

**WHITEGATE
AND
MARTON
PARISH COUNCIL.**

STANDING ORDERS

REVISED MAY 2026

1. Meetings.

Whitegate & Marton Parish council shall meet on the 2nd Monday of every month at Whitegate Primary School, Whitegate, at 7.30pm. This may be altered in the event of a bank holiday, notice to councillors and public will be provided.

Whilst contrary to legislation, in order to preserve public health, In exceptional circumstances (for example Coronavirus Covid-19) Where meetings cannot be held face to face the Chairman in discussion with the Clerk will decide the nature of the business to be discussed and appropriate mechanism to agree decisions, this may take the form of:

- 1) No urgent business so no meeting is necessary,
- 2) Decision can be taken via email, Clerk will record the decision in the meeting minutes,
- 3) Video conferencing platform. Chairman to decide appropriate platform to conduct Parish Council business

2a. Annual Parish Assembly (renamed Annual Village Meeting).

This is a meeting of the electorate and is not a council meeting. This meeting must take place between the 1st March and the 1st June. The Whitegate and Marton Parish Council usually hold this meeting at the end of April.

2b. Annual Parish Council Meeting.

This council must hold an annual meeting in May or, in an ordinary election year, between the fourth and eighteenth day after election. This will, too, usually be in May because the normal Election Day is the first Thursday in May. In addition to the statutory annual meeting at least three other statutory meeting shall be held in each year. (Whitegate & Marton Parish Council holds a meeting every month as stated in 1 above.)

3. Chairman of the meeting.

The person who presides at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Chairman in relation to the conduct of the meeting.

4. Quorum of the council

A quorum is three members or one third of the total membership whichever is the greater. For Whitegate & Marton this would be three as we have eight councillors. If a quorum is not present at a meeting the meeting shall be adjourned and business not transacted shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the chairman may fix.

5. Voting.

If a vote is to be taken at a meeting this will be done by a show of hands On request of any member of Whitegate & Marton Parish Council the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each member present and voting gave his/her vote for or against that question. Such a request can be made before or after a vote has taken place but in any event before moving on to the next business.

The chairman has two votes, his own and the casting one. If the person presiding at the annual meeting would have ceased to be a member of the Whitegate & Marton Parish council but for the statutory provisions which preserve the membership of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman until the end of their term of office he may not give an original vote in an election for Chairman.

Meetings held by video conference link voting will continue to be taken by show of hands.

6. Order of business.

Annual Parish Council Meeting.

- a. The first business shall be to elect the Chairman and receive the Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office.
- b. In an ordinary election year of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council to fill any vacancies not filled.
- c. To elect a vice chairman.
- d. Councillors fill in their declaration of acceptance of office before or at the first meeting of the Whitegate & Marton parish Council meeting. The declaration must be made in the presence of a member of the council or proper officer of the council and if he/she fails to do so his/her office shall become vacant.
- e. Election of officers. Appoint committees and sub committees. In line with transparency regulations wef July 2015 this will be displayed annually
- f. To receive the final year-end accounts and sign them and the receipt/payment book and petty cash book.

Ordinary Meeting.

- a) Apologise and reason for absence. The reason for the absence to be recorded in a separate book as well as the minutes.
- b) Disclosure of declaration of interest. A councillor must declare any pecuniary interest in line with Code of Conduct in an item upon the agenda at the start of the meeting and is not allowed to take part in any discussion or voting on that particular item. The clerk must also record this interest not only in the minutes but also in a book of declared interests.
- c) To sign the minutes as a correct record by the person presiding the meeting.
- d) To deal with matters arising from previous meeting.
- e) To receive the clerks report and any correspondence.
- f) To receive the list of planning applications for the month.
- g) Finances. To receive and agree to the bank statement figures and the clerks bank reconciliation. To agree to pay any accounts as listed on the agenda. To agree to issue any invoices.
- h) To receive and consider any further reports, updates, meetings, as listed on the agenda.
- i) At the end of the meeting any last minute items can be looked at for information purposes or discussion only.

7. Urgent Business.

A motion to vary the order of business on the grounds of urgency may be proposed by the Chairman or by any member.

8. NOTE the councillors of the Whitegate and Marton Parish Council have requested that all minutes are to be numbered.

9. Disorderly conduct.

All members of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council must behave in a manner required by the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

At any meeting no councillor shall persistently disregard the ruling of the Chairman, obstruct business, behave irregularly, offensively, improperly or in such a manner as to scandalise the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council or bring it into contempt or ridicule.

10. To cancel a previous resolution.

A decision made by the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council whether positive or negative shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the name of at least 3 members of the council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.

When a special resolution or any other resolution moved under the provisions of the above paragraph of this order has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

11. Expenditure.

Orders for the payment of money shall be authorised by resolution of the Whitegate & Marton parish council and signed as set out in the finance procedure rules.

12. Committees and Sub Committees.

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council will appoint the committees and any sub committees and may at any other time appoint other committees as are necessary, clearly defining the roles of that committee and any delegated powers, but subject to any statutory provision in that behalf: -

- a. Shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting.
- b. May appoint persons other than members of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council to any committee and may subject to the provision of order 8 above at any time dissolve or alter the membership of the committee.
- c. Every committee shall have a chairman and the chairman shall in the case of an equality of votes have the second or casting vote.

13. To call a special meeting.

The chairman of the committee or the chairman of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council may summon an additional meeting of that committee at any time. An additional meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than a quarter of the members of the committee. The summons shall set out the business to be considered at the special meeting and no other business shall be discussed.

