of the council on all applications.
- B7 To nominate a member of the committee to address the appropriate local planning authority or Planning enquiry as required.
- B8 To advise the clerk on any enforcement action that appears to require consideration by a local planning authority.

## **Review of constitution and terms of reference**

- B9 The constitution and terms of reference shall be reviewed whenever the council's standing orders are reviewed.

# Procurement regulations



## Scope

- C1** These regulations govern the procurement of goods, services, capital assets and projects by the council and they are mandatory.

## Categories of procurement

- C2** The responsible financial officer (RFO) shall make any arrangements for the procurement of goods and services with an estimated value of less than £2,000 at his discretion, having due regard to the need, to ensuring value for money and provided that the expenditure falls within the relevant sum allocated in the budget. Where the expenditure exceeds the budgeted sum, the approval of the council must be obtained (clause A8 of the financial regulations refers).
- C3** The procurement of goods and services with an estimated value between £2,000 and £7,500 shall be made by the RFO after he has obtained three competitive quotations and the approval of Council.
- C4** Goods, services, capital assets or projects with a value over £7,500 shall be procured by the RFO by selective tender from at least three tenderers all of whom shall have satisfied Council as to their competence in the required field. A successful tender shall be approved by Council.
- C5** Deleted

## Basis of quotations and tenders

- C6** All prices submitted in quotations or tenders shall remain confidential to the council until a quotation or tender has been accepted.
- C7** The requirement to obtain a minimum of three quotations or tenders shall not apply:
- a) If the RFO is unable to identify three suitable firms.
  - b) The goods or services are of such a specialised or proprietary nature that competitive pricing would be inappropriate (e.g legal fees, architects etc).
  - c) If the procurement represents a variation of an existing order or contract.
- C8** Tenderers to be invited to tender selectively shall be chosen by a method to be approved by the Council. The method shall be appropriate to the expected level of expenditure and designed to ensure quality or opportunity for all tenderers, subject to satisfying the Council as to their competence.

## Submission of tenders for amounts exceeding £7,500

- C9** Tenders shall be submitted to the council's offices in a plain, sealed envelope clearly labelled "Tender for ....." no later than a date and time to be specified by the RFO in the invitation to tender.
- C10** The RFO shall keep the tenders unopened in his custody until a day and time to be specified by the RFO.
- C11** Two councillors nominated by Council shall be present when tenders are opened and they shall initial the opened tender documents and the details shall be recorded by the RFO.

- C12** The tenders shall be placed before Council at the next meeting following the opening of the tenders.
- C13** The lowest quotation or tender shall be accepted in all cases except where acceptance of another quotation or tender is specifically authorised by the council, which must be satisfied that the reasons for disregarding the lowest price are compelling.

### **Conditions of contract**

- C14** Contracts for assets or projects with an estimated value in excess of £7,500 shall include the following conditions:
- a) Goods, materials or services shall be to a good and workmanlike standard and comply with any specification included in the contract.
  - b) All contracts shall be subject to retention of the contract monies at such percentage and for such length time as the council shall determine prior to the issue of invitations to tender.
  - c) The Council shall determine whether the contractor shall be liable to pay to the council liquidated damages for any failure to complete the work by the completion date specified in the contract.
  - d) The council shall reserve the right to cancel the contract and recover from the contractor any loss thereby incurred if the contractor shall have offered or given or agreed to give, to any person, any gift, consideration or inducement or reward of any kind for doing or forbearing to do or for having done or forborne to do any action in relation to obtaining or executing the contract.
  - e) No variation to the contract will be valid unless put in writing and signed by the proper officer of the council.

### **Suspension of procurement regulations**

- C15** These regulations may be suspended in respect of a particular procurement using the same procedure as for the suspension of standing orders.

### **Review of procurement regulations**

- C16** These regulations shall be reviewed whenever the council's standing orders are reviewed.

# **Goring on Thames Parish Council Code of Conduct**



## **NALC template Code of Conduct for Parish Councils**

### **Introduction**

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Goring on Thames Parish Council ('the Council') has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its members and co-opted members whenever they conduct the business of the Council, including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council.

This Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this Code, a 'co-opted member' is a person who is not a member of the Council but who is either a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, or a member of, and represents the Council on any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Council, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

For the purposes of this Code, a 'meeting' is a meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.

For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council

## **Member obligations**

When a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations.

1. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
2. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
3. He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
4. He/she shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.
5. He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.

## ***Registration of interests***

6. Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by the Council, or the member's election or the co-opted member's appointment (where that is later), he/she shall register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Appendices A and B.
7. Upon the re-election of a member or the re-appointment of a co-opted member, he/she shall within 28 days re-register with the Monitoring Officer any interests in Appendices A and B.
8. A member shall register with the Monitoring Officer any change to interests or new interests in Appendices A and B within 28 days of becoming aware of it.

9. A member need only declare the existence but not the details of any interest which the Monitoring Officer agrees is a 'sensitive interest'. A sensitive interest is one which, if disclosed on a public register, could lead the member or a person connected with the member to be subject to violence or intimidation.

### ***Declaration of interests at meetings***

10. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. He/she only has to declare what his/her interest is if it is not already entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
11. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A which is a sensitive interest, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. If it is a sensitive interest which has not already been disclosed to the Monitoring Officer, the member shall disclose he/she has an interest but not the nature of it.
12. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix B, the member shall not vote on the matter. He/she may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.
13. A member only has to declare his/her interest in Appendix B if it is not already entered in his/her register of interests or he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it or if he/she speaks on the matter. If he/she holds an interest in Appendix B which is a sensitive interest not already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer, he/she shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.

14. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate (other than an interest in Appendix A), the member shall disclose the nature of the interest and not vote on the matter. He/she may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. If it is a 'sensitive interest' the member shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.

### **Dispensations**

15. On a written request made to the Council's proper officer, the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if he/she has an interest in Appendices A and B if the Council believes that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

The procedure for Dispensations is given below.



## Appendix A

Interests described in the table below.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made to the member during the 12 month period ending on the latest date referred to in paragraph 6 above for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a member, or towards his/her election expenses.
	This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the Council —
	(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
	(b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the Council. ‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the member’s knowledge)—
	(a) the landlord is the Council; and
	(b) the tenant is a body that the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—
	(a) that body (to the member’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and
	(b) either—
	(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
	(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

\*‘director’ includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\*‘securities’ means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Appendix B

An interest which relates to or is likely to affect:

- (i) any body of which the member is in a position of general control or management and to which he/she is appointed or nominated by the Council;
- (ii) any body—
  - (a) exercising functions of a public nature;
  - (b) directed to charitable purposes; or

one of **whose** principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which the **member** of the Council is a member or in a position of general control or management;

- (iii) any gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £50 which the member has received by virtue of his or her office.

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### Dealing with Dispensation requests at town and parish councils

The following is the guidance Goring on Thames Parish Council has received from the Monitoring Officer:

S.33 of the **Localism Act 2011**, in force on 1 July 2012, permits a parish council to grant a dispensation to a councillor or co-opted councillor to allow him/her to participate in a discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

1. The following sets out some guidance from the Monitoring Officers in Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) with extracts drawn from guidance from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
2. NALC has set out some guidance on dispensations in its Legal Topic Note (LTN 80) on *Members' conduct and the Registration and Disclosure of their Interests (England)* available to member councils from the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils.

#### Purpose and effect of a dispensation

3. A dispensation allows a councillor to take part in council business when they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
4. Section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 states that a dispensation may allow a councillor to:

- a. participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting(s) and/or
  - b. participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting(s).
5. If a dispensation is granted, the councillor may remain in the room where the meeting considering the business is taking place and if the dispensation allows, they may also vote.

#### Who can grant a dispensation?

6. A parish council can reserve decisions to grant a dispensation for its full council or it can delegate authority to a committee or to its clerk.
7. If the parish council decides to delegate the role to the clerk then it will need to make a formal resolution to this effect.

#### Circumstances in which a parish council can grant a dispensation

8. The following are the circumstances in which a dispensation can be granted:
- a. without the dispensation the number of persons unable to participate in the transaction of business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business;
  - b. without the dispensation the representation of different political groups would be affected so as to alter the likely outcome of any vote<sup>1</sup>;
  - c. the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area;
  - d. that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

#### Process for applying for a dispensation

9. A councillor should submit a written request for any such dispensation to the parish council's proper officer as soon as possible before the meeting at which they require the dispensation. They should explain their reasons for applying for a dispensation. The attached form is designed for this purpose.
10. Only the councillor can submit the request – they should not ask somebody else to do it on their behalf.

