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PART I - MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL

1. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1.1 Timing and business

In a year when there is an ordinary election of councillors, the Annual Meeting will take place within 21 days of the retirement of the outgoing councillors. In any other year, the Annual Meeting will take place in May, on a date to be fixed in advance.

The Annual Meeting will:

- (i) elect a person to preside if the Chairman of Council is not present;
- (ii) elect the Chairman of Council;
- (iii) appoint the Vice-Chairman of Council;
- (iv) approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (v) receive any announcements from the Chairman and/or Head of the Paid Service;
- (vi) appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in addition to the Licensing Committee and such other committees as the Council considers appropriate;
- (vii) decide the size and terms of reference for those committees with exception of the Licensing Committee (as set out in Part 3 of this Constitution);
- (viii) to elect Chairman and appoint Vice-Chairman of the Council's Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups for the ensuing Municipal Year. If the Council does not make these appointments, Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups may appoint their own Chairman and Vice-Chairman subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Council.
- (ix) consider any business set out in the notice convening the meeting;
- (x) if following a local election, to receive the report of the Chief Executive upon:-

- (i) the result of the elections of Councillors to the Wards of the Council held on the day fixed for the purpose by the Secretary of State under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972;
 - (ii) the acceptance of office of Councillors elected.
- (xi) authorisation to the payment of the proper expenses of the Elections.

The Council may elect a Leader and a Deputy Leader.

1.2 Selection of Councillors on Committees and Outside Bodies

At the Annual Meeting, the Council will:

- (i) decide the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules;
- (ii) receive nominations of Councillors to serve on each committee and outside body;
and
- (iii) appoint to those committees and outside bodies except where appointment to those bodies has been delegated by the Council.

1.3 Variation of Order of Business

Except for items (i), (ii) and (iii) of Rule 1.1 above the order of business may be varied either:

- (a) by the Chairman at his/her discretion; or
- (b) by a resolution of the Council, passed on a motion (which need not be in writing) duly proposed and seconded which, once moved, shall be put without discussion.

2. **ORDINARY MEETINGS**

2.1 **Timing and Business**

Ordinary Meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with a programme decided by the Council at an Ordinary Meeting in the previous municipal year. Ordinary Meetings will:

- (i) elect a person to preside if the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are not present;
- (ii) deal with any business required by statute to be done before any other business;
- (iii) deal with any questions submitted by Members of the Public;
- (iv) approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (v) deal with any business expressly required by statute to be done;
- (vi) receive any declarations of interest from Members;
- (vii) receive any announcements from the Chairman, Leader or Head of Paid Service;
- (viii) deal with formal questions from Members under Rule 10;
- (ix) deal with petitions or similar communications submitted by members of the public under Rule 22;
- (x) dispose of any business from the last Council meeting;
- (xi) receive a statement from the Leader of Council and receive questions and answers on that statement;
- (xii) receive reports from the Council's committees and receive questions and answers on any of those reports;

- (xiii) consider motions submitted by Members pursuant to Rule 11 in the order in which they have been received;
- (xiv) consider any other business specified in the summons to the meeting, and reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for debate; and
- (xv) to authorise, where necessary, the sealing of documents.

2.2 Variation of Order of Business

Except for items (i), (ii) and (iii) of Rule 2.1 above the order of business may be varied either:

- (a) by the Chairman at his/her discretion; or
- (b) by a resolution of the Council, passed on a motion (which need not be in writing) duly proposed and seconded which, once moved, shall be put without discussion.

3. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

3.1 Calling Extraordinary Meetings

Those listed below may request the Proper Officer to call Council meetings in addition to Ordinary Meetings:

- (i) the Council by resolution;
- (ii) the Chairman of the Council;
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer; or
- (iv) any five Members of the Council if they have signed a requisition presented to the Chairman of the Council. If the Chairman refuses to call a meeting or fails to call a meeting within five working days of the presentation of the requisition, the five members concerned may require the Proper Officer to call the meeting.

The requisition must specify the business which it is proposed to transact at the meeting.

3.2 Business

The summons for the Extraordinary Meeting must set out the specified business to be transacted, and no other business can be considered at the meeting.

4. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

The time and place of meetings will be determined by the Council in advance and notified in the summons.

5. NOTICE OF AND SUMMONS TO MEETINGS

- 5.1 The Proper Officer will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear days before a meeting, the Proper Officer will send a summons signed by him or her in writing to every Member of the Council. The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such reports as are available.

6. CHAIRMAN OF MEETING

The person presiding at the meeting may exercise any power or duty of the Chairman. Where these rules apply to committee meetings, references to the Chairman also include the chairman of committees.

7. QUORUM

The quorum of a meeting will be one quarter of the whole number of Members and shall, in any event, be not less than 3 Members. During any meeting if the Chairman counts the number of members present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next Ordinary Meeting.

8. DURATION OF MEETING

8.1 Unless the majority of Members present vote for the meeting to continue, any meeting that has lasted for three and a half hours (excluding adjournments) will adjourn immediately following conclusion of the item of business under consideration. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next Ordinary Meeting.

8.2 The closure time for meetings will be recorded in the minutes.

9. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

9.1 General

Members of the public (either residents of or those with a business interest in the District of Ryedale) may ask questions at all ordinary meetings of Full Council. The total time allowed at any meeting for questions by the public shall be half an hour.

9.2 Order of questions

Questions will be asked in the order they are received, however the Chairman may group together similar questions.

9.3 Notice of questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering the question in writing which must be sent to the Chief Executive by post or electronic mail no later than 48 hours before the day of the meeting. Each question must be accompanied by the name, address, telephone number and e-mail address (if applicable) of the questioner.

9.4 Number of questions

No person may submit more than one question at any one meeting and no more than one such question may be asked on behalf of any one organisation.

9.5 Length of questions

Questions should be no longer than 100 words in length with a preamble limited to 3 minutes duration.

9.6 **Scope of questions**

- (i) The question asked at Council must not depart from the text of the question previously submitted to the Chief Executive in writing.
- (ii) Any questions or statements must relate to a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the statutory functions of the District Council.
- (iii) The Chief Executive may reject a question if:
 - It is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the statutory functions of the District Council;
 - It is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
 - It requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
 - It relates to an individual/group business or the questioner's own particular circumstances;
 - It relates to a matter which is the subject of legal or enforcement proceedings or an appeal to a tribunal or to a Government Minister or an investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman;
 - It relates to the personal circumstances or conduct of any Officer and Councillor or conditions of service of employees;
 - It relates to the appointment, promotion, dismissal, salary or other payments, superannuation or conditions of employment or the conduct or ability of any individual employed by the Council or the conduct of a member of the Council;
 - It relates to the activities and aims of a political party or organisation;
 - It relates to individual planning applications;
 - It is a statement and not a genuine enquiry;
 - Where the preparation of the answer would require the expenditure of a disproportionate amount of time, money or effort;
 - It is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - It is about an operational matter for which an officer response is more appropriate.

9.7 **Record of questions**

The Chief Executive will enter each question in a file open to public inspection. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection.

9.8 **Asking the question at the meeting**

The Chairman will invite the questioner to put the question to him/her. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, they may ask the Chairman or Chief Executive to put the question on their behalf. A written reply will be given to the questioner within a reasonable period following the meeting.

9.9 Supplemental questions

A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chairman may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds in Rule 9.6 (iii) above. No person asking a supplementary question may speak for more than one minute.

9.10 Written answers

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time for whatever reason will be dealt with by a written answer.

9.11 Reference of question to a Committee

Unless the Chairman decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question, but any Member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee. Once seconded, such a motion will be voted on without discussion.

10. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

10.1 On reports of committees

A Member of the Council may ask the Chairman of a committee any question without notice upon an item of the report of a committee when that item is being received or under consideration by the Council.

10.2 Questions on notice at full Council

Subject to Rule 10.4, a Member of the Council may ask:

- the Chairman;
- the Leader; or
- the Chairman of any committee;
- a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Ryedale District.

10.3 **Questions on notice at committees**

Subject to Rule 10.4, a Member of a committee may ask the Chairman of it a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Ryedale District and which falls within the terms of reference of that committee.

