

DUNSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is designed to promote efficient administration of meetings, avoid inquorate meetings, and permit timely rescheduling of meetings where necessary. It will also provide accountability for Members.

2. Apologies for Absence

Members shall give as much advance notice as possible of absence from all meetings either by mentioning at a previous meeting, email, or telephone to the Parish Clerk.

The deadline for minuted receipt of an apology for absence shall be 1 day prior to the meeting commencing.

3. Extended Periods of Absence

A Councillor who does not attend any meetings for a period of six consecutive months will automatically cease to be a Member of the Council unless the reason for absence is approved by the Council before the end of the period¹.

If absence becomes necessary for extended periods, Councillors are advised to submit a written request via the Parish Clerk giving the reason for absence, for approval by the Council.

4. Recording and Publishing Attendance

For all meetings of the Council, the Clerk will record Members' attendance, or non-attendance with or without apologies, within the minutes of the meeting.

Guidance from Electoral Commission - Failure to attend meetings

If an elected member fails to attend any meetings of the authority for a period of six months without being subject to any of the special exceptions listed below, they will cease to be qualified to be a member of the authority.

This applies to failure to attend full meetings of the council and any meeting of the authority, or its committees. Where a member acts as a representative of the local authority with another organisation, attendance of any meetings of that body is also classed as a qualifying meeting provided that the elected member is a member of the body concerned. The special exceptions are where:

- the authority has resolved during the period to excuse a particular member from missing a meeting.
- the member is serving in the armed forces at a time of war or emergency and the Secretary of State decides they should not lose their seat due to their service.
- the member is suspended from office.

Once an elected member has missed meetings for a period of six months without being subject to a special exception, the council must formally declare the seat to be vacant. This must be done immediately, six months after their last attendance. The date of the vacancy is the date on which the council makes the declaration.

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| 1. Review | March 2025 | RjM |
| 2. Review | March 2026 | |
| 3. Review | March 2027 | |