#### Procedures for granting a dispensation

11. The process for making requests for dispensations, the criteria to apply and the process that the council will follow when a councillor submits a request should be clearly set out and understood by members of the council.
12. Where the full council or a committee has responsibility for considering/granting dispensations, a request for a dispensation can be considered/granted at the meeting at which the dispensation is required. A councillor requesting a dispensation is not prevented from participating in the consideration of their request at a meeting, although they may wish to think about the circumstances of the request and can

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<sup>1</sup> Political substitution is unlikely to apply to the majority of parish councils.

absent themselves if they believe that such participation would damage public confidence in the conduct of the council's business.

**13.** In doing this, the parish council should keep in mind the requirement to clearly set out the nature of the business on the published agenda. Whilst having standing item to consider dispensations on the agenda might be useful, this would not set out which councillor had requested the dispensation or their reasons for doing so.

**14.** The parish council should therefore encourage councillors to submit requests for dispensations well in advance of a meeting. If the agenda has already been published it would be better for the council to consider a councillor's request at its next meeting after the councillor has fully set out their reasons for the dispensation request and which would allow appropriate notice to be included on the agenda.

#### **Period of the dispensation**

**15.** A dispensation, when granted, must specify the period for which it has effect, and the period specified may not exceed 4 years. It will often be appropriate for a dispensation to expire with the member's current term of office.

#### **Issues to consider before deciding to grant a dispensation**

**16.** In reaching a decision on whether to grant a dispensation the council or clerk should take into account:

- a. The nature of the councillor's pecuniary interest
- b. The need to maintain public confidence in the conduct of the council's business
- c. The possible outcome of the proposed vote
- d. The need for efficient and effective conduct of the council's business
- e. Any other relevant circumstances

**17.** The following are some examples that should be considered before deciding to grant a dispensation.

Is the nature of the councillor's interest such that allowing them to participate would damage public confidence in the conduct of the council's business?

**18.** For instance, it is unlikely that it would be appropriate to grant a dispensation to a councillor who has a disclosable pecuniary interest arising as a result of an effect on their personal financial position, for example through their employment.

**19.** The adverse public perception of the personal benefit to the councillor would probably outweigh any public interest in maintaining the political balance of the committee making the decision. This is especially true where a council has well-established processes for members on committees to be substituted by members from the same political party but political substitution is unlikely to apply to the majority of parish councils.

**Is the participation of the councillor in the business that the interest relates to justified by the member's particular role or expertise?**

**20. For instance, a councillor might have a contract with the authority and have particular expertise that the council would benefit from in making its decision.**

**21. Therefore it may be appropriate for that councillor to address the decision-making body before leaving the room whilst the debate and voting take place. This would mean that the body would have the benefit of the member's expertise before making a decision which would benefit it financially.**

**After the decision has been made**

**22. The decision must be recorded in writing and you should keep a record of the dispensation. If questions arise about a councillor's participation in the matter, confirmation of the dispensation is likely to be sought from the parish council.**

**Dispensation request form**

You should give full details below in support of your application for a dispensation. If you need help completing the form please contact the parish clerk.

<b>Your name</b>	
<b>The business for which you require a dispensation (refer to agenda item number)</b>	
<b>Details of your interest in that business (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</b>	
<b>Date of meeting or time period (up to 4 years<sup>2</sup>) for which you are seeking a dispensation</b>	
<b>Tick one of the following</b> <input type="checkbox"/> I require a dispensation to participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the business, or <input type="checkbox"/> I require a dispensation to participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on that business	
<b>Reason(s) for requiring a dispensation</b> <b>Tick one or more of the following boxes relating to paragraphs from S.33 of the Localism Act:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 33a) without the dispensation the number of persons unable to participate in the transaction of business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business; <input type="checkbox"/> 33b) without the dispensation the representation of different political groups would be affected so as to alter the likely outcome of any vote; <input type="checkbox"/> 33c) the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area; <input type="checkbox"/> 33e) that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation <b>Reason:</b>	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DECISION:**

Dispensation granted: YES / NO      Length of dispensation: .....

