

Information about public participation at Town Council Meetings

A Town Council meeting is a meeting held in public but is not a public meeting.

Members of the public have a legal right to attend decision making meetings of the Town Council and its committees, except where they are excluded for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence (e.g. staffing matters or tenders for contracts).

Members of the public have no legal right to speak at meetings of the Town Council or its committees and so when they are allowed to do so, it is considered a privilege.

The Council sets aside time for public participation during which members of the public may make a representation, contribution, suggestion or ask a question.

Public participation is not to be used to demand information that is already available to the public or will be made available in accordance with statute or to raise matters which are not within the control of or relevant to the Town Council.

It is recognised that some members of the public may abuse the opportunity to speak.

Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto the Council agenda.

While the Chairman will endeavour to ensure an answer to a question this may be refused if continuous representations are made or repetitive questions asked.

The Chairman's decision to allow a question or require an answer to be given will be final.

Members of the public should not heckle or otherwise disrupt and must respect the rulings of the chair. The Chairman of any meeting has the right to exclude a disorderly person(s) and to adjourn the meeting.