

LYDD TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings of Lydd Town Council are **not** public meetings. Members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Council as observers.

Members of the public have no legal right to speak unless the Chairman of the meeting authorises them to do so. However, as part of its community engagement, Lydd Town Council sets out time when members of the public may ask questions directed through the Chairman.

Members of the public should **not** be involved in the decision making of the Council, and the Council should not make any decisions at the behest of members of the public on items not included on the agenda. As a matter of best practice, Public Participation will be kept separate from the debate of Councillors.

Members of the public are welcome to stay for the Council meeting as observers but will not be able to join in the discussion for the rest of the meeting.

Members of the public may be excluded by resolution of the meeting for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence – for example staffing matters, tenders for contracts, legal issues.

Rules for public participation

- Public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes in total and each member of the public is allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes as a maximum.
- Questions must be submitted in writing in full to the Town Clerk by 9am on the day of the meeting and must state the question to be asked in full. Questions not put in writing will not be accepted.
- If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic, they should nominate one person to speak on their behalf to avoid duplication.
- Information handouts should be delivered to the Town Council by 9am on the day of the meeting to avoid delaying or disrupting the meeting.
- The Chairman has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and will not be accepted and stop the speaker from continuing to speak. If the speaker ignores the requests of the Chairman, they will be asked to leave the meeting.
- Neither Councillors or Clerk should respond to comments made by members of the public during public participation unless invited to by the Chairman. If the topic is an agenda item, then it will be debated at the correct time using the correct process.
- Members of the public do not have a right to force items on the agenda for Council or Committee meetings.
- Members of the public do not have a right to insist on how matters are recorded in the Minutes.
- A question raised by a member of the public during public participation shall not require an immediate response and there will be no debate or discussion by Councillors. The Chairman will direct this.
- A brief record of questions raised during public participation will be included in the Minutes
- All persons' present will act respectfully towards every other person in attendance. They must not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates another person. All statements, questions, responses, challenges to statements, complaints or criticisms must be made appropriately and politely.
- All statements, questions and responses must be related to the facts of the matter and not be personal in nature. There should be no personal reference made to any person or persons identified at the meeting.

Offensive and/or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. If a member of the public disrupts the meeting the Council reserves the right to curtail their contribution.

If a member of the public persists in disrupting the meeting after receiving two warnings from the Chairman, the third reminder will result in in person/s causing disruption to be asked to leave the meeting. If a member of the public refuses to leave the meeting the Police will be called upon to remove them.