

Burton & Winkton Parish Council

Meeting Protocol

Participation in the Open Forum

This Council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement and therefore warmly invites members of the public, the press, the police and ward councillors to attend meetings and contribute within the open forum. 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, but this council welcomes the opportunity to offer it.

Members of the public are asked to respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct council business and interruptions during council business are not permitted. If, in the opinion of the Chairman, the business of the meeting is disrupted in any way, the Chairman will ask the person/s causing the disruption to be quiet and if they refuse then ask them to leave.

Public participation is permitted regarding items on any topic within the remit of the parish council. Written questions received in advance of the meeting are encouraged but not essential: if provided in advance this will make it easier for an answer to be prepared. The council will not enter into any substantive discussion on a question raised if it is unable to answer a question directly. If members of the public are unsure whether a question is within the remit of the parish council, then the clerk will be able to answer this.

Public participation will be for a maximum period of 20 minutes and will take place early on in the agenda so that councillors may take into account views expressed when reaching decisions. If a question relates to a topic on the agenda then the Chairman may decide to address it immediately.

Members of the public should note that the council is only allowed to take decisions on topics that are publicised on the agenda, excepting items delegated to the clerk. Agenda items may be suggested no later than 1 week before each parish council meeting.

All communication at meetings shall be through the Chairman. Councillors may not address questions raised by members of the public except through and with the permission of the Chairman. Members of the public may not address individual councillors except through, and with the permission of the Chairman. Councillors and members of the public must respect the role of the Chairman and may be asked to leave if in the opinion of the Chairman they breach this protocol in a way that disrupts the orderly conduct of the meeting.

This council will provide an opportunity via the agenda for the police and ward councillors to attend and report to meetings and respond to any questions or queries from Council.

The Chairman may, at his or her discretion, invite a member of the public to speak on an agenda item during the parish council meeting if, in the opinion of the Chairman, that individual has relevant information not available to the parish council which will help in its deliberations.

Code of Conduct

Members of the parish council are bound by a [Code of Conduct](#)

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

See [Code of Conduct](#) - Appendix B Registering Interests

Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

See [Code of Conduct](#) - Appendix B Declaring Interests

What is the Role of a Chairman

A Chairman:

- Is a member of the Council and is elected annually
- Has the authority at meetings and must be obeyed
- Is the interface between the public and the Council
- The one to welcome speakers and make them 'feel at home'
- Is to make sure the decision is clear for the clerk to act upon

Note: The Chairman on his own has no power to make decisions

Presiding at the first Annual Meeting of the Parish Council:

The retiring chairman, or in his or her absence, the vice chair must preside at the meeting for the first item on the agenda 'To Elect Chairman'. If it is a meeting after an election then the retiring chair or vice chair presides, even if they are no longer councillors. If both are absent then the meeting may appoint another councillor to preside. It is illegal for a clerk to take the chair at a meeting.

Election of a Chair:

If the presiding chair is no longer to be a member of the council then he only has a casting vote. If he is still going to be a member then he has a vote and a casting vote (he can vote for himself if he wants). The chairman of the council should give a report to the Annual Parish Meeting on the activity of the council.

Once voted in, the new chair signs his declaration of acceptance of office and presides over the meeting immediately.

What does a good chairman do?

Plan the meeting with the clerk and ensure that everything on the agenda is legal.

Brief themselves and prepare fully – study all relevant information and anticipate the needs and interests of the members. The Chairman can then answer questions or deal with requests for information.

Be punctual – the Chairman should set a good example by arriving early to check the arrangements and welcome members, the public and any visiting speakers.

Conduct the meeting

1. Check there is a quorum (minimum number of members needed to make the meeting legal)
2. Call the meeting to order and declare it open
3. Welcome members, the public and visiting speakers to the meeting and remind everyone present that under the 2014 Regulations they may be filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise reported about
4. Introduce the standard items on the agenda – apologies; declarations of interest; confirmation of minutes of previous meeting
5. Introduce the agenda items and ensure that all members know what they have to achieve and how they might do it encourage participation
6. Stimulate an exchange of ideas and experience
7. Ensure that all have a chance to express their views freely
8. Keep the members aware of objectives
9. Maintain focus
10. Guide and progress discussion towards achieving the objectives
11. Manage conflict
12. Be fair and balanced
13. Preserve order
14. Enforce rules of procedure
15. Rule on disputed matters