

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 1500 HOURS

Present: Councillors K Cursons
F Kharawala
S Jones
M Freeman
S Owen

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
S Sandiford (Head of Democratic & Central Services)

Members of the Public: 0

01/SO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

02/SO APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor M Freeman be appointed Chair of the Standing Orders Task and Finish Group. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor M Freeman Chair of the Standing Orders Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Freeman took the Chair.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor K Cursons be appointed Vice Chair of the Standing Orders Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor K Cursons Vice Chair of the Standing Orders Task and Finish Group.

03/SO DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting. No declarations were made.

04/SO QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

05/SO MODEL STANDING ORDERS

The Task and Finish Group had received copies of the Town Council's existing Standing Orders and the 2018 Model document issued by the National Association of Local Councils in advance of the meeting. The Town Council document had been based on the NALC Model for some years, with the addition of several areas specific to the Town Council. The document was reviewed annually, sometimes only requiring any updates recommended by NALC but sometimes requiring a more comprehensive review by the Council, usually done by a Task and Finish group or sub committee.

Councillors were reminded that the NALC Model document contained many requirements set out in legislation and that these were shown in bold type. Anything not in bold type could be amended to suit the Council.

The purpose of reviewing the NALC Model at the first meeting was to allow time for any questions to be submitted to NALC for clarification and consideration at a later meeting. Two main points were raised:

- (i) Standing Order 3(e) referred to the right of the public to "answer" questions and clarification had already been sought from NALC that this was correct, rather than "ask" questions. However, this seemed to be in discord with Standing Order 3(h) about responses to questions.
- (ii) Although section 5 of the Model document was entitled "Ordinary Council meetings", the content was in fact about the business of the Annual Council Meeting, thus a whole section on ordinary Council meetings was missing.

A question was raised about public consultation on any amendments to Standing Orders. It was noted that Standing Orders were published on the website and that any proposed amendments would be published as agenda papers and therefore subject to public scrutiny and question.

A point was raised about the official language of Standing Orders and how this might not be easy to interpret by all. It was noted that there was a brief summary document regarding public attendance at meetings available on the Meetings page of the website and that this had also been adapted in 2020 for remote meeting guidance for the public.

It was proposed that as a next stage, the Standing Orders of several other larger councils could be reviewed to see if/how they differed from the NALC Model and whether they contained any points which the Town Council might also wish to consider including. In particular, any references to different political groups within a council might be relevant.

It was agreed that officers would undertake an initial review of several other sets of Standing Orders and for the group to meet again in January.

The meeting closed at 1622 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2020.

Chair

11 JANUARY 2021