10.4 **Notice of questions**

A Member may only ask a question under Rule 10.2 or 10.3 if either:

- (a) he/she has given notice in writing of the question to the Proper Officer not later than 5pm, eight working days before the date of the meeting; or
- (b) the question relates to an urgent matter, he/she has have the consent of the chairman to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Proper Officer by 12 noon on the day of the meeting. An urgent matter must be one which the Member could not have reasonably known about eight working days before the date of the meeting and which must be dealt with before the next ordinary meeting of Council.

10.5 **Response**

An answer may take the form of:

- (a) a direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner and all Councillors.

10.6 **Supplementary question**

A Member asking a question under Rule 10.2 or 10.3 may ask one supplementary question without notice of the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

11. **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

11.1 **Notice**

Except for motions which can be moved without notice under Rule 12, written notice of every motion, signed by at least two Members, must be delivered to the proper officer not later than 5pm, eight days before the date of the meeting. These will be entered in a file open to public inspection.

Written notice of motions may be given by email, from a ryedale.gov.uk email address. Signatures are not required in these instances but consent must be received from each Member who has put their name to the motion by e mail from a ryedale.gov.uk email address.

11.2 Motion set out in agenda

Motions for which notice has been given will be listed on the agenda in the order in which notice was received, unless the Member giving notice states, in writing, that he/she proposes to move it to a later meeting or withdraw it.

11.3 Scope

Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Ryedale District.

11.4 Debate

A motion concerning a matter within the purview of any committee which is moved and seconded shall automatically stand referred to that committee. The Chairman may, however, allow the motion to be dealt with at the meeting at which it is moved if he/she considers it convenient and conducive to the despatch of business.

11.5 Voting on Motions

At the end of a debate the motion shall be formally concluded by a vote and the numbers be recorded.

12. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

The following motions may be moved without notice:

- (a) to appoint a Chairman of the meeting at which the motion is moved;
- (b) in relation to the accuracy of the minutes;
- (c) to change the order of business in the agenda;
- (d) to refer something to an appropriate committee, body or individual;
- (e) to appoint a committee or members thereof arising from an item on the summons for the meeting;
- (f) to receive reports or adopt recommendations of committees or officers and any resolutions following from them;
- (g) to withdraw a motion;
- (h) to amend a motion;

- (i) to proceed to the next business;
- (j) that the question be now put;
- (k) to adjourn a debate;
- (l) to adjourn a meeting;
- (m) that the meeting continue beyond three and a half hours in duration (see *Rule 8*);
- (n) to suspend a particular council procedure rule;
- (o) to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information Rules;
- (p) to not hear further a Member named under Rule 19.3 or to exclude them from the meeting under Rule 19.4; and
- (q) to give the consent of the Council where its consent is required by this constitution.

13. RULES OF DEBATE

13.1 No speeches until motion seconded

No speeches may be made after the mover has moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion has been seconded.

13.2 Right to require motion in writing

Unless notice of the motion has already been given, the Chairman may require it to be written down and handed to him/her before it is discussed.

13.3 Secunder's speech

When seconding a motion or amendment, a Member may reserve his/her speech until later in the debate.

13.4 Content and length of speeches

Speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order. No speech may exceed three minutes without the consent of the Chairman.

13.5 When a member may speak again

A Member who has spoken on a motion may not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except:

- (a) to speak once on an amendment moved by another member;

- (b) to move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since he/she last spoke;
- (c) if his/her first speech was on an amendment moved by another Member, to speak on the main issue (whether or not the amendment on which he/she spoke was carried);
- (d) in exercise of a right of reply (see Rule 13.9);
- (e) on a point of order;
- (f) by way of personal explanation; or
- (g) at the discretion of the Chairman.

13.6 Amendments to motions

- (a) An amendment to a motion must be relevant to the motion and will either be:
 - (i) to refer the matter to an appropriate committee, body or individual for consideration or reconsideration;
 - (ii) to leave out words;
 - (iii) to leave out words and insert or add others; or
 - (iv) to insert or add words;as long as the effect of (ii) to (iv) is not to negate the motion.
- (b) Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.
- (c) If an amendment is not carried, other amendments to the original motion may be moved.
- (d) If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended takes the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion to which any further amendments are moved.
- (e) After an amendment has been carried, the Chairman will read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there are none, put it to the vote.

