

Public Participation Policy May 2023 (Review Date May 2024)

Introduction

Chigwell Parish Council wishes to encourage public participation during its meetings in order to use this as one means of consulting with the public. A council meeting is not a public meeting, it is a meeting held in public. The Council recognises that rules must control the manner of participation in order that the Council Meeting may continue to operate effectively. Public participation is an opportunity for members of the public to make representations to the Council. The Public may ask questions and give evidence relating to items on the agenda.

Principles, Rules and Orders

- 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.
- The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with Council's Standing Orders shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting. Subject to the above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 5 minutes.
- While Councillors will endeavour to respond to any questions that are raised, they cannot take a decision on any issue raised during a public participation session unless the issue is specified on the agenda of that meeting or the Clerk has delegated powers to deal with it as urgent.
- Members of the public may also make representations, answer questions and give evidence during a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda
- Members of the public will not be involved in the decision-making process of the Council.
- Speaking during public participation will be limited to parishioners of the Parish of Chigwell. A member of the public who is not a parishioner may be permitted to speak with the permission of the Chair of the meeting.
- A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak. The Chair may request a person to stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort).
- A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chair of the meeting.
- Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

- Any Member of the Council who has declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on an item to be discussed will be allowed the same rights and time as a member of the public for public participation. The member will be considered acting as a private individual during public participation and not be acting as a Councillor.

All persons present will act respectfully towards every other person present and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates others. All statements, questions and responses, challenges to statements, complaints or criticisms must be made politely, 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 other person. Any statements, questions or responses considered offensive or likely to be interpreted as threatening behaviour will not be tolerated.

Everyone is asked to respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct Council business and interruptions during Council business are not permitted. If the business is disrupted in any way the person or persons causing the disruption may be asked to leave or the meeting adjourned for as long as considered necessary.

Approval

This policy was approved at the Parish Council Meeting on 23 May 2023