

WINKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

SCHEME FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL AND OTHER MEETINGS

1. Why have a scheme

All issues raised by the public under this scheme will be given careful consideration.

While it will not be possible in every case to resolve an issue to the satisfaction of everyone, the Council is committed to a process that ensures the issue is considered fairly.

2. What can the Public do?

The public may use this scheme to make a submission to Councillors at a meeting in one of four ways.

3. Petition

To present a petition at a Council or Committee meeting, in order to request the Council to deal with any particular issue within the community. There is no minimum number of signatures.

4. Question

Ask a question at a Council or Committee meeting. This must be directed at the person chairing the meeting. The question must be about a Council service, or something the Council has done or has not done.

5. Statement

To make a Statement to a Council or Committee meeting about a Council service, about something the Council has or has not done, or about a matter of local interest or concern.

6. Deputation

To present to a Council or Committee meeting a Deputation calling for action by the Council, registering a view about something the Council has or has not done, or about a matter of community interest.

A Deputation may only be made on behalf of an organised group of residents or other interested parties.

7. What falls outside the Scheme

Some matters fall outside the scope of this scheme. These are:

- * individual's circumstances where it would not be appropriate for details to be aired in open session;
- * submissions of a defamatory nature will not be accepted.

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8. Advice on content

The Clerk of the Council will give advice to the public about the content of their submissions and the process.

The Clerk will also advise the Chairman on such matters as necessary.

9. Who can use the Scheme?

The scheme is open to any resident in the parish.

The scheme is also open to a representative of a business operating in the parish.

This scheme is not open to employees of the Council wishing to make representations in that capacity. Employees' rights as private citizens to use this scheme are preserved.

10. At which meetings may submissions be made?

Any submission under this scheme may be made at any ordinary meeting of the full Council other than the Annual Meeting, or of any Committee.

11. Period of notice

Members of the public wishing to use this scheme must give advance notice to the Clerk of the Council. This will ensure that time is available to prepare advice for the meeting, an individual Councillor or the person making the submission.

The periods of notice are as follows:

8 working days before the meeting

Deputations
Statements

6 working days before the meeting

Petitions
Questions

12. What the notice should contain

This notice should describe what form of submission is to be made and at which meeting and must identify the subject of the submission.

A question must be set out in full and a written summary of all points to be raised in any other form of submission must be provided.

13. Relevance to Council

In the case of a submission to the Council meeting, the content must be about something that is within the Council's responsibilities. This includes matters of interest to the Council as a community leader.

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14. Relevance to Committee

In the case of a direct submission to a Committee the subject matter must be about something that is within the remit of the meeting.

15. Named individuals

The notice must identify the name of the individual who will be making the representation. This will enable the Clerk to advise the Chairman who to call at the meeting.

Only one person may speak at the meeting. In the case of a Statement or Deputation on behalf of more than one person, the notice should identify others who are party to the submission.

16. Support for public

The prospect of speaking at a formal meeting of a local authority may be daunting for the public. Every help and support will be made available to those who wish to use this scheme.

The members of the meeting and officers present will treat members of the public with courtesy and understanding.

17. Time Limits

No individual submission will be allowed more than 3 minutes time at a meeting. This rule will be strictly enforced in fairness to all those who wish to address the meeting.

The overall time allowed at a meeting to hear and deal with submissions from the public will be decided by the Chairman or by the meeting itself but will not normally exceed 30 minutes. This will take into account the issues to be raised in the submissions, the number of submissions and the other business of the meeting.

Where there is insufficient time to deal with all submissions received, the Chairman will decide which submissions should be dealt with at the meeting. Any submission not dealt with will be formally received by the meeting and a written response will be given as soon as possible after the meeting.

18. Balance

The Chairman will ensure that those who are making submissions on opposite points of view on the same subject are treated equally as far as possible.

19. Questions on submissions

Councillors will be allowed up to 5 minutes to ask solely factual questions of the person making each submission. This is included in the 30 minutes normally set aside for dealing with submissions.

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20. Written copies of submissions

Those making Statements or Deputations to meetings will be asked to provide beforehand a written text or summary of the points to be mentioned.

A question must be set out in full.

Petitions must be in writing, contain all signatures and are to be handed to the Chairman when the submission is made.

21. How will submissions be dealt with?

Details of all submissions will be printed on the agenda for the relevant meeting. If the subject matter of the submission is already on the agenda for the meeting, the meeting will be prepared to defer consideration of the submission until that item on the agenda is reached.

If necessary and convenient to the other business, the Chairman or the meeting itself will agree to advance that item in the order or proceedings.

22. Action the meeting may take

In the case of a question the Chairman may reply personally or may ask another Councillor or an Officer to reply. The reply will count against the 30 minute time limit. A written reply may be given where this is more convenient and can be circulated at the meeting.

Unless the submission relates directly to an issue to be dealt with at the meeting, petitions will normally be referred for consideration by the Council or Committee on a report from the Clerk.

In the case of Statements and Deputations, the meeting will decide on the most appropriate course of action, which will be either to note the submission or to request an officer report to a subsequent meeting on the issue raised.

23. General Information

This scheme will be reviewed and adjustments made from time to time.

In addition to these arrangements, the public are welcome to attend at Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings where open business is discussed but may not speak to the meeting.

All meeting will be held in accommodation that has reasonable access and seating for the public.

The agenda will be available for inspection for 3 days before the meeting.

A reasonable number of agenda papers will be available to those attending meetings. These, and the minutes of the meeting may be inspected afterwards at the Council's offices.

2nd December 1996