



Castlethorpe Parish Council Standing Orders

Contents

1. Disorderly conduct at meetings.....	4
2. Meetings generally	4
3. Committees and sub-committees	6
3. (a) Sports Ground Committee	7
3. (b) Village Hall Committee	8
3. (c) Finance Committee	9
4. Ordinary council meetings	10
5. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees	11
6. Previous resolutions	12
7. Voting on appointments	12
8. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to Proper Officer	12
9. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice	14
10. Handling confidential or sensitive information	15
11. Draft minutes.....	15
12. Code of conduct and dispensations	16
13. Code of conduct complaints	17
14. Proper Officer.....	17
15. Responsible Financial Officer	18
16. Accounts and accounting statements	19
17. Financial controls and procurement	20
18. Insurance	21
19. Handling staff matters.....	22
20. Requests for information	22
21. Relations with the press/media	23
22. Execution and sealing of legal deeds	23
23. Communicating with Borough councillors	23
24. Restrictions on councillor activities.....	23
25. Standing orders generally	24
26. Elections – Co-Option.....	24
27. Document and Email Retention Policy	25

Rules of debate at meetings

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.

If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- d An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- e If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- f An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- g A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- h If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chairman.
- i Subject to standing order 1(k) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- j One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- k A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- l The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- m Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

- n Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. in exercise of a right of reply.
- o During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- p A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- q When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r) above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

1. Disorderly conduct at meetings

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.













2. Meetings generally

■ Full Council meetings

■ Committee meetings

■ Sub-committee meetings

- a Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.
- b The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.
- c The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting.
- ■ d Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than **3** minutes unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- j Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
-   k Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is permitted as long as it is conducted as laid down in the latest adopted version of the Council's policy 'Reporting of Meetings'.
-   l The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
-  m Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if any).
-  n The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
-    o Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting.
-    p The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.
- q Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- r The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
 - i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors present and absent;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with

voting rights;

- iv. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- v. if there was a public participation session; and
- vi. the resolutions made.



s A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.



t No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.



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

v A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours except at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.

3. Committees and sub-committees

- a Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.
- b The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.
- c Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.
- d The council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 1 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;

- vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
- vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
- viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
- ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee.
- xiii. The chairman and vice-chairman of the council, ex-officio, shall be voting Members of every committee.

3. (a) Sports Ground Committee

Under the provision of the L.G.A 1972 S 101, the PC has agreed to delegate powers to a Sports Ground committee whose function will be;

- To manage the Sports Ground budget identified as such by the council. Expenditure above this limit must be referred back to the Parish Council for authorisation.
- To recommend fees and hire charges to the council
- To appoint, manage and review the handyman / groundsman
- To create a maintenance schedule for the handyman / groundsman and for the Chair to instruct him.
- To report to the Clerk any urgent maintenance to buildings and other property that might be required to be executed.
- To recommend any further maintenance, improvements and any other expenditures at the Sports Ground and its buildings to the Parish Council
- To report to the Clerk any problems with pitch preparations and the general ground maintenance according to the contractor's agreements with the PC.
- To ensure as far as is reasonable that the user groups follow their contractual obligations,
- To ensure as far as is reasonable that anyone misusing the sports ground or any equipment therein is warned regarding their behaviour and that they are reported to the Clerk and Parish Council, if necessary, for further action.

Appointment to the Sports Ground Committee of 4 councillors will take place at the Parish Council Annual Meeting and Councillors will serve an annual appointment. Councillors appointed or assisting the Sports Ground Committee who cannot attend a meeting will be entitled to appoint a representative who will have voting powers conferred.

The Sports Ground Committee will be a committee of Castlethorpe Parish Council with the option to co-opt other members representing users of the ground as necessary. It should meet quarterly and at any other time as necessary.

The public and Parish Councillors are permitted to attend all meetings and the meetings will be publicised according to normal council practice.

