

Preston Patrick Parish Council

Standing Orders (2026 Edition)

Based on NALC Model Standing Orders (England) 2025 Update, tailored for a micro-council with no committees and minimal staffing.

1. Introduction

These Standing Orders govern the procedures of Preston Patrick Parish Council and ensure lawful, transparent and efficient decision-making. They incorporate all mandatory statutory requirements and adapt optional NALC provisions proportionately for a very small parish council.

These Standing Orders shall be reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

2. Meetings

2.1 General Provisions

- Meetings shall be held in Preston Patrick Memorial Hall unless otherwise agreed.
- Meetings shall not be held in premises where alcohol is served unless no suitable alternative is available.
- Public notice of meetings shall be given at least three clear days in advance.
- Meetings shall be open to the public unless confidential business is to be discussed.
- A meeting shall not exceed three hours unless the Council resolves otherwise.

2.2 Public Participation

- A maximum of 15 minutes shall be allocated for public participation.
- Individual contributions shall not exceed 5 minutes.
- Questions shall be addressed to the Chairman.

2.3 Quorum

- No business may be transacted unless at least **three councillors** are present.
- If a meeting becomes inquorate, it shall be adjourned.

3. Chairman of the Council

- The Chairman shall preside at meetings if present.
- In the Chairman's absence, the Vice -Chairman (if appointed) shall preside.
- If neither is present, councillors shall elect a chairman for the meeting.

4. Ordinary Meetings

At the Annual Meeting, the Council shall:

- Elect the Chairman and (if applicable) Vice -Chairman.
- Confirm the accuracy of the previous minutes.
- Review Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Complaints Procedure, and other governance documents.
- Review insurance, assets, subscriptions, and arrangements with external bodies.
- Set the schedule of meetings for the year.

The Council shall hold at least **three ordinary meetings** in addition to the Annual Meeting.

5. Extraordinary Meetings

- The Chairman may call an extraordinary meeting at any time.
- If the Chairman refuses or fails to call a meeting within 7 days of a written request from two councillors, those councillors may convene the meeting.

6. Rules of Debate

- Motions must be moved and seconded.
- Amendments must relate directly to the motion.
- Only one amendment may be debated at a time unless the Chairman directs otherwise.
- Councillors may speak once per motion except for points of order or personal explanation.
- The Chairman's ruling on points of order is final.

7. Voting

- Voting shall be by show of hands unless a recorded vote is requested.
- The Chairman may exercise a casting vote.
- For appointments, if no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and voting continues.

8. Minutes

- Draft minutes shall be circulated with the agenda.
- Minutes shall record: attendees, apologies, declarations of interest, decisions, and public participation.
- Minutes shall be approved and signed at the next meeting.
- As the Council's turnover is under £25,000, draft minutes must be published online within one month.

9. Code of Conduct

- All councillors must observe the adopted Code of Conduct.
- Councillors with disclosable pecuniary interests must withdraw from the meeting.
- Dispensation requests must be submitted in writing to the Clerk.

10. Code of Conduct Complaints

- Complaints about councillors must be referred to the **Monitoring Officer, Westmorland & Furness Council**.
- The Parish Council cannot investigate councillor conduct complaints.

11. Management of Information

- The Council shall maintain secure systems for handling personal data.
- Confidential information shall not be disclosed without lawful authority.

- The Council shall maintain a Retention and Disposal Policy.
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12. Proper Officer

The Clerk is the Proper Officer and shall:

- Issue agendas and public notices.
 - Receive declarations of interest and dispensation requests.
 - Maintain the Council's records.
 - Publish minutes and statutory information.
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13. Responsible Financial Officer

- The Clerk is the RFO unless the Council appoints another person.
 - The RFO shall manage the Council's finances in accordance with Financial Regulations.
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14. Accounts and Audit

- The RFO shall prepare accounting statements and ensure compliance with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
 - Internal audit arrangements shall be reviewed annually.
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15. Financial Controls and Procurement

- Financial Regulations shall govern expenditure and procurement.
 - The Council shall follow the current **Public Contracts Regulations** thresholds.
 - For contracts under £25,000, the Council shall obtain three quotations where practicable.
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16. Handling Staff Matters

- The Council shall consider staff matters in closed session.

- The Chairman shall conduct the Clerk's annual appraisal.
 - Disciplinary and grievance matters shall follow the Council's employment policies.
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17. Press and Media

- The Clerk is the primary point of contact for press enquiries.
 - Councillors shall not speak on behalf of the Council unless authorised.
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18. Communications with Unitary Authority

- The Clerk shall be the main point of contact with Westmorland & Furness Council.
 - Councillors may communicate directly on ward matters but not on behalf of the Parish Council.
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19. Restrictions on Councillor Activities

- Councillors shall not issue instructions to staff.
 - Councillors shall not inspect land or property without Council authorisation.
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20. Standing Orders Generally

- These Standing Orders may not be suspended where they reflect statutory requirements.
 - Other Standing Orders may be suspended by resolution of the Council.
 - These Standing Orders shall be reviewed annually.
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21. Adoption

These Standing Orders were adopted by resolution of Preston Patrick Parish Council at its meeting held on:

Date: _____ \

Signed (Chairman): _____ \

Signed (Clerk): _____ \