

### **Procedure for Public Participation at Council Meetings**

**Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Parish Council**

Meetings of the Parish Council are not public meetings but members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Council as observers. They have no legal right to speak unless the Parish Council Chairman authorises them to do so.

However, as part of its community engagement, Parish Councils can set out a time for public participation at an agreed time when members of the public are invited to speak.

Members of the public should not be involved in the decision-making of the Council. The Parish Council should not make any instant decisions at the behest of members of the public on items that are not included in the agenda. As a matter of best practice, the public forum will be kept separate from the debate of the Councillors. If matters raised are not on the agenda for the meeting these can be used to form part of the agenda for a future meeting at the discretion of the Parish Council.

Members of the public are welcome to stay for the Parish Council meeting after the public session as observers, but will not be able to join in the discussion unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

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.)

Any member of the public has the opportunity to raise issues of concern at Council meetings.

#### **Who can you ask a Question?**

Provided that the required notice is given (see 'How to Register' below), a member of the public may ask questions of the Chairman of the Council or of a Chairman of a Committee at meetings of the Council.

#### **What Question can you ask?**

You can ask any question as long as it relates to local issues and affects Lydiard Millicent.

#### **What you cannot ask?**

The Chairman of the Council or of a Committee may reject a question if it:

- Is not about a matter that Lydiard Millicent Parish Council is responsible for, or if it does not affect the district
- Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
- Concerns confidential or exempt information

If your question is rejected, you will be told the reason why

#### **Procedure on the day of the meeting - If you wish to ask a question**

1. You should endeavour to arrive at the meeting at least 10 minutes before the start, and make yourself known to the Clerk present.
2. Public question time at Parish Council meetings should not exceed 10 minutes in duration unless the Chairman otherwise so agrees.
3. When it is time to ask your question, the Chairman will invite you to put the question to the Committee. There is a time limit of 2 minutes to ask your question.

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4. Questions will be asked in the order that they were received, although the Chairman may group similar questions together.
5. Unless the Chairman decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question.
6. You may also ask one supplementary question without notice to the Member that has answered your original question. The supplementary question also has a time limit of 2 minutes and must arise directly from the original question.
7. Some questions cannot be answered during the meeting, every attempt will be made to give accurate answers to all questions. However, on some subject's further research and consultation with the appropriate bodies may be necessary, following which a response will be offered as soon as is possible.
8. A brief record of topics raised at public participation will be included in the minutes of that meeting. But libellous, offensive and discriminatory comments will not be minuted

Adopted On 4 July 2024

To be reviewed every 3 years or when legislation or circumstances change