

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
18th May 2021**

LJ/2021

11th May 2021

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 13 – STANDING ORDERS

AIM

1. To consider adopting a revised version of Standing Orders for Bridgnorth Town Council.

BACKGROUND

2. Standing Orders are the general rules that govern the Town Council and they should normally be reviewed each year.
3. The Bridgnorth Town Council Standing Orders are based on the model recommended and produced by the National Association of Local Councils.
4. It has been noted that Standing Order no 27, Questions from Councillors (paragraph b, line 3) erroneously refers to '8a above' when it should read '27a above'.
5. At a recent meeting of the Council a member's question was asked regarding public questions which highlighted the fact that there were 2 Standing Orders relating to public questions. (Town Council meeting minute 0266/2021 dated 27th April 2021 refers)

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

6. Correction a typographical error in Standing Order 27 b is relatively straight forward matter and should be corrected.
7. Having 2 Standing Orders regarding questions from residents (Standing Order 3e to 3k and Standing Order 3y) is confusing, when they say much the same thing.
8. Standing Order 3e to 3k is a direct lift from the NALC model, whereas Standing Order 3y is a bespoke order that appears to have been created to expand on Standing Order 3e to 3k.
9. Standing Order 3e to 3k seeks to clarify public participation at a meeting (for which an agenda has been published). It seems reasonable to have public questions relating to matters that appear on the agenda and for them to be answered at the

meeting. These public questions (that relate to the business on the agenda) can be most useful in providing additional information to help members in reaching decisions

10. To have public questions on 'any other business' (not on the agenda) of the Council can create difficulties. There is risk that the Council might make decisions or begin discussions on an item that is not on the agenda (and for which members are not prepared or necessarily sufficiently informed to be able to respond meaningfully). Furthermore, it can mismanage expectations of the public that a debate on the topic (not included on the agenda) will occur at the meeting. The National Association of Local Council provides the following advice in its Legal Topic Note No. 5 Parish and Community Council meetings (from paragraph 44):

- a. *Members of the public who wish to communicate about business which is not included in the agenda for a meeting may communicate with the council in alternative ways e.g. by written correspondence of attending councillors' surgeries.*

The Town Council receives, daily, questions from the public and deals with these as a matter of normal business.

11. Much of Standing Order 3y is repetition of Standing Order 3e-k and some of it is contrary.

RECOMMENDATION(s)

12. It is recommended that the Town Council RESOLVES:

- a. To amend Standing Order 27b (line 3) to replace 8a with 27a.
- b. To delete Standing Order 3y
- c. To adopt Standing Orders (as amended above)



Lee Jakeman
Town Clerk