

# **SOUTH STOKE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **GOOD WORKING PRACTICES FOR COUNCILLORS**

### **1. Introduction**

This document describes the preferred working practices for all Councillors of the Parish Council. It is in addition to best practice documents and codes of conduct and does not replace them. Councillors and others are referred to The Good Councillor's Guide published by the NALC

<http://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/801-good-councillors-guide/file>.

### **2. Before Meetings Councillors Should**

- 2.1 Inform him/herself as to the business and objectives of the meeting
- 2.2 Ask for items to be added to the agenda in good time
- 2.3 Prepare him/herself for each of the discussions that are to take place during the meeting
- 2.4 Preferably, circulate written reports for their area of responsibility in advance of the meetings

### **3. During Meetings Councillors Should**

- 3.1 Confine discussion within the scope of the topic under discussion and reasonable limits to time
- 3.2 Make sure that their views have been expressed and noted
- 3.3 Maintain an open state of mind throughout a discussion
- 3.4 Be respectful of other councillors and their views allowing them to express themselves without interruption
- 3.5 Assist the chair of the meeting to maintain order, work towards a conclusion of a topic within a reasonable timescale
- 3.6 Once a decision has been taken, fully support that decision whether they were for or against that decision
- 3.7 Ensure that actions they take are clearly stated and fully understood

### **4. Outside Meetings Councillors Should**

- 4.1 Inform the clerk if they are away and unable to attend to council business for a period of more than 5 working days
- 4.2 Check post, e-mail and telephone messages every day
- 4.3 Respond to correspondence within 5 working days
- 4.4 Copy e-mails to all councillors
- 4.5 Read circulated documents as soon as possible.

- 4.6 Explain and support council decisions as if they were their own to parishioners if asked
- 4.7 Refer matters to the responsible councillor or direct parishioners to the responsible councillor rather than undertaking to address an issue themselves if it falls outside their remit
- 4.8 Clear their actions as soon as possible and report back progress to councillors and the clerk

## **5. Roles and characteristics of a Councillor**

- 5.1 If a Councillor needs to speak on behalf of the Council, he/she must remember to express the views of the Council and not personal views. By law, a Councillor cannot make a formal decision on behalf of the Council.
- 5.2 A Councillor represents the views and concerns of the residents of the Parish to the Parish Council, and through it, to the District and County authorities in their areas of responsibility. Councillors must take care that they take into account all views and not just those of a vocal minority.
- 5.3 A good Councillor will be:-
  - Knowledgeable about Local Government legislation
  - Aware of local issues and priorities
  - Objective
  - Clear thinking
  - Consultative
  - Democratic
  - Professional

## **6. Voting**

- 6.1 Councillors have a vote on issues and motions before the Council during meetings. If there is a tied vote, the Chairman can have a second or casting vote

## **7. Review of policy**

- 7.1 This policy was approved by the Parish Council on 29 October 2018, and will be reviewed annually.