3. (b) Village Hall Committee

Under the provision of the L.G.A 1972 S 101, the Parish Council has agreed to delegate powers to a Village Hall Committee whose function will be;

- To manage the Village Hall budget identified as such by the Council. Expenditure above this limit must be referred back to the Parish Council for authorisation.
- To recommend fees and hire charges to the Parish Council
- To maintain, review and award on an annual basis a contract to fulfil the role of Village Hall caretaker
- To appoint a Booking Clerk
- To create a maintenance schedule for the caretaker and for the Chair to instruct him.
- To report to the Clerk any urgent maintenance to buildings and other property that might be required to be executed.
- To recommend any further maintenance, improvements and any other expenditures at the Village Hall to the Parish Council
- To ensure as far as is reasonable that the user groups follow their contractual obligations,
- To ensure as far as is reasonable that anyone misusing the Village Hall or any equipment therein is warned regarding their behaviour and that they are reported to the Clerk and Parish Council, if necessary, for further action.

Duties of the Bookings Clerk

The Bookings Clerk will keep the Village Hall diary and will accept bookings on behalf of the Parish Council noting it in the diary. The Bookings Clerk will issue a booking form to the user which the user will then submit to the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer to the Parish Council together with a deposit. The Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer will issue an invoice for the full cost of hire as soon as possible following the event.

A copy of the booking diary plan will be passed to the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer monthly prior to the Parish Council meeting in order that she/he is able to cross reference the invoicing.

A copy of the booking diary will be sent monthly to the caretaker.

Where there are organisations using the Village Hall frequently, normally more than once a month, the Clerk may collect fees monthly in arrears.

The role of the Booking Clerk may be undertaken by another approved person should this be necessary. An expenses allowance may be paid to the Booking Clerk as negotiated.

All using organisations must also have their own insurance including public liability cover of £5m (or other such sum as advised by the Parish Council) and certificates must be displayed on internal notice boards.

Appointment to the Village Hall Committee of 3 councillors will take place at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and Councillors will serve an annual appointment. Councillors appointed to the Village Hall Committee who cannot attend a meeting will be entitled to appoint a representative who will have voting powers conferred.

The Village Hall Committee may co-opt up to 3 other voting members representing regular Village Hall user groups. All other regular Village Hall user groups will be entitled to appoint a non-voting member of the Committee. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be parish councillors and will be elected at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. The Committee should meet quarterly and at any other time as necessary.

The public and Parish Councillors are permitted to attend all meetings and the Agenda and Minutes of meetings will be publicised according to normal council practice.

3. (c) Finance Committee

Under the provision of the L.G.A 1972 S 101, the PC has agreed to delegate powers to a Finance committee whose function will be;

- to assist the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and advise on financial matters pertaining to and on behalf of the Parish Council
- to carry out a quarterly audit on the banking and payment schedules provided by the Clerk to verify the income and expenditure.
- To prepare a draft budget for decision by council
- To authorise urgent expenditure
- to determine and, if necessary, devise the format and substance of reports
- to assist the RFO in an internal audit procedure to support the annual external audit
- to investigate other sources of funding and grants and to perform all necessary preliminary work as may be necessary to enable an application to be laid before the Parish Council.

Appointment to the Sports Ground Committee of 4 councillors will take place at the Parish Council Annual Meeting and Councillors will serve an annual appointment.

All Councillors will be informed of any Finance Committee meeting and are free to attend the meeting. Those who attend have the right to vote at that meeting.

The public and Parish Councillors are permitted to attend all meetings and the meetings will be publicised according to normal council practice.

4. Ordinary council meetings

- a In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
- b In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.
- c If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 7pm.
- d In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.

Ordinary meetings of the council shall normally be held at 7.30pm at the Village Hall on the first Monday that is not a Bank Holiday of each month.

- e The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council.
- f The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.
- g The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.
- h In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- i In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- j Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:
 - i. In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of

- the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
- ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
 - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4 above;
 - ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - x. Review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
 - xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - xii. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - xiii. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;
 - xiv. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - xv. Review of the council's complaints procedure;
 - xvi. Review of the council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998;
 - xvii. Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press/media; and
 - xviii. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council.

5. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees

- a The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.
- b If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.
- c The chairman of a committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two members of the committee, any two members of the committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee.

6. Previous resolutions

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 8 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 6(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

7. Voting on appointments

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

8. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to Proper Officer

- a) A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
- b) No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least four clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c) The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 8(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d) If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 8(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least four clear days before the meeting.

- e) If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
 - f) Subject to standing order 8(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
 - g) Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.
-
- a) A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
 - b) No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least four clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
 - c) The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 8(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
 - d) If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 8(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least four clear days before the meeting.
 - e) If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
 - f) Subject to standing order 8(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
 - g) Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

9. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
- i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
 - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
 - xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
 - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - xvii. to close a meeting.

