



Standing Orders - Version 3.0 (01/07/2025)

Stour Church | Church, but Different

Standing Order 1 - Church Meetings

1. Attendance is limited to Church Members, except by specific invitation of the Pastor or Diaconate
2. Only Members are entitled to vote
3. The Pastor shall normally chair Church Meetings, though the Meeting may agree to appoint another Chair if appropriate
4. Church Meetings shall normally be held bi-monthly (January, March, May, July, November)
5. The Annual General Church Meeting (AGM) shall normally be held in May's Church Meeting each year
6. Special Meetings may be called as required, with at least two weeks' written notice
7. Agendas and minutes shall normally be available to Members ten days before each Meeting
8. A quorum shall comprise 25% of the total Membership
9. No proxy votes are permitted
10. Voting shall normally be by a show of hands, but the Chair may call for a written ballot for matters of a personal or sensitive nature
11. All decisions require a simple majority (51%) of those present and voting, unless otherwise stated in these Standing Orders
12. The first agenda item shall confirm whether any other business (AOB) will be accepted
13. When a Special Meeting concerns the appointment or removal of the Pastor or a Deacon, a written ballot shall be used

Standing Order 2 - The Pastor

1. The Pastor shall be appointed by the Church Meeting following a recommendation from the Diaconate and after a period of prayerful consideration
2. The appointment shall require the approval of 51% of the total Church Membership voting in favour at a Special Meeting
3. A quorum for such a Special Meeting shall be 25% of the total Membership present
4. The Church may, by 51% of total Membership, request the Pastor's resignation at a Special Meeting called for that purpose
5. All Members must be informed in writing at least two weeks before any such meeting

Standing Order 3 – The Diaconate

1. The Diaconate shall consist of the Pastor, Church Secretary, Church Treasurer, and up to nine additional Deacons elected from the Membership
2. A quorum of two-thirds of the Diaconate is required to conduct business.
3. The Pastor shall normally chair Diaconate Meetings
4. The Church Secretary and Church Treasurer shall be elected annually at the AGM
5. Deacons serve for an indefinite term, unless they resign or are asked to stand down under Article 5 of the Constitution
6. Nominations for Secretary, Treasurer, or Deacon must be submitted in writing to the Church Secretary at least two weeks before the AGM
7. Elections shall be held by written ballot at the AGM

8. The Diaconate may co-opt a Church Member to fill a vacancy until the next AGM
9. The co-option must be reported to and confirmed by the next Church Meeting

Standing Order 5 – Membership Process

1. Applications for membership shall be made to the Pastor or a Deacon
2. Following pastoral conversation and recommendation from the Diaconate, the application shall be presented to the Church Meeting for approval
3. New Members shall be formally welcomed into fellowship during a communion service following approval
4. A Member may withdraw by notifying the Pastor or Secretary
5. The Church Meeting may, following pastoral discussion, remove a Member from the roll where there is clear and sustained disengagement from fellowship

Standing Order 6 – Amendment of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders may be amended, added to, or revoked at any Church Meeting, provided that all Members are notified in writing at least two weeks in advance and that the proposal appears on the agenda. Amendments require a simple majority (51%) of those present and voting, and any change takes effect from the close of that Meeting.

Conventions

The following describes normal practice but does not form part of the Constitution or Standing Orders:

1. The Pastor may be referred to as Reverend (Rev) or Pastor, followed by either first name or surname
2. Deacons may be referred to as Deacon followed by first or surname
3. The Pastor and Deacons may wear clerical attire when deemed appropriate for Church duties
4. Such titles and attire mark office and function only, and do not elevate any individual above the congregation