BEAULIEU
PARISH COUNCIL

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Roles & Responsibilities

Beaulieu Parish Council ("the Council")

1.1. The Council is an elected body in the first tier of local government, supporting the democratic process by holding elections every 4 years. The role of the Council is to represent the interests of the whole community it serves, improving both the quality of life and the local environment.

1.2. The Council is a corporate body and a legal entity that is separate from that of its Councillors. It is accountable to the local community. Its decisions are the responsibility of the whole body and are made collectively by a majority vote.

1.3. The Council has powers granted by Parliament, including the authority to raise money through taxation, known as the Precept, and a range of powers to spend public money. The Council is an employer with the Parish Clerk working for, and with, the Council to action its decisions.

1.4. The Council is responsible for appointing the Chair, Vice Chair, Committee Chairs and Clerk with clear roles and responsibilities to ensure the proper discharge of all its activities.

Role of Council Chair

1.5. The Chair is elected annually by the members of the Council at its annual meeting. Unless he/she resigns or becomes disqualified the Chair continues in office until their successor becomes entitled to act as Chair at the next annual meeting of the Council. The Chair's main role is to run Council meetings. The Chair cannot legally make a decision on behalf of the Council.

1.6. The Chair shall:

- Plan the meeting with the Clerk, who is legally accountable for serving Notice of the meeting and settling and publishing the agenda.

- Brief themselves and prepare fully – study all relevant information and anticipate the needs and interests of the members. On more complex matters this may take significant time in consulting Councillors and non-Councillors, attending site meetings etc. The Chair should then be in a position to manage questions raised at the meeting or deal with requests for information.
- Ensure compliance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other Council policies.
- Create an atmosphere that encourages discussion whilst ensuring that Councillors keep to the point. The Chair summarises the debate and facilitates the making of clear resolutions, being responsible for keeping discussions moving.
- Decide on points of order and other incidental questions that require decision during the course of a Council meeting.
- Be punctual – the Chair should set a good example by arriving early to check the arrangements and welcome members, the public and any visiting speakers.

1.7. The Chair has a casting vote. His/her first vote is a personal vote as a member of the Council. If there is a tied vote, the Chair has a second or casting vote.

1.8. The Chair should liaise regularly with the Vice Chair and ensure he / she knows enough about the current issues faced by the Council to be able to stand in at short notice.

1.9. In a small parish, as is the case with Beaulieu, it is a distinct advantage for the Chair to:

a. Be adequately well known, respected by, and visible to, the wider Beaulieu community;
b. Understand how the Parish Council interacts collaboratively with other nearby Parish Councils and other local bodies, and with both District and County Councils;
c. In conjunction with the Clerk, (who has ultimate legal responsibility for this), provide regular and accurate financial updates to Council, ensure budgets, precept and funding requirements are tabled in a timely manner including for longer term financial planning matters; and
d. Have administration and computer skills to support the Clerk as may be required (including in their absence).

1.10. The Chair will often be the public face of the Council and will represent the Council at official events and/or with the media. He/she may be asked to speak on behalf of the Council and, in such circumstances, should only express the agreed views of

the Council and not give his or her personal views.

1.11. The Chair shall commit time to such training as may be appropriate in performing the above role.

Role of the Council Vice Chair

1.12. The Vice Chair is elected annually by the members of the Council at its annual meeting. Unless he/she resigns or becomes disqualified the Vice Chair continues in office until their successor becomes entitled to act as Vice Chair at the next annual meeting of the Council.

1.13. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall chair formal and informal meetings connected with the work of the Council. In doing so his / her work shall be undertaken consistent with the requirements set out in paragraphs 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 above.

1.14. The Vice Chair must be prepared to make a regular time commitment to support the Chair by working closely with him/her, acting as a sounding board and advising on any matters as they see fit to ensure the smooth running of the Council.

