STAVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Policy 011

MINUTES POLICY

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Part 1

PREPARATION OF MINUTES

Introduction

The minutes of a council and its committee meeting are a public record of the deliberation and decisions of the council and great care should be taken in their format and production. The minutes can be produced in court and other judicial processes as evidence of decisions of the council, and they form part of the Council archives which must be preserved.

The right to record, film and broadcast meetings of the Council and its Committees is established under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014. This is in addition to the rights of press and public to attend such meetings. Staverton Parish Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its decision making.

For the purpose of this policy the term 'record' means any form of audio, visual or electronic recording. Such recording is permitted under the lawful direction of the Council meeting.

It shall be the policy of the above Council that:

1 **Audio recording of Parish Council Meetings**

The Council will audio record all meetings and upload the recording to the internet via a link on our website. Instructions on how to access the recording will be published on the Parish Council website

2 Minute taking of Parish Council meetings

The clerk will normally draw up draft minutes of each meeting of the Council and their Committees.

3 Content

The minutes will be:

(a) as brief as is consistent with accuracy;

(b) precise and concise;

(c) self-contained (i.e. complete in themselves and understandable Without reference to other documents);

(d) decisive (so that there is no doubt about the decision made);

Each minute should contain a heading clearly indicating what the Minute is about, a narrative or text, as appropriate that briefly summarises what took place, and the decision. For routine items, for example, planning applications, a narrative will not be necessary.

4 Style

(a) Minutes should be produced with clear headings containing the status of the meeting, the place and date along with the time the meeting starts and ends and any adjournments.

(b) Minutes will start with an alphabetical list of the Councillors present at the meeting.

(c) Minutes will be numbered consecutively for ease of reference as is consistent with the relevant agenda.

(d) The narrative should be in the past tense (known as 'reported speech') and should include reference to any written reports submitted by title and date as stored on the website.

(e) The narrative should be in plain English using full sentences and appropriate grammar.

(f) Abbreviations should be avoided and acronyms only used after having written the title in full at the first mention.

(g) The decision (resolution) should be separately highlighted for ease of identification and words used to show that it is a decision.

(h) The wording of the decision should be included in full.

(i) It is not normally necessary to note the name of the member moving and seconding a motion in the minutes or the fact that a was taken unless a recorded vote is requested in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders).

(j) The order of the minutes will normally follow the order of the Agenda.

5 Open Forum and Public Speaking at Council meetings.

It will not be normal for public comment to be minuted unless requested by Resolution of the Council

6 Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest must be carefully recorded in the naming the Councillor and clearly indicating which item the interest referred to, whether the interest is a personal interest or a personal and prejudicial interest, giving the nature of the interest and, in the case of a personal and prejudicial interest, recording that the member left the meeting during the discussion and decision on the item and their return. For example;

7 Formal written motions and Recorded votes

Where Standing Orders provide for the submission by notice of formal written motions to a council meeting, or when a Councillor asks for votes to be recorded in the minutes, the minutes should record the names of Councillors voting for and against the matter or the individual Councillor's vote accordingly. For the purpose of the audio recording the chairman will say aloud how each councillor has voted.

8 Excluding press and public

Decisions to exclude the press and public should be fully recorded in the minutes, making it absolutely clear the reason for the exclusion and to which matter or part of it the exclusion applied.

9 Clerks Responsibilities

It is the Clerks responsibility to ensure that Councillors understand that decisions of Parish Councils can be set aside by a Court for procedural irregularity, which is why it is so important that the correct meeting procedures are followed and decisions are accurately recorded.

10 Draft Minutes Production

Decisions taken at a meeting take effect immediately and do not depend on the minutes being approved at the next meeting.

11 Draft Minutes Publication

The draft minutes will be published:

(a) on the website;

(b) on the Parish Council notice board;

(c) hard copies available at the meeting for members of the public;

The draft minutes do not become valid minutes until they are accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair at the next meeting.

The draft minutes will therefore record this fact clearly (at the top and bottom) in the header and footer of the document to the effect: "Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting" along with being stamped DRAFT in red.

The audio recording will be uploaded to the Parish Council Website by the clerk

12 Storage

The signed minutes will be carefully retained by the Clerk for the Council's archives.

13 The end of the published minutes should include the fact of being signed by the Chair and the date on which they were signed.

14 The Council will display copies of this Policy at its meeting and on the Parish website and those undertaking recording will be deemed to have accepted the terms contained therein whether they have read them or not.

Part 2

CIRCULATION OF DRAFT MINUTES

It shall be the policy of the above Council that:

15 Copy to the Chair

The Clerk will draw up draft minutes of each meeting and forward them to the Chairman without delay. This is the opportunity for the Chairman to pick up any mistakes in the content or identify typing errors, or amend points of order. This opportunity is not to be used by the Chairman as a means of re-writing the minutes.

16 Copy to the Councillors

The draft minutes will then be circulated to all Parish Councillors no later than 8 calendar days after a meeting, unless there is good reason for not doing so in which case the Clerk will make Parish Councillors aware of such reason. Issues then raised by a Councillor on a point of order can be amended with the agreement of the Chairman prior to any further publication

17 Ownership of Draft Minutes

It is recognised that minutes are drafted by the Clerk and shall remain the property and the responsibility of the Clerk until such time as they are amended and approved by the Council at a full Council meeting.

Part 3

AMENDMENTS OF DRAFT MINUTES

It shall be the policy of the above Council that:

18 Proposed Amendments with Notice

A Councillors shall give a written detailed notice to the Clerk with a copy to all Councillors, not less than 4 days (96Hrs) prior to the scheduled start of a meeting, of intention to move an amendment to the minutes of a Previous Meeting. These amendments shall be subject to the Councils normal voting procedure.

Advance notice will enable the Clerk and Councillors to check notes and obtain relevant information prior to the subsequent discussion on the proposed amendment at the meeting.

19 Proposed Amendments without Notice

Amendments to the minutes tabled at the meeting without 4 days (96hrs) notice to the Clerk, will only be adopted by unanimous agreement of the Council.

20 Agreed Amendments

For any changes which are approved to the minutes by the council

(a) The wording changes will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting that agreed the changes and

(b) The original minutes will be amended to reflect the changes.

21 Signing and of Agreed and/or Amended Minutes

The copy signed by the Chair will contain the alterations, recorded in longhand, with the changes signed and dated.

Should a Parish Councillor consider their amendment to be significant the clerk will ensure an amended copy of the approved minutes are published within 3 days of the meeting replacing the draft copy.

The Parish Council reserve the right by resolution, to amended or cancel this policy at any time.

Policy Reviewed 4th February 2020