Date: .....      Minute Number: .....

Signed : ..... Clerk to the Council

2. A dispensation cannot extend beyond the your term of office

# Communicating on behalf of the council with the news media and general public



## Code of good practice for communicating with the news media

**E1** In the interests of democracy, accountability and openness, the council wishes to communicate actively with the public through the press and other news media. The policies and activities of the council are most likely to be reported accurately and constructively if the following guidelines are followed.

### Media communications initiated by the council

**E2** Any statement to the news media should normally be issued in writing by the clerk with the authority and in the name of the council.

**E3** The text should be agreed in advance in a formal meeting by the full council or by the committee to which responsibility for the matter that is the subject of the statement is delegated.

**E4** The committee or the full council may authorise its chairman or vice-chairman, or the clerk, to prepare and issue a statement on its behalf.

**E5** If circumstances prevent this authority from being granted in advance by the council or committee in a formal meeting, it may be granted by the chairman of the council or of the committee (including to himself if necessary) if he is satisfied that the statement proposed is consistent with the council's agreed position or point of view on the matter that is the subject of the proposed statement.

**E6** Unless it has been explicitly agreed otherwise, a person so authorised may also answer questions from the media arising from the statement, orally or in writing.

**E7** The person answering questions should make a timely, written record of the questions asked and answers given and make this record available to the clerk and council or committee as appropriate.

### Responding to enquiries initiated by the news media

**E8** There is no obligation on the Council to respond to any unsolicited enquiry from the news media and there may be circumstances in which silence is judged to be the most likely way to limit damage or avert controversy or adverse or premature media reporting.

**E9** If it is considered by the chairman of the council or, in his absence, the clerk to be in the interests of the council to respond to an enquiry initiated by the news media, the enquiry should be answered by reference to the agreed position or point of view or practices of the council.

**E10** If there is no agreed position, point of view or practice to rely on, and the enquiry concerns a matter within the responsibility of the council, the person receiving it should make a note of the enquiry, and the name and contact details of the publication, and ask to be allowed time for thought and consultation before responding with a considered answer.

- E11 The enquiry should be referred to the chairman of the council, or of the competent committee, who should decide whether an answer is to be given, in what terms and by whom.
- E12 If the enquiry is so urgent that there is no time for prior consultation and the chairman of the council or of the responsible committee or, in their absence, the clerk, regards it as being in the interests of the council to provide a response, the chairman or, in his absence, the clerk may do so on his own authority.
- E13 Where this authority is exercised, the person responding to the enquiry should make a timely, written record of the question(s) asked and the answer(s) given and make this record available to the clerk and council or committee as appropriate.

### **Personal statements by councillors**

- E14 Nothing in this code of good practice purports to prevent a councillor from making a personal statement to the news media provided that the councillor makes it clear that he is making the statement in a personal capacity and not as a representative of the council.
- E15 In deciding whether to make a personal statement, a councillor should consider whether doing so is likely to reflect favourably or unfavourably on the council or its work and no statement should be made by a councillor or the clerk that would be likely to bring the council into disrepute.

### **Definition of news media**

- E16 For the purposes of this code, “news media” and “publication” mean any printed or electronic newspaper or journal, or radio or television company or station, or internet site, which is not under the control of Goring parish council.

