

TOSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL
MEETINGS: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROTOCOL

Adopted 2024-03-12

Participation in the Council Meetings

The Council meeting is not a public meeting but rather it is a meeting conducted in public, and there is no requirement in law to provide a public forum. As the Council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to openness and community engagement, it does invite residents and members of the public to attend meetings and to contribute within the agenda item set aside for public comment and questions.

Those attending are kindly asked to respect the fact that the meeting is held to conduct Council business.

From time to time confidential items may be discussed which require press and members of the public to be excluded in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

- ◆ Public participation will, generally, be for a period of no more than 15 minutes.
- ◆ Each agenda will indicate when public participation is able to take place.
- ◆ Questions and comments should address the business specified on the agenda. The Chair will indicate if any question or comment is deemed to be inappropriate and will not be accepted.
- ◆ Should matters be raised which are not on the agenda then these are most likely to be carried forward, without discussion, to the next meeting.
- ◆ All questions and comments must be addressed to the Chair and should not exceed three minutes in length (unless, at the discretion of the Chair, longer is permitted).
- ◆ Only one question or comment on a topic per person is allowed although supplementary questions or comments may be entertained at the discretion of the Chair.
- ◆ Questions asked from the audience during public participation may not result in an immediate response; the Chair may direct that a reply is referred to a specific councillor to answer or to the Clerk for a written or verbal response after the meeting.
- ◆ For the benefit of all, only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak then the Chair shall direct the order of speaking.
- ◆ Members of the public are not permitted to speak during debates and discussions by councillors. However, the Chair may opt to adjourn the meeting should councillors express a wish to seek further information and/or clarification on particular matters from those in the audience.

Prior to the agenda item permitting public participation, each agenda will provide an opportunity for the presentation of reports by the County and District Councillors after which questions and comments will, at the discretion of the Chair, be able to be put by councillors and then members of the audience.

NB: Offensive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. In the unlikely event of any person displaying such behaviour then the Chair may exercise the right to curtail the contribution or exclude the person from the meeting. Should there be serious disorder of any sort then the Chair may decide to adjourn the meeting.