

Bishopton Parish Council

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND RECORDING IN MEETINGS

RULES

1. The Public Participation Session is an opportunity for members of the public to make representations, answer questions and give evidence relating to the business on the agenda
2. Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.
3. The session will be limited to a maximum time of 15 minutes.
4. The time for each member of the public to speak is limited to 3 minutes.
5. If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic then they should nominate one person to speak on their behalf. This will avoid duplication and make best use of the public participation period.
6. If there are a large number of people wishing to speak, the chairman will give priority of the time available to residents of Bishopton.
7. A person shall raise his or her hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chairman may at any time permit an individual to be seated when speaking.
8. Please address your comments to the Chairman
9. Neither Councillors nor the Parish Clerk should be put under pressure to respond immediately to comments made under public participation. Members of the public do not have the right to force items onto the council agenda nor to insist on how matters are recorded in the minutes.
10. A question raised by a member of the public shall not require a response and there should be no debate or discussion between the Council and the public.
11. The Chair may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.
12. 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 this session. The member will be required to leave the room before the council considers the matter in which they have declared the disclosable pecuniary interest.
13. **All persons present will act respectfully towards every other person present and will not behave offensively or improperly. Please note that threatening or offensive behaviour will not be tolerated. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings of any meeting, the Council reserves the right to curtail the contribution of that person and to exclude a disorderly person (see "Exclusions" below).**

14. All statements, questions and responses must be related to the facts of the matter and not be personal in nature. There should be no reference to personal views about any person.
15. A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting. A brief record of topics raised at public participation will be included in the minutes of that meeting. However, libellous, offensive and discriminatory comments will not be minuted.

16. Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is permitted (see the Parish Council's Recording in Meetings Policy).

The Parish Council acknowledges that no prior permission is required, but asks that any person wishing to film or audio record a public meeting let Council staff know in order that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting. The Chairman may remind everyone in attendance and who will be participating in the meeting that they may be filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise reported about, and that these rules must be observed." (Para 39, NALC Legal Topic Note 5). It is not permitted to provide a running verbal commentary. No trailing cables or plugging in to sockets of electrical equipment will be permitted. Children and vulnerable adults are not to be filmed, recorded or photographed or otherwise reported about where the relevant responsible adult has not given consent (which in the case of a vulnerable adult is a medical professional, their carer or legal guardian, and in the case of a child, their parent, legal guardian or teacher). Part of the public area will be used, if required, for children and vulnerable adults or those public attending who do not wish to be filmed, however, this is within the limitation of the Council room and its layout. Persons taking part in the public participation section, excluding children and vulnerable adults as indicated above, may be filmed, recorded or photographed or otherwise reported whether they are in a designated area or not.

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

EXCLUSIONS

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 Chairman of a meeting is expected to be vigilant of, and seek to control behaviour which obstructs the proceedings of a meeting. The Chairman is expected to ask people to modify any behaviour that disrupts a meeting. If disrupting behaviour continues, a councillor may move a motion requiring anyone disrupting the meeting to leave. Usually it is desirable for the Chairman to move the motion. A person can be excluded from a meeting if the meeting passes a resolution to this effect. If a person refuses to leave a meeting after there has been a resolution to this effect, and the meeting cannot proceed due to a person's continued disruptive behaviour, the Chairman may suspend or ultimately close the meeting. (NALC Legal Topic Note 5, March 2017).

Members of the public may be excluded by a resolution of the meeting for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence (e.g. staffing matters, tenders for contracts, some legal issues).