

**Extraordinary Meeting of the Council, held virtually  
on Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 20:00**

**Attendees:**           **Jim Donahue (Chair) (JD)**  
                              **Diana Smith (DS)**  
                              **Hanna Ferguson (HF)**  
                              **Carrie Leadbeater-Hart (CLH)**  
                              **Jon Steward (JS)**  
                              **Katherine Higley (KH)**

**Public Attendees:**   **2 Residents**

- 1   **Apologies for absence and read Mission Statement**
- 2   **Declaration of Interests by Councillors on any items on the Agenda.**  
      Cllr Smith stated that she was a member of TAPAG.
- 3   **Public Forum** - an opportunity for members of the public to express their points. No issues were raised.
- 4   **Meeting Objective:** For the Council to review Standing Orders and processes. It was agreed that if all items on the agenda are not able to be covered in this meeting as follow up meeting would be scheduled to cover the remaining agenda items.
- 5.0 **Discussion of Standing Orders and key processes**  
      A discussion took place regarding the order of items to be placed on Parish Meeting Agendas. The Standing Orders were reviewed, and it was confirmed that items should be placed in order of receipt by the Parish Clerk. This is to ensure that no agenda items have any priority over others. It was agreed that the standing items on the agenda would remain, unless standing order 10.6 is voted on and agreed.
- 5.1 **Process for raising a motion**  
      A Cllr supports the Standing Orders as they are, but feels they should be more rigorously applied.  
      If a motion, it needs to be seconded. Must ensure that no decisions are not made unless a motion is pre-raised.  
      A Cllr was happy with Standing Orders, no changes.  
      Suggested that the person who has proposed motion should be the one who presents it at the meeting. Noted that items s and t are repeated in the standing orders, and should be replaced by u and v. **ACTION**  
      If a counsellor wishes the Council to vote on an agenda item, an clear and concise overview must be sent to the Clerk a clear 8 days prior to the scheduled meeting. This allows time for counsellors to review the items that require votes prior to the meeting. The vote should then be on the actual wording that has been sent to the Clerk. If any changes to the wording are required, these can be requested and carried if the council votes to agree. **ACTION** To request updated wording in the Standing Orders.

The number of 'Yes' and 'No' votes should be recorded in remote meetings. **ACTION** to update Standing Orders.

## 5.2 Meeting debate and decision-making process, including debate outside of Meetings:

It was stated that it was important to be able to debate outside of meetings. Raised concern that if debate should only happen in meetings then she didn't realistically feel that this could all be achieved in a 2hour monthly meeting.

A Cllr would prefer to have face to face meetings to debate complex issues. Would support extra separate meetings without the Councils Standing Agenda Items.

It was raised that one Cllr felt that the Council need to make better underpinned decisions, and open robust debate is essential to support this.

It was raised that for larger subjects should be in separate specialist meetings to allow for proper debate. ie TAPAG and Pavilion Should have separate regular meetings.

It was raised that he felt that no announcements should be made by any Council members on public platforms unless they are reviewed and agreed by the council prior to publication. Including the Chairman's Report.

It was raised that debating via email should be replied to.

It was raised that the Council should only take on work that they are responsible for and not stray beyond the Parish Council remit.

It was also raised that best value does not necessarily mean cheapest, and that the Council should be more questioning prior to awarding tenders.

It was raised that equality should be ensured for everyone in the Council, including the Chair and Vice-Chair. She stated that she finds debate outside of meetings helpful – but that decisions should only be made in meetings.

It was stated that emails debate needs to be managed carefully as the quantity can become overwhelming. Don't copy to all.

A Cllr would be in favour of holding extra meetings to discuss face to face complex issues.

It was stated that a Cllr didn't feel it would be sufficient to go round the table once when debating complex issues. If the debate carries on more than twice round the table, the Council should vote whether to carry on the debate at an extraordinary meeting. **ACTION**

Standing Order 24b was brought to the attention of the meeting: Debates should be held in Extraordinary Meetings.

It was suggested that no decisions to be made outside of meetings. Questioned if debate happens outside of meetings, how does the public know what we've debated.

A Cllr suggested to have working groups to carry out debates and bring back to the Council. Would like all debate to occur in meetings and not via email.

Due to time constraints – the Council voted on skipping to Agenda Item 6.0. Other Agenda Items are to be discussed at a further meeting.

## 5.3 Public participation in meetings

5.4 Council communications inside and outside meetings and via email.

#### 6.0 Working Group and Committee rules

It was stated that Committees are ongoing whereas Working Groups are designed to be temporary. Committees have delegated responsibilities. Committees are public meetings and must produce agendas and minutes. Working Groups do not.

It was suggested to have an Extraordinary Meeting to review all Council Recognised Groups to ensure terms of reference are understood and clear and that they are approved by the Council – with clear parameters.

It was suggested there was a need to have an Extraordinary Meeting to further discuss all groups. Need to look at Standing Orders ie feels that they should proscribe how/who/when someone can join committees/working groups.

It was suggested that there was a need to be more flexible mindset – what fits Whitchurch best?

It was raised that Terms of Reference all need to be reviewed. What is the output that the Council wants from each group. Need to have formal updates from each group.

A Cllr supported diversity of views within working groups/Committees sex/age/wealth/difference of views. Supports an Extraordinary Meeting to review, understand and realign all Council Recognised Groups.

It was suggested that Terms of Reference should go on the Website.

It was suggested Standing Orders should go on the Website.

It was suggested there should be a sub committee for working groups/committees

A Cllr suggested they would like to have a review of Working Groups and Sub Committees, but that the Council must be cognisant of the fact that we are relying on volunteers.

It was suggested the Council should review other councils best practice.

It was suggested there is a need to review inconsistencies within Working Groups.

**ACTION** – An Extraordinary Meeting Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 8pm

6.1 Review of current WG and Committees

6.2 Review if public participation should be allowed

6.3 Lead Councillor responsibilities

7.0 Proposed changes to standing Orders from recent NALC updates to permit virtual meetings. – Cllr Smith

8.0 Additional Topics

8.1 Charing meetings

8.2 Role of Clerk

8.3 Parish Council External Communications

9.0 Other

10 Meeting Close