



HEADCORN PARISH COUNCIL



Public participation and questions policy

The following information sets out to advise and make the Public aware of their access, rights and limitations in respect of participation and questions at Meetings of the Parish Council.

All Council Meetings must be advertised and open to the Public and disability legislation requires the Council to make its Meetings accessible to anyone who wishes to attend.

At least three days clear notice must be given before each Council Meeting and notices displayed in a prominent place in the Parish. The four notice-boards are located as follows:

Foreman's Centre (rear of Sainsbury's)
Village Hall
Library
Hawkenbury

It is unlawful to make a decision without sufficient notice and if not included on the Agenda for that Meeting. Topics requiring decisions cannot be added to the Agenda after the deadline of three clear days has passed.

Council Meetings have a clear purpose – to make decisions. Meetings are Public events and the Public has the right to observe how the Council operates. Exceptions are when sensitive issues are discussed (such as legal, contractual or personnel matters) and then the Council can agree to exclude the Public for just that item.

The Standing Orders (rules) set by the Council will determine procedures for Public participation.

The Public Session is at the discretion of the Council. It is not a legal requirement to hold a Public Session and the Public have no legal right to contribute to any Meeting. However, it is considered 'best practice' to allow the Public to express their views or to ask questions. Public questions are not part of the Meeting itself, and the Council must agree to take them before the Meeting starts or to adjourn the Meeting for that purpose.

Public questions do not form part of the minutes but any items are noted on an addendum page.

Public questions regarding any issue than could be regarded as 'complex' or 'substantial' should be put in writing to the Council in order for a reflective and full response to be given, rather than an 'off the cuff' answer which may be inaccurate.



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The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting is at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting or any other issue relevant to the Parish. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes

It is the duty of the Chairman to control the Public Session to ensure good order is maintained at Meetings.

Caroline Carmichael
9th December 2020
HPC PP & Q 2020/1