



Lancing Parish Council

Public Participation at Meetings Policy

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 All members of the public and press are welcome to attend meetings of Lancing Parish Council and have a legal right to do so under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.
- 1.2 A Council Meeting is not a public meeting; it is a meeting held in public and there is no requirement in law to provide an opportunity for the public to question the Council, however Lancing Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to offer it.
- 1.3 Many councils give members of the public an opportunity to address the council and to raise issues of local concern. This is a useful way for councillors to hear directly from their local electors.
- 1.4 Lancing Parish Council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement and as such, residents are warmly invited to attend and contribute during *Public Forum & Questions* time and when prompted to do so during the meeting.
- 1.5 The agenda is the official order of business for Parish Council meetings. By law, the Parish Council cannot take action on issues that are not listed in the agenda.
- 1.6 The public participation session is on the Council's agenda and therefore part of the meeting. The Clerk will include any discussion within the minutes.
- 1.7 Members of the public may suggest items to be included on the agenda for a future council or committee meeting.
- 1.8 A meeting shall not exceed a period of two and a half hours.

2.0 NOTICE OF A MEETING

- 2.1 Statute requires that three clear days (at least) before a meeting of a parish council, notice of the time and place of such meeting has to be displayed in some conspicuous place within the parish.
- 2.2 **Full Council**
The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.
- 2.3 **Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council**
The minimum three clear days public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.

3.0 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 3.1 Members of the public may ask questions and make statements at a Council or Committee meeting, but only relating to items of business on the agenda.
- 3.2 Members of the public will also be given the opportunity to express opinions at each main agenda item and when prompted to do so during the meeting, and also at the end of the meeting to identify any issues to be added to future agendas.

- 3.3 A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort).
- 3.4 A member of the public shall not speak for more than three minutes.
- 3.5 Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- 3.6 A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

4.0 RECORDING OF MEETINGS

- 4.1 A person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public.
- 4.2 To *report* means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.
- 4.3 A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.
- 4.4 Refer to our Recording of Public Meetings Policy (2017) for further guidance and information.

5.0 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- 5.1 No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. The chairman of the meeting may request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- 5.2 If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- 5.3 If a resolution to exclude is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

6.0 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC DURING CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

- 6.1 Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media may be excluded from a meeting during the consideration of items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.
- 6.2 Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons.

6.3 The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.