10. Handling confidential or sensitive information

- a The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- b Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

11. Draft minutes

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 9(a)(i) above.
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

12. Code of conduct and dispensations

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- b Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting to the public gallery when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from the meeting to the public gallery when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- d Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer as soon as possible and at least one clear day before the meeting.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 12(d) and (f) above, dispensations requests shall be considered by the Proper Officer before the meeting.
- h A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 12(e) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:
 - i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or
 - ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or
 - iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

13. Code of conduct complaints

- a Upon notification by the Borough that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 10 above, report this to the council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 13(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(d) below.
- c The council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- d Upon notification by the Borough Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

14. Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda or, where the councillor has indicated willingness, at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors a summons, by email, confirming the time, place and the agenda provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.
 - ii. give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee

provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them;

- iii. subject to standing order 8 above, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 4 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iv. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;
- v. facilitate inspection of the Minutes by local government electors;
- vi. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;
- vii. retain "Acceptance of Office" forms from councillors;
- viii. retain a copy of every councillor's "Register of Interests";
- ix. assist with responding to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the council's policies and procedures relating to the same;
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;
- xiv. refer a planning application received by the council to the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the council;
- xv. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme;
- xvi. In the absence of the Clerk that any three Councillors may nominate a deputy to fill in where required to include the Clerk's emergency powers.

15. Responsible Financial Officer

- a The Clerk shall be the Responsible Financial Officer. The council shall appoint an appropriate person to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.
- b The Clerk has powers to spend up to **£250** in any one month without reference to the Council.

- c That the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) be given authority to authorise expenditure in an emergency when it is not possible to wait either for the next council meeting or for an extraordinary Finance Committee meeting. In such cases the RFO shall consult with at least two councillors one of whom should be the Chair or Vice Chair or the Chair of the Finance Committee and gain their support for such expenditure

16. Accounts and accounting statements

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide'.
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
 - i. the council's receipts and payments for each quarter;
 - ii. the council's aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported

and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the council's receipts and payments for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March. A completed draft annual return shall be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The annual return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

17. Financial controls and procurement

- a The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
- i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 17(c) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where a contract has an estimated value of less than £2,000.
- b Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c Financial regulations shall confirm that a proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £2,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 17(d) below.
- d Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in any manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

- e Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the council must comply with EU procurement rules.
- g The Responsible Financial Officer shall be permitted to maintain internet banking at a designated bank for the purposes of checking balances, transferring of money from low interest yielding current accounts to a higher interest yielding account and for payment of creditors via BACS system. Orders for the payment of money shall be authorised by resolution of the Council and signed by two authorised Members of the Council, who should counter-sign the payment schedule. Invoices must be available, at the time of signing, to Members signing cheques or viewing internet BACS payments who should confirm the validity and amount of payment prior to signing. Cheques and/or payment schedule are to be signed at meetings at which the payment is approved.
- h Where the exact payment amount is unknown, it is permitted to approve a 'maximum' amount on the Payments Schedule, and then the cheque or BACS payment (up to the maximum) can be signed later when the details are available.
- i Should an urgent payment be necessary, such as for emergency repairs, the Finance Committee shall have delegated authority to approve such payments which will be reported on the payment schedule of the following General Meeting.
- j The Responsible Financial Officer is authorised the use of a dedicated savings account (on the basis of the imprest system) with the sole purpose of being able to settle any and all minor & incidental expenses & to allow for the most cost effective method of obtaining goods/services. Withdrawals from account to be listed as with any other expenses, on a monthly schedule to be approved and countersigned in full council by any two signatories. Balance in account to be maintained monthly back to a level to be decided and approved at every annual meeting. Account to be initially opened at £500.00. Card/s for savings account to be held by the Responsible Financial Officer and backup by the Chair of the Finance Committee.

18. Insurance

The Council shall maintain insurance cover for the risks it considers appropriate but shall, as a minimum cover, include for Public liability, Employers Liability (including for volunteers), Personal Accident, Legal Expenses, Officials Indemnity, Libel & Slander and Fidelity Guarantee.

