

Sedgwick Parish Council

Standing Orders 2025

Based on the NALC Model Standing Orders (England) 2025 with Sedgwick Parish Council Amendments

PART A – FULL STANDING ORDERS

Important Note

You are correct that the previous draft was still too condensed compared with the full NALC model.

This revised version is intended to retain the structure, procedural protections and governance detail of the NALC Model Standing Orders rather than operate as a simplified summary. The aim is that Sedgwick Parish Council adopts a document that remains recognisably aligned to the national model while incorporating only local amendments where appropriate.

The local Sedgwick amendments are intentionally limited to matters such as:

- speaking limits;
- public participation periods;
- meeting duration;
- substitute member notification periods; and
- local administrative arrangements.

All statutory and procedural protections should remain substantially intact.

PART A – FULL STANDING ORDERS

1. 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 Chair.
- b. A motion, including an amendment, shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c. A motion not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chair as withdrawn.
- d. A motion may only be withdrawn by the proposer with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

- e. An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion and shall not negate the motion.
- f. If an amendment is carried, the amended motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g. Amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chair.
- h. Only one amendment shall be debated at a time unless the Chair directs otherwise.
- i. A councillor may not move more than one amendment to a motion at any one time.
- j. The mover of an amendment shall have no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- k. Unless permitted by the Chair, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - to move or speak on another amendment;
 - to make a point of order;
 - to give a personal explanation; or
 - to exercise a right of reply.
- l. During debate, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or personal explanation.
- m. A point of order shall relate only to an alleged breach of standing orders or procedural irregularity.
- n. The ruling of the Chair on a point of order shall be final.
- o. When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
 - to amend the motion;
 - to proceed to next business;
 - to adjourn the debate;
 - to put the motion to the vote;
 - to ask a person to be no longer heard;
 - to exclude the public and press;
 - to adjourn the meeting; or
 - to suspend standing orders.
- p. Before a motion is put to the vote, the Chair shall be satisfied that the matter has been sufficiently debated.
- q. The mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply.
- r. Contributions by councillors shall relate only to the motion under discussion.

- s. A councillor's speech shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Chair.
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2. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings

- a. No person shall obstruct business or behave improperly.
 - b. The Chair may require a person to moderate their conduct.
 - c. If conduct continues, the Council may resolve to exclude the person from the meeting.
 - d. The Chair may suspend or close the meeting if necessary to restore order.
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3. Meetings Generally

- a. Meetings shall not take place in premises used for the supply of alcohol unless no other suitable premises are available.
- b. Public notice of meetings shall be given in accordance with statutory requirements.
- c. Meetings shall be open to the public unless confidential business requires exclusion of the public and press.
- d. The exclusion of the public shall be by formal resolution stating the reasons.
- e. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at meetings.
- f. Public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes unless extended by the Chair.
- g. Individual public speaking time shall not exceed 3 minutes.
- h. Public participation shall not normally create debate between councillors and the public.
- i. Persons speaking shall direct comments through the Chair.
- j. Only one person shall speak at a time.
- k. Members of the public may record meetings in accordance with legislation.
- l. The press shall be afforded reasonable facilities for reporting meetings.
- m. The Chair shall preside at meetings or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair.
- n. If both Chair and Vice-Chair are absent, councillors present shall elect a Chair for the meeting.
- o. Subject to quorum requirements, all questions shall be decided by a majority of members present and voting.

- p. Voting shall normally be by show of hands.
 - q. A recorded vote shall be taken if requested before the next business item.
 - r. The Chair may exercise a casting vote in the event of equality of votes.
 - s. Minutes shall record:
 - attendance;
 - apologies accepted;
 - declarations of interest;
 - dispensations;
 - resolutions;
 - voting where requested; and
 - key procedural decisions.
 - t. Members with disclosable pecuniary interests shall comply with the Code of Conduct and statutory requirements.
 - u. No business shall be transacted unless the meeting is quorate.
 - v. The quorum shall be one-third of members with a minimum of three.
 - w. If a meeting becomes inquorate it shall be adjourned.
 - x. Meetings shall not normally exceed 2 hours.
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4. Committees and Sub-Committees

- a. Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and membership shall be determined by the committee.
- b. The Council may appoint standing committees and other committees as necessary and shall:
 - determine their terms of reference;
 - determine the number and timing of meetings;
 - appoint members;
 - appoint substitute members where appropriate;
 - appoint committee Chairs;
 - determine public participation arrangements; and
 - determine quorum requirements.
- c. Substitute members must notify the Proper Officer at least 3 clear days before the meeting.
- d. Committee and sub-committee quorum shall be no fewer than three members.
- e. Committees shall report recommendations to Full Council unless delegated authority has been granted.