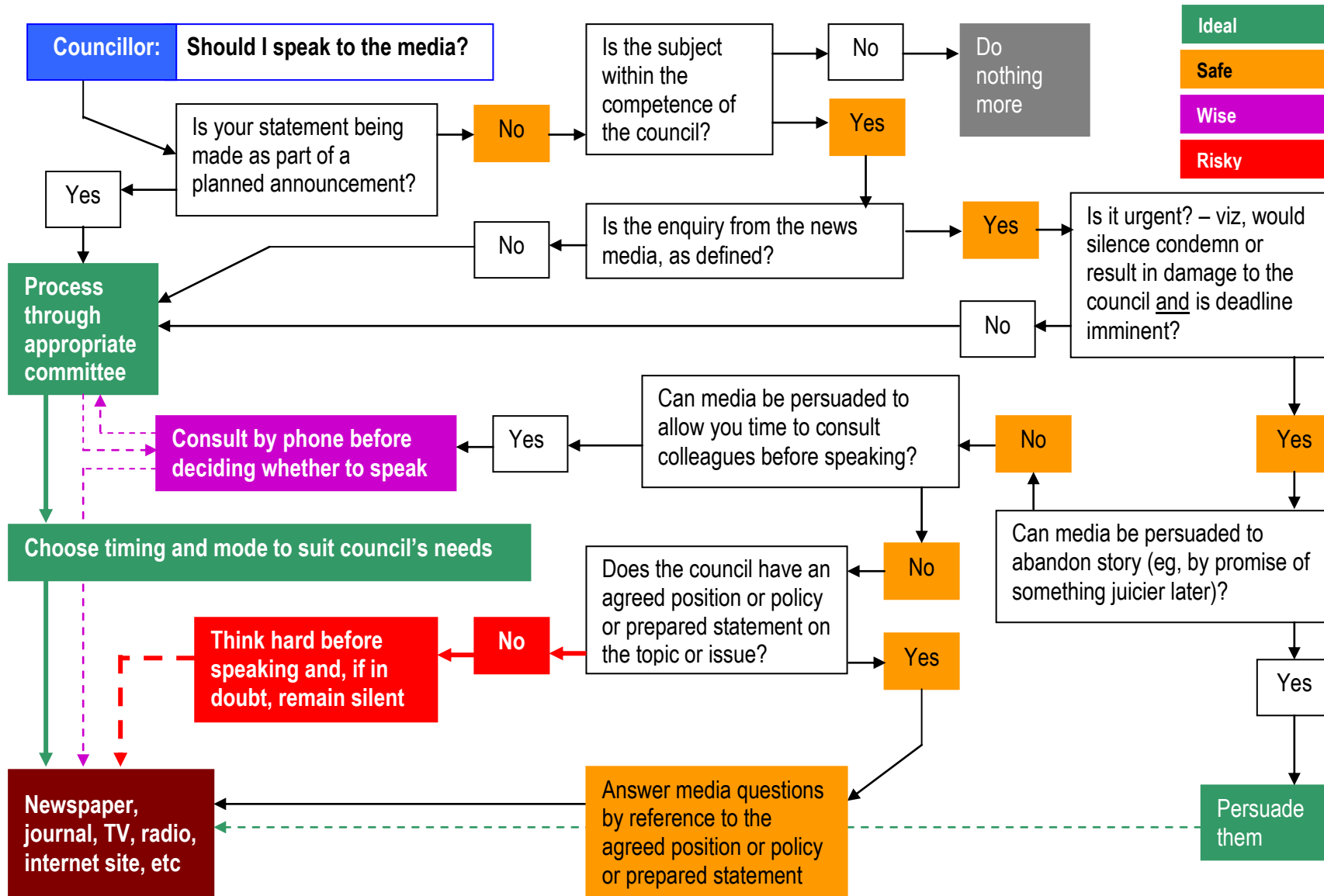
### **Decision tree**

- E17 A decision tree designed to illustrate how this code should work in practice complements this code.

### **Code of good practice for communicating on behalf of the council with the general public**

- E18 A shrewd and considerate councillor will bear in mind that he or she has been elected to serve on the council by the people of Goring and will benefit from providing the public with polite and factual advice and information.
- E19 In communicating with the public on matters that are covered by a committee on which you serve, refer to the appropriate information in the minutes of that committee.
- E20 If asked for information or a comment on a particular subject you are unsure about, refer the matter in the first instance to the clerk.
- E21 Nothing in this code of good practice purports to prevent a councillor from making a personal statement to a member of the public provided that the councillor makes it clear that he or she is making the statement in a personal capacity and not as a member or on behalf of the council.
- E22 No statement should be made by a councillor that would be likely to bring the council or its members into disrepute.
- E23 Any written communication with the public on behalf of the council must be issued by or with the knowledge and approval of the clerk.