1.15. Once a year the Vice Chair shall undertake a 1:1 meeting with each Councillor to discuss the operation of the Council, to understand what runs well and any areas for improvement. The Vice Chair will then report and discuss a fair and balanced summary of his / her findings to Council ahead of the AGM each year. This report should include recommending any development or training requirements.

1.16. Should the office of Chair be vacated before the AGM, the Vice Chair shall immediately assume the role of Chair until a new Chair is elected by Council. He / she will then revert to being Vice Chair. A motion to appoint a new Chair should be tabled with Council as soon as possible.

1.17. The Vice Chair shall commit time to such training as may be appropriate in performing the above role.

Role of Committee Chair

1.18. The Council operates through 3 Committees:

- Planning
- Asset Management

- Finance and General Purposes.

1.19. Each Committee has its own Terms of Reference published on the Council's website.

1.20. Each Committee Chair is elected annually by the members of the Council at its annual meeting. Unless he/she resigns or becomes disqualified the Committee Chair continues in office until their successor becomes entitled to act as Chair at the next annual meeting of the Council. Should the office of Committee Chair be vacated before the AGM, the Committee Vice Chair shall immediately assume the role of Chair until a new Committee Chair is elected by Council.

1.21. The Committee Chair is responsible for overseeing the arrangement of Committee meetings and activities, communicating clear Committee objectives to Committee members, taking into account any legal or regulatory requirements as advised by the Clerk and keeping Committee members engaged and on track with the Committee's activities.

1.22. If any of the Committee's meetings are to be held as public meetings, the Committee Chair shall liaise with the Clerk to ensure that appropriate Public Notice is given, agendas posted and a meeting location agreed and publicised.

1.23. During Committee meetings the Chair should introduce each item and its purpose, request contributions, encourage participation, ensuring others do not dominate the meeting.

1.24. The Committee Chair shall ensure that Council is updated on progress through written or oral updates by themselves or by the relevant Committee member. The Committee Chair shall liaise on a timely basis with the Clerk to ensure any required Council motions are included in the Council's agenda.

Role of the Parish Clerk

1.25. The Clerk is employed by the Council under section 112 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to provide administrative support for the Council's activities.

1.26. The Clerk's primary responsibility is to advise the Council on whether its decisions are lawful and to recommend ways in which decisions can be implemented. To help with this, the Clerk may be asked to research topics of concern to the Council and provide unbiased information to help the Council make appropriate choices.

1.27. The Clerk has a wide range of other responsibilities which are set out in his / her job description. The Clerk shall recognise that the Council is responsible for all decisions and that he / she takes instructions from the Council as a body.

1.28. The Clerk is not answerable to any individual Councillor, including the Chair. The Council must be confident that the Clerk is, at all times, independent, objective and professional.

1.29. The Clerk is also variously referred to as the 'Proper Officer' and 'Responsible Financial Officer' in certain aspects of their work for the Council.

The Role of Parish Councillors

1.30. Parish Councillors are elected representatives, not volunteers or employees, and serve for a 4-year term, unless co-opted or elected in a bye-election when they serve until the next election. They must apply the law and comply with the Council's Code of Conduct and commit to the Council's Civility & Respect Pledge.

1.31. A Parish Councillor represents the views of all residents within the Parish and listens to, and understands, the views and needs of the differing groups within the community. As a Councillor, there is a responsibility to be well-informed, especially in relation to any diverse local views. Councillors cannot assume they represent the interests of electors without consulting them.

1.32. All Councillors have a responsibility to communicate council decisions that affect the community.

1.33. Councillors contribute to the work of the Council by suggesting ideas, influencing policy, engaging in constructive debate and by responding to the needs and views of the community. Councillors comment on proposals to ensure the best outcome and vote to enable the Council to make decisions.

1.34. Individual Parish Councillors cannot make decisions on behalf of the Council and have no powers outside of the Council meeting.

1.35. It is each Councillor's responsibility to ensure that any potential Conflicts of Interest are declared at the earliest stage.

1.36. Councillors shall commit time to such training as may be appropriate in performing their role.