

Local Governance Handbook for Waterwatch UK

This handbook supports the Waterwatch UK Constitution and sets out the principles, structures, and expectations for the organisation's local governance, local operations, and local community engagement.

1. Waterwatch Community Committees

Purpose:

- Represent local community voices
- Coordinate local Waterwatch panels and summits
- Advise the national CIO on emerging local concerns

Structure:

- Minimum of 3 and maximum of 9 members
- Roles: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Outreach Lead (optional)
- Term: 1-year term, renewable

Appointment:

- Nominations invited from local groups and residents
- Approved by a vote within the existing community group or CIO trustees if a new committee is being formed

Membership Requirement:

- Only registered Waterwatch UK members for the region may vote or stand for the Community Committee
- Members have no voting rights over national CIO governance

Stakeholder Participation:

- Stakeholders (e.g. MPs, councillors, water company reps) may be invited as non-voting participants
- They may contribute to discussions, offer updates, and support collaboration
- They do not vote in committee elections or decisions and may not stand for committee roles

2. Meetings and Decision-Making

Types of Meetings:

- Waterwatch Summits (public)
- Committee Planning Meetings (local and national)
- Community Meeting Panels

Protocols:

- Agenda circulated at least 5 days in advance
- Minutes published within 10 days
- Quorum: 50% of appointed members
- Decisions by majority vote

3. Code of Conduct

Expected Behaviours:

- Show respect to all participants
- Listen actively and speak constructively
- Avoid personal attacks and maintain professionalism

Unacceptable Conduct:

- Harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- Defamation or malicious allegations
- Disruption of meetings or disregard for the chair's authority

Enforcement:

- Initial warning by Chair or facilitator
- Repeated breach: referral to trustees
- Serious misconduct: removal from role or exclusion from meetings

4. Transparency and Accountability

Commitments:

- All meeting minutes and decisions to be published on request
- Local financial statements shared annually with the public
- All members must declare relevant conflicts of interest

5. External Engagement and Partnerships

Principles:

- Remain politically neutral
- Collaborate constructively with campaign groups, government, and regulators
- Prioritise the public interest and environmental protection

Process:

- Stakeholders may be invited to participate in summits or advisory groups
- External groups must follow the same conduct rules while involved in Waterwatch activities

6. Review

- This Handbook shall be reviewed annually by the trustees
- Changes may be proposed by any member and must be approved by the trustee board

