



Standing Orders - Version 2.3 (04/05/2025)

Stour Church | Church, but Different

Standing Order No. 1 - Church Meetings

1. Attendance at Church Meetings shall be limited to members only, except by the specific invitation of the Church or Diaconate Meeting. Only Members are permitted to vote;
2. The Chair at Church Meetings shall normally be taken by the Pastor but, if the Meeting agrees, any other person may Chair the Meeting;
3. Church Meetings shall normally take place on the last Tuesday of January, March, May, July, and November;
4. The Annual General Church Meeting shall normally be held on the last Tuesday of September, each year;
5. Special Meetings may be called as required;
6. Minutes shall be taken at all meetings. Agendas and copies of the previous minutes shall normally be available to all members ten days before each Meeting;
7. A quorum shall comprise at least one-quarter of the Membership being present at the Church Meeting;
8. Only those attending a Meeting will be eligible to vote as no proxy votes are accepted at any Church Meeting;
9. Except when a written ballot is carried out, the method of voting at all meetings shall be by a show of hands. The Chairman, upon request from the floor, may deem it desirable to use ballot papers when decisions may be of a personal nature;
10. All decisions at Church Meetings require a 75% majority of those present (except where otherwise stated);
11. At the Annual General Church Meeting, all elections to the Diaconate shall take place, office holders and representatives shall be appointed and the financial statement shall be presented;
12. Any Church Member wishing to raise any matter at the Church Meeting should make every effort to notify the Church Secretary at least two weeks in advance so that the agenda can reflect this. The inclusion of matters under 'any other business' (AOB) should be decided as the first item on the agenda, and at the discretion of the Chair;
13. When a special meeting is called to fulfil the requirements of Article 5 or 6 of the Constitution and a vote is taken, a ballot paper shall be used.

Standing Order No. 2 - The Diaconate

1. A quorum of two-thirds of the Diaconate is required to conduct a Deacons' Meeting which shall normally be chaired by the Minister;

2. The Diaconate, which shall be appointed by the Church Meeting, shall comprise the Minister, the Church Secretary, the Church Treasurer, and a maximum of nine other elected Deacons. The Diaconate shall be elected from the Membership Roll;
3. The Church Secretary shall be elected annually at the Annual General Church Meeting;
4. The Church Treasurer shall be elected annually at the Annual General Church Meeting;
5. All other Deacons shall be elected at the Annual General Church Meeting for a term of office of two years. These Deacons may serve for two consecutive terms of office but must then stand down for at least one year before being eligible for re-election;
6. Nominations for the Diaconate must be submitted in writing to the Church Secretary one month before the date of the Annual General Church Meeting;
7. Votes in elections for positions on the Diaconate may only be cast by Church Members attending the Annual General Church Meeting. Ballot papers shall be used. If there are more candidates than vacancies, then Order 2.8 shall apply. In the event of there being only the same number of candidates as vacancies or if there are fewer candidates than vacancies a ballot shall still take place and to be elected the candidate(s) must secure at least 75% of votes cast. Each Church Member may, if so prompted, vote for as many candidates as there are vacancies on the Diaconate;
8. If, at any election, there are more candidates than vacancies it may be necessary to hold more than one ballot to achieve the necessary 75% of votes cast. After the first ballot, any candidate(s) achieving 75% or more shall be elected. Of the remaining candidates, those with the least votes will be required to stand down so that the number of candidates remaining equals the number of remaining vacancies. A second ballot will then be held with the intention that any candidate gaining 75% of votes cast shall be elected.

Standing Order No. 3 - Co-options to the Diaconate

1. In the event of any vacancy, the Diaconate may co-opt an eligible Church Member to fill that vacancy;
2. The term of any co-option shall run as if elected at the previous Annual General Church Meeting;
3. The continuation of the co-option must be considered and voted upon by the next Church Meeting as per election procedures outlined in Standing Order No. 2.

Standing Order No. 4 - Position and Alteration of Standing Orders

1. The Constitution shall take precedence over the Standing Orders where a conflict arises;
2. The Standing Orders may be amended, or added to, upon the agreement of any Church Meeting providing that all members have been notified in writing at least two weeks in advance. Notice of intention must be included on the agenda and any approved changes will take effect from the next Church Meeting.

Conventions

The church has a number of conventions - ways that it operates - that are not considered a part of its Constitution or Standing Orders, and are open to interpretation and alteration, which include:

1. The Minister may be referred to as Reverend (Rev) or Pastor and/or then either their first or surname, and the elected Deacon(s) may be referred to as Reverend (Rev) or Deacon and/or then either their first or surname;
2. The Pastor and the elected Deacon(s) may wear clerical attire when deemed to be 'on church business' and secular dress when not;
3. Neither Convention 1 and 2 should be seen as elevating either the Pastor or the elected Deacon(s) above the congregation in any way, as both merely mark out a role performed and the office held by the person.