MEDIA RELATIONS DECISION TREE

Media communication decision tree

# White Hill burial ground regulations



- F1 White Hill burial ground is owned and managed by Goring on Thames parish council and supervised by the clerk to the council. **The public has no right of way on to or across the burial ground.**
- F2 Areas are set aside for Church of England, Roman Catholic and other denomination burials. In each there are grave spaces for coffins and for cremated remains in caskets. There is no exclusive facility for scattering cremated remains: However ashes may be scattered on existing graves, with the consent of clerk and the family.
- F3 White Hill is a lawn burial ground. No planting of trees, shrubs, bulbs or other material of a temporary or permanent nature is permitted. This is to facilitate mowing and maintenance.
- F4 There are regulations regarding monuments and inscriptions.
- F5 These regulations apply to public behaviour in the burial ground.
- F6 Fees are charged in accordance with the council's schedule applicable at the time of the burial or erection of a monument. Current fee scales can be viewed on the internet, at: [www.goringparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.goringparishcouncil.gov.uk). Residency qualification for charges for both interment and memorials are based upon the last permanent address of the deceased and not the exclusive rights owner. A maximum of 5 years limit applies when moving out of the home address for residential care etc.

## Arranging burials and cremations

- F7 Arrangements are usually made by a funeral director, who is responsible for ensuring that the applicant is fully aware of the contents of these regulations including memorials and inscriptions before seeking permission to carry out an interment. Clients may make their own arrangements subject to the approval of the clerk to the council who shall be the first point of contact and is responsible for ensuring that the applicant is fully aware of these regulations. The council office is normally open on Mondays to Thursdays except on public holidays. Burials and interments of cremated remains can normally be arranged at three working days' notice.
- F8 Notice of interment must be given to the parish council at its office on the form provided by the council. The person making the arrangements must sign the notice. Information from this form is used in the burial register. The register is kept available for public inspection at the council's office. A plan showing the location of each grave space is also available for public inspection.
- F9 Estimates of fees can be given on the telephone. All fees must be paid at or before the time of burial. An official receipt will be issued on request.
- F10 A burial can take place only in a grave space for which an exclusive right of burial has been purchased. Burial rights are purchased at the time of the first burial, usually by a family member. The exclusive right is for 99 years from the date of purchase. The policy of the council is not to permit advance reservation or purchase of burial plots.
- F11 Second or subsequent burials in a grave space can only be carried out with the permission of the burial rights owner. Families must keep the council informed of the current ownership of the burial right if it is transferred or passes by inheritance.

- F12** Ownership of an exclusive right to burial conveys no other legal rights over the grave space, which remains the Council's property.
- F13** Coffin grave spaces generally have room for two coffin burials and a number of caskets of cremated remains. A triple depth grave can accommodate up to three coffin burials. Cremated remains grave spaces have room for two caskets.
- F14** Grave spaces for first burials will be selected by the council in the appropriate site of the burial ground and marked approximately two days before the burial. The policy of the council is normally to allocate the next space in line.

### **Preparing the grave**

- F15** Goring on Thames parish council will be responsible for the excavation of a coffin grave to the required depth and for backfilling immediately after the burial ceremony. The grave may be opened the day before the burial but must be left safely covered in accordance with current health and safety legislation. No work may be carried out whilst burials are taking place.
- F16** The first burial in a double depth coffin grave space shall be excavated to a depth of not less than 2000mm and the second burial to a depth of not less than 1300mm. When a grave is reopened for a second burial a minimum of 150mm of soil must be left between coffins. No brick graves or vaults are allowed.
- F17** A casket of cremated remains shall be buried so that its top is at least 300mm below ground level.
- F18** Only coffins made of perishable material will be used except with the prior approval of the council in special circumstances.
- F19** Surplus soil and chalk excavated from any grave will be disposed of by the parish council. At least 300mm of soil must be used to complete backfilling to ground level. A supply of topsoil is provided. The backfilling shall be well consolidated. A mound of soil not more than 300 mm high will be permitted to remain for a period of approximately twelve months following an interment. Then the grave space will be levelled and turfed or seeded. Thereafter the council will level and returf the grave space whenever it is considered necessary.
- F20** The area around the grave must be left clean and tidy.
- F21** The council reserves the right to provide an identification marker if no memorial is erected within two years from date of interment.

