

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

### **Introduction.**

*This policy supersedes previous policy and any expectations that may have been established by the previous conduct of meetings.*

Meetings of Parish Councils are not public meetings, but members of the public have a statutory right to attend as observers.

There is no right for members of the public to speak at Parish Council meetings. However, it is regarded as good practice to provide an opportunity for members of the public to make brief statements of their views.

It is not possible for members of the public to discuss subjects with the Council during meetings.

### **Public speaking.**

- The total allotted time for public speaking is limited to ten minutes.
- The Chair determines who may speak and for how long.
- If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic, they may wish to nominate one person to speak in order to make best use of the time.
- Members of the public may be asked to confirm that they are on the electoral role in the Parish. Non-Parishioners may only speak if invited to do so.
- The Council, and Clerk, will not answer questions during public speaking. Members of the public may be asked to pause speaking so that questions can be noted for the Council to respond to later.

### **Responding to public speaking.**

- The following ARE permitted under matters arising from public speaking.
  - For Councillors, or the Clerk, to provide answers to questions raised, or comment on statements made, where these are matters of fact such as
    - Items which have been recorded in previous minutes.
    - Matters covered by published policies.
    - Matters relating to published legislation, or good practice, for the functioning of Parish Councils.
    - Clarification regarding the appropriate authority for addressing matters which are not the responsibility of the Parish Council.
  - Suspending Standing Orders to permit the Council to ask questions of a member of the public in order to clarify their statement.
  - Bringing forward an item on the agenda relating to a matter raised during public speaking.
  - Agreeing that a subject raised during public speaking should be placed on the agenda of a subsequent meeting.
- The following are NOT permitted.
  - For members of the public to request a further opportunity to address the Council in

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ADOPTED November 2024.

For details of latest review see meeting minutes and document management system.

- response to statements made by Councillors or the Clerk.
- For the Council to discuss, or consider its position, regarding any matter not already covered by the published agenda.

**General.**

- A member of the Council, who has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in an item to be discussed, is allowed the same rights to public speaking as a member of the public.
- The Chair may ask members of the public to confirm that they have read, and accepted, this policy, before permitting them to speak.
- The distribution of written material, or photographs, during public speaking is not permitted. These can however be sent to the Clerk in advance of the meeting and will be circulated to Councillors if time permits.
- Members of the public may request that items be added to the agenda of a forthcoming meeting. But items cannot be added to an agenda once it has been published. Agendas are published a minimum of three clear days (excluding Sundays) before the meeting. **In practice, for meetings generally occurring on a Wednesday, requests for agenda items not acknowledged by the Clerk by the previous Thursday are unlikely to be included.** This applies to Councillors as well as members of the Public.
- The inclusion of items on the agenda will be at the discretion of the Chair (subject to confirmation from the Clerk that they are proper matters for the Council to discuss).
- There is no right for statements made during public speaking to be recorded in the minutes. At the discretion of the Clerk a brief account of the issues raised may be included where this background may assist others in understanding the subsequent actions of the Council.
- Disorderly conduct at meetings is dealt with under section 2 of the Parish Council's Standing Orders.