

Scarning Parish Council

Public Participation

1. Introduction

Parish Council meetings (including all full meetings or committee and sub committee meetings) are open meetings. This means that the Press and public are able to attend. There are only two exceptions:-

- (a) When the Council has confidential matters to discuss and passes a resolution to exclude the Press and public; and
- (b) The Annual Parish Meeting when only registered electors of the Parish are entitled to speak and vote.

2 Public speaking at meetings - Full Council

The public has no rights to participate in the proceedings of the Council unless invited to do so following a resolution of the Council and the public contribution being relevant to the agenda item under consideration. However, the Council has adopted the following provisions to encourage open communication and transparency:-

- (i) Agenda item - Questions from the Public under the Public Participation period

A member of the public may under this agenda item raise in person any matter, ask a question and/or address the Council on a specific subject/s. In all cases public comments and Council responses must be made through the Chairman of the meeting who has the authority to place a time restriction on proceedings.

Members of the public who are unable to attend a Council meeting may submit their comments, concerns or questions in writing or by emailing the Clerk to the Council provided these are received by no later than one day before the Council meeting.

- (ii) Planning Applications

Members of the public will be granted the opportunity to address the meeting on Planning Applications published on the agenda for the meeting during the Public Participation period and subject to those time restrictions noted above (i).

3. Council Committees

Although open to the general public committee meetings do not offer the same opportunities for Public Participation, but at the discretion of the Chairman members of the public may be allowed to speak, if comments or questions directly relate to an agenda item.

Should a member of the public wish to address a committee meeting he/she must notify the Clerk prior to the start of the meeting, so that the Chairman can be notified and give consideration to the request.

4 Openness in Local Government: - Recording of meetings

The Parish Council has adopted the following policy statement to accompany the agenda for its meetings.

- (a) The Parish Council permits the filming, recording, photographing, blogging or tweeting of the content of its public meetings. Filming or photography should be notified to the Clerk and procedures agreed in advance of the meeting.
- (b) Members of the public filming, recording, photographing, blogging or tweeting at the meeting **DO NOT** have the right to give an oral report or commentary during the meeting.
- (c) Members of the public who are recording or filming all or part of a meeting should **NOT** edit their recording or film in any way that could lead to misrepresentation or misinterpretation of proceedings.
- (d) Only by prior agreement will the use of flash photography or film lighting be allowed.
- (e) Members of the public who are filming must have a constant awareness of the restrictions that apply to the filming of children and vulnerable people.
- (f) Persons under the age of 18 or other members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed should notify the Clerk or Chairman and should sit in an area designated for that purpose.
- (f) Filming or recording can only take place from a fixed position, which has been agreed in advance with the Chairman/Clerk to the Council.
- (g) The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to suspend or terminate any actions or activities that in his/her opinion is disruptive.
- (h) Should a notification be received that a person does not wish to be recorded, filmed etc, that request must be adhered to.