### **Burials**

- F22** Burials are permitted between 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on weekdays (excluding public holidays) and 9.30 am to 12.30 pm on Saturdays, unless the clerk to the council gives permission for some other time in a case of special emergency.
- F23** Arrangements for the conduct of any burial service are the responsibility of the relatives and friends of the deceased. The person making arrangements must inform the clerk of the name of a minister or other person conducting the service no later than twenty-four hours beforehand.
- F24** No extraordinary funeral procession will be permitted to enter the burial ground unless the council grants prior permission.

- F25** During a funeral a council officer may exclude from the burial ground anyone who is not a mourner or officially connected with that funeral, or who is behaving in an inappropriate manner.
- F26** Parts B & C of the registrar's certificate for disposal (green form) or the original certificate of cremation must be sent to the council's office within twenty-four hours of the burial. The minister or other person officiating at a burial shall complete a notice of burial having taken place and shall send it to the council's office within twenty-four hours.

## **Monuments**

- F27** The council's written agreement to size, design, materials and wording of a monument and inscription must be obtained before it is erected. Written agreement of the council is also needed for additional inscriptions. To obtain the council's agreement and application signed by the burial right owner or the funeral director must be made to the council's office. It shall include a detailed drawing and description and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee. A monument installed without the council's written agreement or that deviates from the approved design, is subject to immediate removal.

### **Monument specification** (see illustration below)

- F28** A monument must be dignified and made entirely of stone or wood and must be inscribed on the back in the bottom left hand corner with the grave number. Any cramps used in construction must be of non-ferrous metal. Loose stones, chippings and edgings are not permitted
- F29** For a coffin grave space only a head stone or cross is permitted. It must be positioned near the west (head) end of the grave space, in line with adjacent monuments, or where marked by the council. The maximum width permitted is 750mm and the monument shall be positioned centrally across the width of the grave space. No part of a monument may be more than 1200mm above ground level. The monument shall rise from a matching stone base, set level with the ground and not extending more than 450mm along the grave. The base may be pierced for a removable flower container.
- F30** For a cremated remains grave space, only a tablet set level with the ground or a "desk" tablet 75mm high will be permitted. This must not be greater in size than 450mm by 450mm.
- F31** No maker's name or other advertisement of any kind may be shown on any monument.
- F32** No work to a monument may be carried out on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, nor after sunset or whilst a burial is taking place. If any damage is done to council's land or premises, or another monument, the council will seek to recover the cost of repairs from the burial rights owner.
- F33** The burial rights owner must ensure that a monument complies with the British Standard BS8415, specification on monuments within burial grounds and memorial sites, and that it is installed and maintained in accordance with the NAMM code of practice on the installation, inspection, management and maintenance of memorials, published by the [National Association of Monumental Masons](#). The council does not maintain monuments. If a monument becomes dangerous the council will immediately make it safe. In case of general disrepair the council will

give notice to the burial rights owner, at his or her last notified address, that the monument must be repaired within three months. If the repair is not carried out the council may remove the monument and seek to recover the expenses thereof from the burial rights owner.

### **Planting and wreaths**

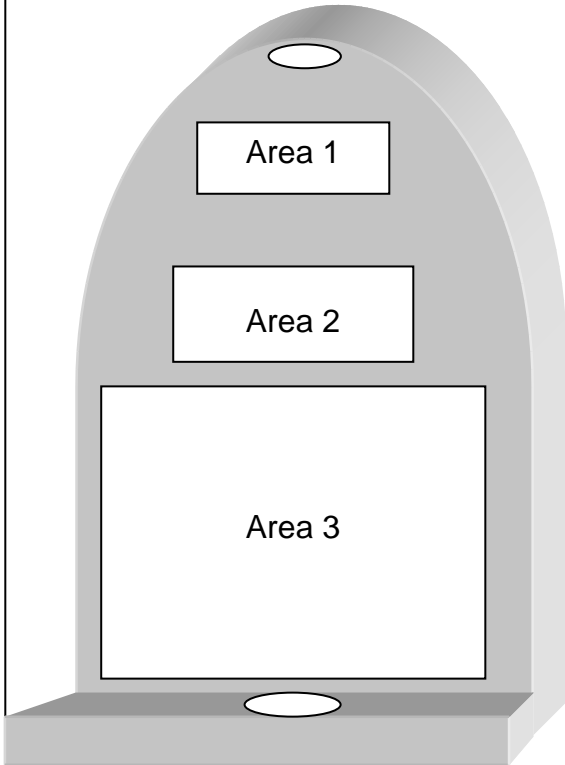
- F34** The council will remove any wreaths remaining on a grave more than three weeks following a burial.
- F35** After a grave has been levelled a holder to contain cut flowers will be permitted on a grave space if set level with the ground within 450mm of the eastern side of the base of any approved monument. The container must be removable.
- F36** No shrub may be planted on a grave. No glass case shall be placed on any grave. Artificial flowers or wreaths may be permitted on a grave. The council reserves the right to remove them if they become untidy.