14. Advisory Committees.

The Whitegate & Marton Parish Council may create advisory committees, whose name and number of members and the bodies to be invited to nominate members shall be specified.

The clerk shall inform the members of each advisory committee of the terms of reference of the committee.

An advisory committee may make recommendations and give notice thereof to the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

An advisory committee may consist wholly of persons who are not members of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

15. Estimates/Precepts.

The Whitegate & Marton Parish Council will consider written estimates for the coming financial year at its October meeting.

Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the clerk a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than the end of September.

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16. Personal Interests.

If a member has a personal interest as defined by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council then he/she must declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the nature and extent of that interest as required.

If a member who has declared a personal interest then considers the interest to be prejudicial, he/she must withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item to which the interest relates.

17. Inspection of Documents.

All the minutes kept by the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council and by any committees shall be open for the inspection of any member of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

18. Admission of the public and the press to meetings.

The public and press shall be admitted to all the ordinary meetings of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council but may however be temporarily excluded if in the view of the nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be instructed to be withdrawn. The council will state the reason for the temporary exclusion.

At all the meetings of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council the public will be given the opportunity to speak for 10/15 minutes before the meeting starts on any item on the agenda or not.

The clerk shall afford to the press reasonable facilities for taking their report of any proceeding at which they are entitled to be present. Audio, video recording and photograph's of the meeting are permitted by press and public. Although permission is no longer required, it is requested that the Parish Council be informed that this will be undertaken as a matter of courtesy. Reporting of council meetings via social media is also permitted.

If a member of the public interrupt the proceedings at the meeting the chairman may after warning, order that he/she be removed from the meeting.

In the event of exceptional circumstances, the Parish Council will allow members of the public to join video conference meeting, upon prior request by emailing the Clerk 24 hours before the meeting start time.

19. Confidential Business.

Any business declared to be confidential which is discussed at a meeting, will not be revealed by any member of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council to committees or sub committees or any other person not a member of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

If any member is found to be in breach of the above then the council will remove him/her from any committee or sub committee of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

20. Planning Applications.

As soon as the clerk has received a planning application it will be entered into the planning applications spreadsheet. The following details will be entered in the spreadsheet: -

- a. A plan reference number for our own use, which will also be put on the plan.
- b. The planning application number.
- c. The date of the planning application.
- d. Who the planning application is for and the address.
- e. What the plans are for.

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Details of the planning application will be circulated to the chairman of the planning committee and the planning committee members. The plans will be seen at the next parish council meeting before a final decision is made.

Later when the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council has made its decision on a plan these comments will also be entered into the *Cheshire West and Chester Council Planning Portal*.

21. Code of Conduct on Complaints.

The Whitegate & Marton Parish Council shall deal with complaints of maladministration allegedly committed by the council or by any officer or member in such manner as adopted by the council except for those complaints that should be properly directed to the Monitoring Officer for consideration. The Complaints Procedure is attached.

22. Variation, Revocation and Suspension of Standing Orders.

A resolution permanently to add, vary or revoke a standing order shall when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

23. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Parish Council recognises its responsibility to comply with GDPR. The GDPR places a much greater emphasis on transparency, openness and fairness than previous legislation required. The Parish Council as Data Controller will ensure the Principles of Data Protection legislation will be followed in the management of personal data and that the Clerk and Councillors understand the requirements of the new legislation. Our Policies and procedure have been updated and are available on our website once approved.

24. Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Parish Council adopted the Model Publication Scheme in 2012. This represents the Council's commitment to release information proactively. A guide detailing the information routinely published and how this information can be accessed is available on the Council's website or as a hard copy.

Information which is not routinely published will be considered for release on receipt of a written request. The Clerk will respond within 20 days as per legislation. Advice and assistance will be given to help people who propose to or have made a request for information. Details of information that has been provided by the Council in response to requests will be published on a Disclosure Log under the Council's Publication Scheme. FOI Policy.

25. Health and Safety

The Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibilities as an employer for providing a safe and healthy working environment for its employees, contractors, voluntary helpers and others who may be affected by the activities of the Council.

The Council will meet its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and will provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, the resources necessary to fulfil this commitment.

The Council will seek, as and when appropriate, expert technical advice on Health and Safety to assist the Clerk in fulfilling the Council's responsibilities for ensuring safe working conditions. The Health and Safety Policy is attached together with current Risk Assessment.

26. Equality and Diversity

It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”.

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken). We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Diversity Policy is attached.

27. Requirement under Assertion 10 – Digital, Data & Information Governance.

This places stronger expectations on all local councils to demonstrate robust digital practices, secure communications, and full compliance with accessibility legislation.

This new assertion requires councils to evidence that:

- Digital systems (including websites, email and data-storage) are secure, appropriate and well-managed.
- The council operates a domain that it fully controls and that councillor and officer email accounts match the official council domain.
- Websites meet the current Public Sector Bodies (Accessibility) Regulations, which now reference WCAG 2.2 AA standards rather than WCAG 2.1.
- There is clear governance over how digital systems are managed, reviewed and documented.

Council email accounts: All councillors and officers are advised to use official email addresses associated with the council's domain.

27. Standing orders to be given to all members of the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

A copy of these standing orders will be given to each member of the council upon completion of his or her declaration of acceptance of office and written undertaking to comply with the code of Conduct adopted by the Whitegate & Marton Parish Council.

K Rayner
J Ellis

May 2026

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