



Public Participation Policy

Author of Policy	
Date Effective From	
Review Date	
Version	
Signed By	

Attendance

Meetings of the Parish Council are not public meetings, but members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the council as observers. They have no legal right to speak unless the Parish Council Chair authorises them to do so. However, as part of its community engagement, Parish Councils can set out a time for public participation at an agreed time when members of the public are invited to speak. Members of the public should not be involved in the decision-making of the Council. The Council should not make any instant decisions at the behest of members of the public on items that are not included in the agenda.

As a matter of best practice the public forum will be kept separate from the debate of the councillors. If matters raised 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. Members of the public are welcome to stay for the Council meeting after the public session as observers but will not be able to join in the discussion unless invited to do so by the Chair. Members of the public may be excluded by a resolution of the meeting for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence (e.g. staffing matters, tenders for contracts, some legal issues).

Please note: *Offensive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings of any meeting, the Council reserves the right to curtail the contribution of that person and exclude a disorderly person.*

Representations:

Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions, and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.

- The period which is designated for public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes.
- Each member of the public is entitled to speak once and shall not speak for more than five minutes.
- A question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or debate.
- A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak.
- Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Chair.
- Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Chair shall direct the order of speaking.
- The Chair may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- If topics are duplicated one person shall be nominated to be spokesperson.
- Members of the public are requested to leave their contact details with the Clerk before leaving the Council meeting if they wish to receive a written reply to their query.
- The Chair reserves the right to state a question is deemed inappropriate for the meeting.
- All statements, questions and responses must 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.
- A brief record of topics raised at public participation will be included in the minutes of that meeting.

END