19. Handling staff matters

- a) A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of council is subject to standing order 10 above.
- b) Subject to the council's policy regarding absences from work, the council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman or, if he is not available, the vice-chairman of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the council at its next meeting.
- c) The chairman or in his absence, the vice-chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by the council.
- d) Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the council's most senior employee shall contact the chairman or in his absence, the vice-chairman in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the council.
- e) Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the chairman or vice-chairman, this shall be communicated to another member of the council which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the council.
- f) Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.
- g) The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.
- h) Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders (f) and (g) above if so justified.
- i) Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders (f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Clerk and the Chairman of the Council.

20. Requests for information

- a) Requests for information held by the council shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

- b Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the chairman. The council shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

21. Relations with the press/media

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

22. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing orders 14(b)(xii) and (xvii) above.

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b Subject to standing order 21(a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

23. Communicating with Borough councillors

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the Borough representing the area of the council.
- b Unless the council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the Borough Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the council.
- c Ward councillors may be invited to speak at the discretion of the chairman.

24. Restrictions on councillor activities

- a. Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor(s) shall issue orders, instructions or directions.

25. Standing orders generally

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 8 above.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

26. Elections – Co-option

- a Under the Local Government Act 1972 (Section 87(2)) Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 that stand to cover the election by co-option of Parish Councillors, it is accepted that Castlethorpe Parish Council adopt the following process
 - 1) Notice to be posted stating a vacancy has occurred to be filled via co-option and inviting interested parties to complete an application form giving reasons why he or she would like to be co-opted onto the Council.
 - 2) Applications need to be in by specified date to be determined but to fall under the 60 days allowance for election of Councillor as governed by LGA above.
 - 3) At the next Parish Council meeting (which can be an general or extraordinary meeting), the Clerk offers all applications to the Parish Council.
 - 4) The PC must then decide to either :
 - (a) co-opt directly where the Parish Council will co-opt directly via vote (show of hands) by Councillors in public at next called meeting (which can be an general or extraordinary meeting).
 - (b) invite applicants to appear at the next PC meeting for an interview where all applicants are invited for an interview with the Parish Council at the next called meeting (which can be an general or extraordinary meeting), then a public vote by councillors via show of hands is taken.

If (b) is decided upon by the Parish Council then all applicants are invited to speak to the council prior to any voting must be provided with a prepared interview form as it is imperative that all applicants are treated alike in order that the arrangements are seen as fair. Applicants under such arrangements should be discouraged from any personal lobbying. Applicants should be afforded 3 minutes to speak.

Once the PC have decided on their preferred route:

- a) Notice of the election should be given in the agenda for the meeting of the Parish Council.
 - b) When the item is reached, the Chairman should call for the nominations, which should be duly proposed and seconded.
 - c) When all the nominations have been received a vote should be taken. It is usual for the candidate's names to be put in alphabetical order. This is done on a show of hands.
 - d) After the vote has been taken, the Chairman should declare the candidate who received the highest number of votes duly elected.
- b) The person elected must make a declaration of acceptance of office before, or at, the first meeting of the Parish Council following his election in the presence of a member of the Parish Council or the Proper Officer of the Parish Council. This declaration must be within 28 days of the successful election of the person to the Parish Council. The declaration is then retained in the parish records.

27. Document and Email Retention Policy

- a) All Legal Documents such as Deeds and Agreements will be stored in safekeeping by a Third Party such as a bank or solicitor. They will normally be held indefinitely but, should space become an issue, then the Clerk will invite the Council to resolve to dispose of them. In any case, this will not be less than 7 years after their expiry date. For purposes of clarity, licence and rental agreements for users of the village hall and sports ground do not fall in this category.
- b) All other written documents including *inter alia* Minutes of Meetings, Annual Accounts and tax records will be retained by the Clerk either at his office or in a storage facility for a minimum of 7 years.
- c) All electronic records including, where applicable, those in (b) above and substantive emails will be maintained indefinitely. In this context, 'substantive' means when an email has meaningful content and not just a simple response. Any email agreement for the Clerk to take action should be confirmed at, and recorded in the Minutes of, the next Parish Council Meeting. Reliance should not be made on an email exchange. Copies of electronic records will be held both by the Clerk and by a third

party supplier such as Google. Should space become a problem, then the Clerk may delete such records but not before the later of 10 years and 7 years after the expiry of any legal agreement to which they refer.

- d Confidential records will be maintained in a secure manner unless they cease to be confidential. Staff records will be maintained indefinitely by the Clerk and, in the case of employment records of the Clerk, by the Chair with the Chair passing such records to his successor.