

## **Public Participation at Parish Council Meetings**

Meetings of the Parish Council are not public meetings but members of the public have a statutory right to attend as observers. Parwich Parish Council encourages public participation at its meetings. To ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to talk, we have introduced guidance on how you can best have your say, and make the most of your time when you speak. To ensure everyone gets a fair-share of the available time, this session is limited to a maximum time of ten minutes, you will only be able to speak once for up to three minutes. However if there are more people wanting to speak then the session allows the maximum time for individuals to speak may be reduced, with the time being divided equally between each person.

- You will be asked to give the Clerk your name and address. This is to establish that you are a parishioner. Non-Parishioners may only speak if invited to do so.
- To make the best use of your time, please be brief and to the point. You will not be allowed to over- run your time.
- If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic, please nominate one person to speak on the subject. This will avoid duplication and make the best use of the public participation period.
- Any member of the Council, who has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest on an item to be discussed, will be allowed the same rights and time as a member of the public for this session.
- Owing to the short time you have to put your views across photographs or display material will not be accepted at the meeting, but may be sent to the Clerk at least 5 days before the meeting, so they can be disseminated to the Councillors. The same applies to written submissions.
- Please avoid derogatory or defamatory statements. If the Chair feels that this is the case you may be asked to stop speaking.
- The Chair has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and will not be accepted.
- Neither Councillors nor the Clerk should be put under pressure to respond immediately to comments under public participation. Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto the council agenda nor to insist on how matters are recorded in the minutes.
- A question raised by a member of the public during a public participation session shall not require a response and normally there would be no debate or discussion between the Council and the public. At the discretion of the Chair however, the Council may ask questions of the member of the public to clarify their statement.
- If matters raised by the public are not on the agenda for the meeting, these can be used to form part of the agenda for a future meeting at the discretion of the Council. The Council can only pass resolutions regarding items publicised on the agenda.

- If the issue is on the agenda, then it will be discussed under the appropriate item or may be raised under Matters Arising from the Public Participation. At the discretion of the Chair, standing orders may be suspended to allow the member of the public further explanation regarding the agenda item being discussed by the Council.
- Members of the public are requested to leave their contact details with the Clerk before leaving the meeting if they wish to receive a reply to their query when the matter has been resolved by the Council. This may not be until after a subsequent meeting, consultation with outside professionals/agencies or following receipt of information from outside professionals/agencies.
- All persons present will act respectfully towards every other person present and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates. All statements, questions and responses, challenges to statements, complaints or criticisms must be made politely, be related to the facts of the matter and not be personal in nature. There should be no reference to personal views on any person.

### PROCEDURE AT THE MEETING

- Most meetings of the Parish Council take place in the Meeting Room in the Memorial Hall, Parwich. Please check with the Clerk before the meeting in case there has been any change.
- You will be asked to sit in seats at the back of the Meeting Room.
- The Chair will announce that Public Participation has commenced and if you wish to speak, invite you to do so.
- The time limit will be strictly enforced and the Chair will notify you when you have 30 seconds left. Please have the respect and courtesy you would wish for yourself when others present their thoughts.
- After you have finished speaking, you are welcome to sit and listen to the debate and other workings of the Council, but will not be able to take part in further discussion or interact with members of the Council.
- After Public Participation the Parish Council will continue with items as listed in the agenda.
- Where the presence of the public is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons the public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- The Chair has responsibility for the smooth running of the meeting. His/her decision on procedural matters is final. Please contact the Parish Clerk, contact details on Parwich Parish Council Website.