

**Sandwich Town Council
Standing Orders Working Group Meeting**



Agenda

Chair: Cllr Black
Councillors: Breen, Csuka, Gray and Pennington

Members are hereby cordially invited to attend a Standing Orders Working Group Meeting in the Council Chamber, Guildhall on **Thursday 29th June 2023 at 10:30** to transact the business on the agenda below.

Date: **23rd June 2023**
Gill Gray: Interim Town Clerk

1	Apologies for absence received:	
2	Declarations of interest: To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests from Members in respect of business to be transacted on the agenda.	
3	Minutes of the SO Working Group To receive and approve the minutes as an accurate record of the SO Working Group meeting held on 22nd June 2023 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes not covered elsewhere in this Agenda: Decision required	Attach 1
4	Public Participation: A 15-minute session is set aside for members of the public to make representations at the meeting in respect of the business on the agenda. Individual representations should not exceed 3 minutes. (Written notice of the desire to exercise the right to speak, together with the topic to be addressed, must be given to the Interim Town Clerk prior to 4pm on the Monday preceding the meeting).	
5	Standing Orders Members to continue to work on the draft Standing Orders.	
6	Date of next SO Working Group Meeting: TBC	

Draft Minutes of the Standing Orders Working Party meeting held on 22nd June 2023

Present:

1. Present

In Attendance:

Cllr Ian Black (Chair) IB

Cllr Peter Breen PB

Cllr Emmet Csuka EC

Cllr Nicholas Gray NC

Cllr Martin Pennington MP

Ms. Christina Glynn (CG) was present to video the proceedings, and also contributed to the discussions.

No other members of the public attended

2. Apologies for Absence. None.

3. Public Participation. None

4. Minutes:

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 15/6 were *accepted* as a correct record.

5. Open Discussion

The main focus was on the Public Participation policy aspects of the SO

5.1 NG reminded the WP that there was an existing policy on public participation dating for 2022. After discussion the WP *agreed* this should be replaced as a stand-alone policy, and a new policy, consistent with all the other changes proposed by the WP, should be incorporated into the SO document.

5.2 The discussion covered any notification, which might be required of the public for this participation policy.

1. The meeting *agreed* that the Council should know who wanted to speak, to allow the Clerk and the Chair of the meeting to know:
 - a. How many wished to speak,
 - b. To establish a running order for the meeting,
 - c. And if many wished to speak on the same subject, to organise a number of representative speakers from those who wished to speak
2. There might be a need to prioritise speakers, e.g.

- a. Residents,
 - b. Matters which the council had direct control over,
 - c. Other matters relevant to the council's business,
 - d. Other matters of wider relevance e.g. action on climate generally
3. If the above were accepted as important for the effective working of public participation, then it would be necessary to have some form of notification from the public.
 4. It was suggested the cut-off generally would be the close of work on the last working day before the meeting. This would allow the Meeting's Clerk to gather the information, and consult with the Meeting's Chair to address points 5.2.1 and 2 above.
 5. The meeting should be given a summary by the Clerk of the number of requests received and any changes determined by the Clerk and Chair as in 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 4 above.
 6. A very late application could be accepted by the Meeting's Chair, at that person's sole discretion.

5.3 MP suggested STC should also explore other ways to engage with the public. Perhaps a regular "surgery" approach, with, say, some councillors being available on a Saturday on a regular basis for less formal public involvement. This was endorsed by others.

5.4 Whatever approach was adopted, the WP *agreed* that STC had to keep better records of participation and follow up, including:

1. The Chair of the meeting responding to participants by the end of the meeting, whether the Council should seek more information, or asking a councillor and/or officer to progress the matter
2. Reporting back on actions taken as per 5.4.1 above, and any closure
3. A clear record of progress

5.5 It must be made clear to the public what the policy was, timescales, and why prior notification would generally be required.

5.6 The WP were concerned about the lack of physical access to Meetings by people with mobility issues. This required long term solutions

5.7 The WP *agreed* the current seating layout of the council chamber (where some councillors had their backs to the public) was inappropriate> NG reminded the WP that in Spring 2022 a new, more open, outward looking seating plan had been adopted. He could see no reason why the old layout had been reinstated: the WP *agreed* the revised layout should be explored, and probably re-instated.

5.8 Closely related to 5.6 and 7 above, there was a need to examine remote access to the council via electronic links. The WP *agreed* to contact Cllr Mallet on progress of live streaming etc.

5.9 The WP *agreed* that a normal time limit of 5 minutes was more appropriate than the current 3 minutes. However, speakers should be strongly encouraged to supply a hard copy version of their key points to the Meeting. This would aid minuting, and allocating responsibility for actions.

5.10 The WP *agreed* clause 5.1.7 should be relocated to the "Code of Conduct". 5.1.9 should be deleted.

5.11 The current wording of section 6 is confusing. It merges an "agenda item" with a "motion".

5.12 The whole layout of section 6 did not follow the typical flow of any meeting. The WP *agreed* the clauses in this section should follow the outline sequence of:

1. Preparation for a meeting and agenda setting
2. Actions during a meeting
3. Conclusion of the meeting and resulting actions

5.13 PB who is compiling the master document for the SO proposals explained the limitations of the "track changes" software. To mix wording changes with alteration of the sequencing would result in major difficulties. It was therefore *agreed* that PB would continue with the current track changes approach until a final version became available when the changes would be accepted. Thereafter a new document would be created with changed sequencing.

5.14 The meeting concluded that the WP was now 2/3 through the document. It was hoped that a "final" version could be put to STC for the July meeting.

5.15 IB thanked all the participants, including CG for their input.

6. Next steps

6.1 the Town Clerk would be invited to the meeting of 6th July for consultation on the practicality and ease of application of the WP's proposals

6.2 IB and PB would endeavour to write a guide for councillors on the proposed changes and the reasoning behind them for issue with SO draft for the July 2023 STC meeting.