### **Behaviour in the burial ground**

- F37** Public admission to the burial ground will be allowed daily between sunrise and sunset, only for the purpose of visiting graves. No activities inconsistent with this purpose are allowed.
- F38** All visitors must observe decorum in all respects. No one may sit, stand, climb upon or over or damage any monument, gravestone or tablet in the burial ground. No damage may be caused to shrubs, plants, trees, flowers or fences.
- F39** No one may prevent, interrupt or delay a funeral.
- F40** Dogs are permitted only if on a lead.
- F41** No car, bicycle or other vehicle shall be driven from the access road onto the verge or other grass areas of the burial ground without the consent of the council and, if consent is given, shall not remain there longer than is necessary.
- F42** All vehicles when not in use shall be parked so as not to obstruct other vehicles or pedestrians.
- F43** No music is permitted and the use of radio prohibited unless in connection with a funeral.

**Memorial specification**

**Area 1:** To contain a dignified simple and reverent sentence of factual content.  
For example: "In loving memory of" or "In remembrance of".



**Area 2:** To contain the name/s of the deceased in a larger font, together with relevant dates

**Area 3:** Area for personal tributes of a solemn and dignified nature.

Footnotes:

- (a) Requests for engravings/carvings at the head of the stone, nicknames etc, may be considered at the council's discretion.
- (b) Special consideration will be given for memorials for children under the age of eleven (11) years.
- (c) A single ceramic photograph not more than 6 x 4 inches may be considered at the Councils discretion above Area 1.

The above principles will also apply to cremation tablets.

**This stone shape is an example only.  
Some other shapes are permitted within the overall dimensions.**

**Extract from regulations:**

**F33** The burial rights owner must ensure that a monument complies with the British Standard BS8415, specification on monuments within burial grounds and memorial sites, and that it is installed and maintained in accordance with the NAMM code of practice on the installation, inspection, management and maintenance of memorials, published by the National Association of Monumental Masons. The council does not maintain monuments. If a monument becomes dangerous the council will immediately make it safe. In case of general disrepair the council will give notice to the burial rights owner, at his or her last notified address, that the monument must be repaired within three months. If the repair is not carried out the council may remove the monument and seek to recover the expenses thereof from the burial rights owner.

# Freedom of Goring



## **The Freedom**

- G1 The Freedom of Goring (“the Freedom”) is intended to honour a resident, past or present, living or dead, of the parish of Goring on Thames who has given outstanding service in respect of enhancing the quality and / or diversity of village life.

## **Nomination**

- G2 A nomination for the Freedom shall, in the first instance, be initiated by the clerk having received a nomination signed by not fewer than ten individuals listed in the current electoral roll for Goring.
- G3 A nomination shall be accompanied by a written summary setting out the reasons for the nomination.

## **Approval**

- G4 The nomination will be approved provided it has the support of not fewer than two thirds of the councillors, as indicated by either their signatures on the nomination or their votes cast at the meeting at which the nomination is decided or a combination of both.

## **Confidentiality**

- G5 The approval process must be conducted in the strictest confidence until such time as the nominee approved by the council has confirmed his or her willingness to accept the Freedom and the appropriate public announcement is made by the council.

## **Review**

- G6 The Freedom will be reviewed by the council at least once during its four year term to ensure that the award and the roll of its living holders remain appropriate to the conditions at that time.

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*All correspondence to be addressed to the clerk*