

Denstone Parish Council

Public Participation in Meetings

In preparing this Protocol, Denstone Parish Council has referred to guidance published by the National Association of Local councils (NALC) and adopted by Staffordshire Parish Councils Association.

1. Participation in the Public Forum by members of the public

Public Participation provides an opportunity for members of the public to make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

In accordance with standing order 3(e), 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 at (or before) the next meeting.

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

The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e), shall not exceed twenty minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than five minutes.

A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak. The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.

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.

Councillors with a prejudicial interest in an agenda item will be allowed to speak during this agenda item, and then leave the room when the item is considered by the other Councillors.

At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may raise comments about matters such as hedges, street lights, potholes and similar topics during public participation, provided these are relevant to a matter before the Council and within its terms of reference. Alternatively, such matters should be notified directly to the Clerk of the Council either by letter, phone or email.

The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.

2. Participation in Public Forum by persons other than members of the public

Denstone Parish Council will automatically provide an opportunity via the agenda for the Police, Emergency Services, and the County and District Councillors to attend and report to meetings and respond to any questions or queries from Councillors. A written report may be sent if attendance in person is not possible. At the Council's discretion, the overall time limit on this section is **thirty** minutes.