

LYTHE PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY COVERING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION AT A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

There will be a public participation session at the beginning of each Parish Council meeting, during which members of the public may address the Council on any issue over which the Council has a power. Any complaints should be made through the Council's complaints procedure.

Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only for up to 3 minutes, with the total session lasting up to 15 minutes or at the discretion of the Chairman. If a member of the public wishes to speak, they should raise their hand and wait for the Chairman to invite them to speak, they should then address the Council through the Chairman. If several people want to speak on the same topic, they should appoint a spokesperson to speak for them all.

The Council is not obliged to answer any questions asked nor debate an issue raised by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting. However, if the Council does make a response, it shall be given through the Chairman. An individual may be advised that the Council requires more time to investigate the concern before the individual receives a full response or that the individual needs to put the concern(s) in writing.

A record of a public participation session shall be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Any person deemed to be acting offensively or improperly, or disrupting the business of the meeting, will be asked by the Chair to moderate their behaviour. If they do not comply with this request, any Councillor can ask for them to be excluded from the meeting. If seconded, this motion will be put to the vote without further discussion.

For Information:

- The Parish Council is required to follow certain rules and procedures as defined by the Local Government Act 1972 and are set out in its Standing Orders. Therefore, the Parish Council cannot make decisions on items that have not been included on the agenda. Items not on the agenda that are discussed and relate to urgent parish health and safety or maintenance issues can be delegated to the Clerk to deal with.
- If members of the public raise issues not timetabled for discussion, they may be included on the next appropriate agenda at the discretion of the council. If the matter raised is already on the agenda, it will be discussed by the Council during the meeting.
- Members of the public may only make contributions during the Public Participation Session. At other times, the discussion is restricted to the Council. However, the public are welcome to stay in the meeting and listen to the debate, if they wish.
- Occasionally, for legal reasons, there are items which need to be discussed without the presence of the press or public. When this happens, any members of the public present will be directed to leave. It should be noted, however, that any decisions taken during private sessions are public knowledge and will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting.