



Coxhoe Parish Council

Public Participation Policy

Approved: May 2023

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Introduction

Coxhoe Parish Council wishes to encourage public participation during its meetings in order to use this as one means of consulting with the public. A council meeting is not a public meeting, it is a meeting held in public. The Council recognises that rules must control the manner of participation in order that the Council Meeting may continue to operate effectively. Public participation is an opportunity for members of the public to make representations to the Council; ask questions and give evidence relating to items on the agenda.

Principles, Rules and Orders

- 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 period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with Council's Standing Orders shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting. Subject to the above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 5 minutes.
- Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence during a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. While Councillors will endeavour to respond to any questions that are raised, they cannot take a decision on any issue raised during a public participation session unless the issue is specified on the agenda of that meeting or the Clerk has delegated powers to deal with it as urgent.
- Members of the public will not be involved in the decision-making process of the Council.
- Complaints will not be accepted as part of the business of a meeting and are to be referred to the Clerk (or the Chair if appropriate) in writing. Members of the public are requested to leave their contact details with the Parish Clerk if they wish to receive a reply to their concern.
- Speaking during public participation will be limited to parishioners of the Parish of Coxhoe. A member of the public who is not a parishioner may be permitted to speak with the permission of the Chair of the meeting.
- A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak. The Chair may request a person to stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort).
- A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chair of the meeting.
- Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- 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 public participation. The member will be considered acting as a private individual during public participation and not be acting as a Councillor.

All persons present will act respectfully towards every other person present and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates others. All statements, questions and responses, challenges to statements, complaints or criticisms must be made politely, must be related to the facts of the matter and not be personal in nature. There should be no reference to personal views on any other person. Any statements, questions or responses considered offensive or likely to be interpreted as threatening behaviour will not be tolerated.

Everyone is asked to respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct Council business and interruptions during Council business are not permitted. If the business is disrupted in any way the person or persons causing the disruption may be asked to leave or the meeting adjourned for as long as considered necessary.

There is no requirement in law to provide a public forum but this council welcomes the opportunity to offer this. Accordingly, there are rules which must be observed for public participation at meetings.