

SMITH'S WOOD PARISH COUNCIL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings of the Parish Council are **NOT** public meetings. Members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Council as observers.

Members of the public have no legal right to speak unless the Parish Council Chair authorises them to do so. However, as part of its community engagement, the Parish Council set out a time for public participation of fifteen minutes when members of the public are invited to speak.

Members of the public should **NOT** be involved in the decision-making of the Council, and the Council should not make any instant decisions at the behest of members of the public on items that are not on the agenda. As a matter of best practice, 'Public Participation' will be kept separate from the debate of the councillors.

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 for the rest of the meeting.

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).

RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Public Participation shall not exceed fifteen minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting.
- The time for each member of the public to speak is limited to three minutes.
- If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic, they should nominate one person to speak on their behalf. This will avoid duplication and make the best use of the time set aside for Public Participation.
- Information handouts brought to the meeting should be placed on the table provided to avoid delaying or disrupting the meeting.
- The Chair has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and will not be accepted and stop the speaker from continuing to speak. If the speaker ignores the requests of the Chair, they will be asked to leave the meeting, if they refuse to leave the meeting, the Police may be called upon to remove them from the meeting.
- Neither Councillors nor the Clerk will respond to comments received by members of the public during Public Participation. If the topic they are speaking about is on the agenda, it will be debated using the correct process.
- Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto the Council and/or Committee agendas.
- Members of the public do not have a right to insist on how matters are recorded in the

minutes.

- A question raised by a member of the public during Public Participation shall not require a response and there will be no debate or discussion by Councillors. The Chair will direct this.
- A brief record of topics raised during Public Participation will be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- All person's present will act respectfully towards every other person in attendance. They must not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens, or intimidates another person. All statements, questions, responses, challenges to statements, complaints or criticisms must be made appropriately and politely.
- All statements, questions and responses must be related to the facts of the matter and not be personal in nature. There should be no personal reference made to any persons or persons identified at the meeting.

PLEASE NOTE:

Offensive and/or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. If a member of the public disrupts the proceedings of any meeting the Council reserves the right to curtail their contribution.

If a member of the public persists in disrupting the meeting after receiving two warnings from the Chair, the third reminder will result in the person(s) causing the disruption to be asked to leave the meeting. If a member of the public refuses to leave the meeting the Police will be called up to remove them.