13.7 **Alteration of motion**

- (a) A Member may alter a motion of which he/she has given notice with the consent of the meeting. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- (b) A Member may alter a motion which he/she has moved without notice with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- (c) Only alterations which could be made as an amendment may be made.

13.8 **Withdrawal of motion**

A Member may withdraw a motion which he/she has moved with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion. No Member may speak on the motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.

13.9 **Right of reply**

- (a) The mover of a motion has a right to reply, if there has been a debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote.
- (b) If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion has the right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment but may not otherwise speak on the amendment. In exercising a right of reply on the motion, the mover of the motion may not introduce any new matter.
- (c) The mover of the amendment has a right of reply to the debate on his or her amendment immediately before the mover of the original motion. In exercising a right of reply to the debate on his or her amendment, the mover of the amendment may not introduce any new matter.

13.10 **Motions which may be moved during debate**

When a motion is under debate, no other motion may be moved except the following procedural motions:

- (a) to withdraw a motion;
- (b) to amend a motion;
- (c) to proceed to the next business;
- (d) that the question be now put;
- (e) to adjourn a debate;
- (f) to adjourn a meeting;
- (g) that the meeting continue beyond three and a half hours in duration (see *Rule 8*);
- (h) to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information Rules; and
- (i) to not hear further a Member named under Rule 19.3 or to exclude them from the meeting under Rule 19.4.

13.11 Closure motions

- (a) A Member may move, without comment, the following motions at the end of a speech of another Member:
 - (i) to proceed to the next business;
 - (ii) that the question be now put;
 - (iii) to adjourn a debate; or
 - (iv) to adjourn a meeting.
- (b) If a motion to proceed to next business is seconded and the Chairman thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, he or she will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply and then put the procedural motion to the vote.
- (c) If a motion that the question be now put is seconded and the Chairman thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, he/she will put the procedural motion to the vote. If it is passed he/she will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply before putting his/her motion to the vote.
- (d) If a motion to adjourn the debate or to adjourn the meeting is seconded and the Chairman thinks the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be discussed on that occasion, he/she will put the procedural motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original motion the right of reply.

13.12 Point of Order

A Member may raise a point of order at any time. The Chairman will hear it immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these Council Rules of Procedure or the law. The Member must indicate the rule or law and the way in which he/she considers it has been broken. The ruling of the Chairman on the matter will be final.

13.13 Personal explanation

A Member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation may only relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the Member which may appear to have been misrepresented in the present debate. The ruling of the Chairman on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.

14. PREVIOUS DECISIONS AND MOTIONS

14.1 Motion to rescind a previous decision

A motion or amendment to rescind a decision made at a meeting of Council within the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion is signed by at least one quarter of the whole number of Members of the Council.

Such notice of motions may be given by email, from a ryedale.gov.uk email address. Signatures are not required in these instances but consent must be received from each Member who has put their name to the motion by e mail from a ryedale.gov.uk email address.

14.2 Motion similar to one previously rejected

A motion or amendment in the same terms as, or similar terms to, one that has been rejected at a meeting of Council in the past six months cannot be moved for a further six months, unless this rule is suspended pursuant to Rule 23.

15. VOTING

15.1 Majority

Unless this Constitution provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those Members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

15.2 Chairman's casting vote

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chairman will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chairman chooses to exercise a casting vote.

15.3 Method of Voting

Voting shall be by use of the Council's electronic voting system or, as an exception approved by Council, or where the electronic system is not working, by a show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by affirmation of the meeting.

15.4 Electronic Voting

Where voting is by means of the electronic voting system the result of the vote shall be as indicated by the electronic voting system announced by the person presiding at the meeting.

15.5 Recorded vote

If, before a vote is taken, three Members present at the meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be recorded using the electronic voting system and entered into the minutes. In the case of a vote by a show of hands this should be by roll-call and the vote or abstention of each Member shall be recorded.

All votes relating to the setting of the budget and the Council Tax at Budget Council meetings shall be recorded.

15.6 Right to require individual vote to be recorded

Where any Member requests it immediately after the vote is taken, their vote will be so recorded in the minutes to show whether he/she voted for or against the motion or abstained from voting.

