
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS

Meetings of the Parish Council are not public meetings but members of the public are very welcome to attend as observers, as is their statutory right. They have no legal right to speak unless the Parish Council Chairman authorises them to do so. However, as part of its community engagement, Berryfields Parish Council sets out a time for the public participation as part of the agenda. This is an agreed time when members of the public are invited to speak.

If feasible, members of the public are asked to make contact prior to the meeting to inform the Clerk of the wish to speak or raise an issue. This will allow the Clerk to research or bring along any information to the meeting which may help with the query or that may assist the Councillors in answering any question.

Members of the public are not involved in the decision-making of the Council. If the Council is able then they will answer any question put them at the meeting, however the Council will not make any instant decisions at the behest of members of the public on items that are not included in the agenda. The Chairman may at any time choose that a question asked by a member of the public be directed to another Councillor for an oral response or to an Officer for a written or oral response. 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 do not have a right to insist how matters are recorded in the minutes. A brief record of topics raised at public participation will be included in the minutes of that meeting, but libellous, offensive and discriminatory comments will not be minuted.

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 Chairman. Members of the public may be excluded by a resolution of the meeting for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence (eg. Staffing matters, tenders for contracts, some legal issues).

Councils and other local government bodies are required to allow any members of the public to take photographs, film and audio-record the proceedings, and report on all public meetings. While no prior permission is required to carry out this activity, it is courtesy to inform those present that there is an intention to film or audio-record a public meeting.

Points to note

- The public participation session will be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes
- In line with the Parish Council standing orders a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic then they should nominate one person to speak on their behalf. This will avoid duplication and make best use of the public participation period.

BERRYFIELDS PARISH COUNCIL

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- The Chairman has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and will not be accepted.
 - All persons present will act respectfully towards every other person present and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates him or her. All statements, questions and responses, challenges to statements, complaints or criticisms must be made 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 reference to personal views on any person.
 - No paperwork/plans/photographs are allowed to be circulated by a speaker at the meeting. This must be done in advance of the date of the meeting via the Clerk if required.

Document History

Approved and adopted November 2023 (version 1)