

COMMUNITY COUNCILS - SUGGESTED STANDING ORDERS

The following examples of standing orders have been taken from the Glasgow Community Council Forum Executive Standing Orders, with some amendment.

Order of Business:

This clause sets out the order of business for each meeting.

- (a) Apologies**
- (b) Minutes**
- (c) Business arising from Minutes**
- (d) Reports (sub-committees, delegations, finance etc.)**
- (e) Correspondence**
- (f) Other Competent Business**

Quorum

This clause sets out the quorum for the meeting i.e. the minimum number of persons required to be in attendance in order to conduct business.

The quorum shall be one third of the total membership of the community council provided that there is a majority of elected members present.

The Chairperson's Ruling:

This clause is a particularly important one as it supports the authority of the Chairperson.

The ruling of the Chairperson on any question under Standing Orders, or on points of order, shall be final.

Length of Speeches:

This clause provides the Chairperson with the power to prevent excessive waffling.

The mover of a motion or amendment shall be allowed three minutes.

Motions and Amendments:

A motion or amendment will not be discussed unless it has been moved and seconded.

Motions or amendments made but not seconded will not be discussed or recorded in the Minutes. When a motion or amendment has been moved but not seconded, the mover may request that his or her dissent in respect of the item of business be recorded in the minute.

Method of Voting:

Given that any issue which has to be resolved by a vote may be contentious, it is advisable to clarify any procedure for a casting vote in the Standing Orders as follows. The casting vote is traditionally cast for the status quo or the less controversial option.

Voting shall be by a show of hands. Where there is an equality of votes the Chairperson shall have a second/casting vote."

Notices of Motion:

This clause gives an Executive Committee time to assemble an agenda and give adequate consideration to any issue which has been raised.

Notices of motion shall be in the hands of the Secretary, in writing, not less than seven days before the meeting at which they are to be discussed."

Points of Order

The Chairperson may be called, from time to time, to rule on a point of order. A point of order must relate only to an alleged breach of a standing order or statutory provision. This is dealt with in the following clause, with the final decision left to the Chairperson without challenge.

Any member may claim to speak on a matter of Order and the person who is then addressing the meeting shall cease to do so until the point is heard and the Chairperson makes a ruling.

Members of the Public:

It is also useful to have some procedure laid down which deals with the participation of the public at meetings.

In the event of any member of the public being present at the meeting, they shall not participate in the business of the meeting except at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Length of Meetings:

It is important to prescribe the maximum length of meetings so as to limit the possibility of unnecessary discussion.

Meetings of the Community Council shall not be longer than 1½ hours in duration.

Suspension of Standing Orders

On occasions, standing orders may require to be suspended e.g. in order to discuss urgent business or have a longer meeting, and the following clause provides for this.

Standing Orders may be suspended provided notice is given, or the council agrees that it is a case of urgency, provided a motion for suspension is carried by two-thirds of those present and voting and an absolute majority of the whole council.

For the benefit of the public and new community councillors, it may be useful to have copies of your community council's standing orders available at meetings for reference.