

FLAXTON PARISH COUNCIL RULES FOR A PUBLIC SESSION

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Introduction

This policy sets out the rules governing the conduct of any Public Session which forms the part of a Council or a Committee Meeting of Flaxton Parish Council in which members of the public are invited to participate.

It is recommended that the public are reminded of these rules at the start of each session. These rules could be laminated to hand round in the public gallery at each meeting.

Rules for a Public Session

1. Define the time that the public session will take place and the duration of the session.
2. That the chair of council will control the public session and that their decision upon proceedings at this part of the meeting are final.
3. That good manners and respect are expected during the session.
4. Define the type of issues that members of the public will be expected to raise, i.e. ongoing issues (complaints to the council not permitted; these should be addressed via the council's adopted complaints procedure).
5. An explanation that if detailed issues are to be raised by the public then they must be put into writing. Any detailed financial issues can be included in this, although council may wish to address current but minor financial issues where it can in the session.
6. That it is at the Chair's discretion whether questions raised will be answered at the meeting or dealt with after the meeting by written response to the enquirer.
7. That council cannot take a decision on any issue raised at public session unless the issue is specified on the agenda of the council meeting or the clerk has delegated powers to deal with it as urgent, i.e. highway repairs.
8. The length of time that a member of the public may speak (although if the chair is strong in the role he/she may be able to control the session without this parameter as adhering to specific timescales can be difficult to manage).
9. Advise members of the public that they may be filmed or audio recorded by members of the public at the meeting and also advise the public if the council is making its own recording, whether visual, audio or both.

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Rules and Expectations of the Public During the Formal Council Meeting

1. State that 'In the formal council meeting there is no right for members of the public to speak without invitation of the council (not just the chair)'.
2. Define a process telling members of the public what to do if they want to speak – e.g. indicate by hand and the chair will come to them if and when there is an appropriate point in the proceedings. Tell them that the chair will seek a resolution from council to permit you to speak, please be patient while this necessary procedure is undertaken.
3. State that 'You will only be permitted to speak during the formal meeting if you have information for the council which may impact on its decision making in a specific issue. Complaints will not be accepted in the meeting; any complaints are to be referred to the clerk by way of the council's complaints procedure'.
4. You may wish to add in here what will happen if they are disruptive in the meetings or do not adhere to these rules.