15.7 Voting on appointments

If there are more than two people nominated for any position to be filled, the method of voting will be by way of ballot. If there is not a clear majority of votes in favour of one person (i.e. the number of votes cast for one person is not greater than the total sum of the votes cast for all other nominees), then the name of the person with the least number of votes will be taken off the list and a new vote taken. The process will continue until there is a majority of votes for one person. If at any stage in the process there is an equal number of votes cast for two nominees when one of them is to be appointed or taken off the list the issue will be determined by the drawing of lots.

16. MINUTES

16.1 Signing the minutes

The Chairman will sign the minutes of the proceedings (including confidential minutes) at the next suitable meeting. The Chairman will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. The only part of the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.

When the minutes have been signed, Members may ask questions to ascertain what progress has been made on a particular matter referred to in the minutes, but not make any other statement or generate discussion on the minutes.

16.2 No requirement to sign minutes of previous meeting at Extraordinary Meeting

Where in relation to any meeting, the next meeting for the purpose of signing the minutes is a meeting called under paragraph 3 of schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 (an Extraordinary Meeting), then the next following meeting (being a meeting called otherwise than under that paragraph) will be treated as a suitable meeting for the purposes of paragraph 41(1) and (2) of schedule 12 relating to signing of minutes.

16.3 Form of minutes

Minutes will contain all motions and amendments in the form and order the Chairman put them. (The minutes of proceedings when the meeting was not open to the public or which disclose exempt or confidential information may not be made available to the public but a summary of the proceedings will be made available where the minutes open to inspection do not provide a reasonably fair and coherent record - See the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution).

17. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

A record of attendance will be made by the officer supporting the meeting for each committee, sub-committee or working party.

18. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

Members of the public and press may only be excluded either in accordance with the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution or Rule 20 (Disturbance by Public).

19. MEMBERS' CONDUCT

19.1 Standing to speak

When a Member speaks at Full Council he/she must, where possible, stand and address the meeting through the Chairman. If more than one Member stands, the Chairman will ask one to speak and the other(s) must sit. Other Members must remain seated whilst a Member is speaking unless they wish to make a point of order or a point of personal explanation. The Chairman has the right to waive the requirement for a Member to stand to speak where he/she considers it appropriate to do so.

19.2 Chairman standing

When the Chairman stands during a debate, any Member speaking at the time must stop and sit down. The meeting must be silent.

19.3 **Member not to be heard further**

If a Member persistently disregards the ruling of the Chairman by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business, the Chairman may move that the Member be not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

19.4 **Member to leave the meeting**

If the Member continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, the Chairman may move that either the Member leaves the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

19.5 **General disturbance**

If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting for as long as he/she thinks necessary.

20. **DISTURBANCE BY PUBLIC**

20.1 **Removal of member of the public**

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room.

20.2 **Clearance of part of meeting room**

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared.

21. **RECORDING AND OTHER EQUIPMENT**

Anyone who wishes to use an electronic device to record, photograph, film or make live text based communications of public meetings of Council or any Committee or Sub-Committee may do so provided:

- (i) The electronic device is set to silent mode;
- (ii) There is no interference with the proceedings of Council or Committee (including the use of flash photography);
- (iii) There is no interference with the sound system used for meetings of Council or a Committee.

As a courtesy it is requested that the Chairman of the meeting be notified in advance so that all those present at the meeting can be made aware that recording is taking place.

Permission to use electronic devices may be withdrawn by the Chairman of the meeting at any time, if it is causing disturbance or disruption to the meeting, and use of the electronic device in the meeting must cease.

These requirements do not apply to the use of equipment for providing assistance for people with a disability.

22. PETITIONS

Petitions will be considered by Council in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Petition Scheme. The Council's Petition Scheme is set out at Part 5 of this constitution.

These provisions do not apply to any petition or similar communication concerning planning applications or similar matters which must be presented direct to the Planning Committee.

23. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

23.1 Suspension

All of these Council Rules of Procedure except Rule 15.6 and Rule 16.2 may be suspended by motion on notice or without notice if at least one half of the whole number of Members of the Council are present. Suspension can only be for the duration of the meeting.

23.2 **Amendment**

Any motion to add to, vary or revoke these Council Rules of Procedure will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.