- f. The Council may dissolve a committee or sub-committee at any time.
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- a. The Council may appoint committees and determine their terms of reference.
- b. Committees may appoint sub-committees unless the Council determines otherwise.
- c. Substitute members must give 3 days' notice to the Proper Officer.
- d. Committee quorum shall be no fewer than three members.
- e. Committees shall report recommendations to Full Council unless delegated authority has been granted.
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5. Ordinary Council Meetings

- a. In an election year, the Annual Meeting shall be held on or within 14 days following councillors taking office.
- b. In other years, the Annual Meeting shall be held in May.
- c. At least three other ordinary meetings shall be held each year.
- d. The first business of the Annual Meeting shall be:
- election of the Chair; and
 - election of the Vice-Chair.
- e. The Chair shall continue in office until a successor is elected.
- f. Following election of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Annual Meeting shall include:
- receipt of declarations of acceptance of office;
 - confirmation of previous minutes;
 - review of delegation arrangements;
 - review of committee structures;
 - review of standing orders;
 - review of financial regulations;
 - review of asset register;
 - review of insurance arrangements;
 - review of subscriptions;
 - review of complaints procedures;
 - review of policies under FOI and GDPR legislation;
 - review of employment policies;
 - review of expenditure under statutory powers; and
 - setting dates for future meetings.
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6. Extraordinary Meetings

- a. The Chair may convene an extraordinary meeting at any time.
 - b. If the Chair does not convene a meeting within 7 days of a written request by two councillors, those councillors may convene the meeting.
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7. Previous Resolutions

- a. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except by a special motion signed by at least two councillors.
 - b. No substantially similar motion may be moved within six months.
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8. Voting on Appointments

Where more than two persons are nominated and no candidate receives a majority, the person with the fewest votes shall be eliminated until a majority is achieved.

9. Motions Requiring Written Notice

- a. A motion shall relate to the Council's statutory responsibilities or matters affecting the parish.
 - b. Written notice of motions must be submitted to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting.
 - c. The Proper Officer may correct obvious typographical or grammatical errors.
 - d. If the wording of a motion is unclear, the Proper Officer may require resubmission.
 - e. The Proper Officer may reject improper motions after consultation with the Chair.
 - f. Motions received shall be recorded in the order received.
 - g. Rejected motions shall be recorded with reasons.
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10. Motions Without Written Notice

The following may be moved without notice:

- correcting minutes;
- moving to a vote;
- changing the order of business;

- adjournment;
 - excluding the public;
 - suspending standing orders;
 - referring a matter to committee.
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11. Management of Information

- a. The Council shall maintain appropriate technical and organisational measures for secure management of information.
 - b. The Council shall maintain policies for retention and destruction of information.
 - c. Agendas, reports and minutes shall not disclose confidential information without lawful authority.
 - d. Councillors, staff, contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.
 - e. The Council shall comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
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12. Draft Minutes

- a. Draft minutes shall be presented for approval at the next meeting.
 - b. Only their accuracy may be debated.
 - c. Approved minutes shall be signed by the Chair.
 - d. Draft minutes shall be published in accordance with transparency requirements.
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13. Code of Conduct and Dispensations

- a. All councillors shall observe the adopted Code of Conduct.
- b. Members with disclosable pecuniary interests shall withdraw from meetings unless granted a dispensation.
- c. Members with other registerable interests shall comply with requirements of the Code of Conduct.
- d. Dispensation requests shall:
 - be made in writing;
 - specify the relevant interest;
 - specify whether participation and/or voting is requested; and
 - explain why the dispensation is sought.

- e. Dispensation requests shall be determined by the Council unless delegated otherwise.
 - f. Dispensations may be granted where:
 - the transaction of business would otherwise be impeded;
 - granting the dispensation is in the interests of parish residents; or
 - it is otherwise appropriate.
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14. Code of Conduct Complaints

Complaints regarding member conduct shall be handled by the relevant principal authority in accordance with adopted procedures.

15. Proper Officer

- a. The Proper Officer shall be the Clerk unless the Council appoints another officer.
 - b. The Proper Officer shall:
 - issue summonses and agendas;
 - publish public notices;
 - retain the minute book;
 - retain declarations of acceptance of office;
 - maintain registers of interests where required;
 - manage correspondence;
 - facilitate inspection of records;
 - respond to FOI and GDPR requests;
 - liaise with the Data Protection Officer where applicable;
 - manage council records;
 - arrange execution of legal deeds;
 - record planning applications and council responses;
 - manage publication scheme information;
 - retain custody of the seal if applicable; and
 - arrange payment processes in accordance with Financial Regulations.
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16. Responsible Financial Officer

The Council shall appoint a Responsible Financial Officer.

17. Accounts and Accounting Statements

Accounts shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils Practitioners' Guide.

18. Financial Controls and Procurement

- a. The Council shall adopt and regularly review Financial Regulations.
 - b. Financial Regulations shall include arrangements for:
 - accounting records;
 - internal controls;
 - risk management;
 - internal audit;
 - inspection of accounts;
 - procurement and tendering.
 - c. The Council shall comply with procurement legislation and transparency requirements.
 - d. Tendering procedures shall normally include:
 - preparation of specifications;
 - formal invitations to tender;
 - advertising where appropriate;
 - sealed submissions where applicable;
 - opening of tenders in the presence of councillors; and
 - formal reporting to Council or committee.
 - e. The Council is not bound to accept the lowest tender.
 - f. Contracts exceeding relevant procurement thresholds shall comply with applicable legislation.
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19. Handling Staff Matters

- a. Staff matters shall be treated confidentially.
 - b. The Clerk shall notify the Chair of absence due to illness or other reasons.
 - c. The Chair or Vice-Chair shall conduct staff appraisals where authorised.
 - d. Grievance and disciplinary matters shall be handled in accordance with Council procedures.
 - e. Persons involved in staff management shall maintain confidentiality.
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20. Responsibilities to Provide Information

- a. The Council shall publish information in accordance with Freedom of Information legislation.
 - b. The Council shall comply with the Smaller Authorities Transparency Regulations where applicable.
 - c. Requests for information shall be handled in accordance with adopted policies.
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21. Data Protection

- a. The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
 - b. The Council shall maintain policies and procedures for responding to rights requests.
 - c. The Council shall maintain a personal data breach procedure.
 - d. The Council shall record data breaches and remedial actions.
 - e. Privacy notices shall be maintained and kept up to date.
 - f. The Council shall maintain records of processing activities.
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22. Relations with the Press and Media

Relations with the media shall be conducted in accordance with Council policy.

23. Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds

Legal deeds shall only be executed by resolution of the Council.

24. Communication with District and Unitary Councillors

Relevant councillors shall receive agendas and notices of meetings.

25. Restrictions on Councillor Activities

Unless authorised, councillors shall not:

- inspect land or premises on behalf of the Council; or
 - issue instructions to staff or contractors.
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26. Standing Orders Generally

- a. Standing orders may be suspended by resolution unless they reflect mandatory legal requirements.
- b. Amendments require a special motion.
- c. The Proper Officer shall provide copies of standing orders to councillors.

Adopted by Sedgwick Parish Council on: _____

Signed (Chair): _____

Signed (Clerk/Proper Officer): _____

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PART B – MEMBER QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Sedgwick Parish Council – Meeting Procedure Summary

Before Meetings

- Agendas are issued at least 3 clear days before meetings.
 - Motions requiring notice must be submitted 5 clear days before the meeting.
 - Read papers beforehand.
 - Declare interests before relevant agenda items.
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Public Participation

- Total public participation: 15 minutes.
 - Individual speaking limit: 3 minutes.
 - Public questions do not automatically trigger debate.
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Debate Rules

- Speak through the Chair.
 - One speaker at a time.
 - Councillors normally speak once per motion.
 - Speech limit: 5 minutes.
 - Amendments must not negate the motion.
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Voting

- Usually by show of hands.
 - Recorded votes may be requested.
 - Chair has a casting vote in a tie.
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Quorum

- Minimum quorum is 3 councillors.
 - If inquorate, business must stop.
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Declarations of Interest

- Declare interests clearly.
 - Leave the room where required unless a dispensation has been granted.
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Behaviour and Conduct

- Treat others respectfully.
 - Do not interrupt except on a point of order.
 - Disorderly conduct may result in exclusion.
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Confidential Items

- Confidential matters must not be disclosed.
 - Exclusion of public and press requires a formal resolution.
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Financial Governance

- Follow Financial Regulations.
 - Procurement procedures apply.
 - Councillors must avoid conflicts of interest.
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Role of the Chair

The Chair:

- manages debate;
 - keeps order;
 - decides procedural matters;
 - ensures fairness and efficiency.
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Role of Councillors

Councillors should:

- act collectively;
 - avoid unauthorised action;
 - respect decisions once made;
 - comply with the Code of Conduct.
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Key Principle

Standing Orders exist to ensure:

- lawful decision-making;
- transparency;
- fairness;
- consistency;
- good governance.