

Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council

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Council Policy on Protocols for Public Participation in Council Meetings

Council Standing Orders state various rules for public participation at council meetings and hopefully Councillors will already be conversant with these rules and procedures. However, when the public attend meetings there is an acknowledged lack of perception of 'where, what and when' they can speak or raise issues.

This document aims to clarify the situation and sets down the protocol for the public to adhere to in complying with the said Standing Orders and Rules of Chairmanship as currently applicable to Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council. The protocol also aims to make the rules easier to understand for the casual visitor to council meetings.

The protocol covers the Police, District & County Councillors when giving reports during the public participation period.

Information for the public regarding their right to record, film and photograph meetings is also now included (12/03/15).

Copies of the protocol will be laminated and left on the public gallery chairs for the public to read but not remove from the meeting.

The protocol is reproduced overleaf.

<i>Doc. History:</i>	Issue 1	14/07/09	First draft modified from SALC original
	Issue 2	13/08/09	Approved for publication by GP&F Committee
	Issue 3	16/06/11	Alignment of speaking time limit with new Standing Orders
	Issue 4	14/03/12	Substantial rewrite and added procedure for noting speakers at meetings
	Issue 5	12/04/12	Approved for publication by GP&F Committee
	Issue 6	13/03/14	Added 3 minute time limit & written reports under item (b)
	Issue 7	12/03/15	Added statutory right to film, record, photograph etc

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Councillors: Please place this policy document in section 10 of your Councillor Handbook.

RUSHMERE ST. ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Public Participation at Council Meetings

This Council meeting is not a public meeting, but is a council meeting conducted in public and different rules apply.

Everyone present at this meeting, subject to certain exclusions, has a statutory right to film, record, photograph or otherwise report on the proceedings of this meeting. However, we ask that anyone who intends to, or is recording this meeting, to make the Chairman of the Meeting aware of the fact immediately, as there are restrictions which apply in respect of vulnerable adults and children. We also remind everyone that in carrying out such recording or filming, they must take care to ensure that personal data is used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

There is no requirement in law for the council to provide a public forum but as the Council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement, we warmly invite members of the public, the press, the Police and District/County Councillors to attend our meetings and contribute at defined points in the meeting. We ask you to please respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct council business and interjections during council business are not permitted. If you disrupt business in any way you may be asked to leave. If you feel for any reason that you do not wish to take part in the public forum or if the problem you wish to raise is complex, it may be better to provide information to the Council prior to the meeting, if possible at least 7 clear days before the meeting using the contact details at the foot of the page.

Public Participation is considered to be part of the business of the meeting and will be included in the minutes of that meeting. A maximum period of 30 minutes will be allowed for discussion, but may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman. This 30 minute period will be split between:-

a) Public Participation on Items Listed on the Current Agenda

- The agenda will indicate at which point members of the public may notify the Chairman that they wish to speak regarding a specific item on the current agenda (Normally item 4 on the agenda).
- For each person wishing to speak, The Chairman will record their name along with the agenda item that they have an interest in.
- At the appropriate point on the agenda the Chairman will call upon those persons to speak in the same order as the names were recorded.
- Verbal questions or statements should be addressed to the Chairman and must not exceed 3 minutes in length.
- For some meetings the Chairman may request an attendance sheet is circulated for completion by members of the public.

b) Public Participation - Including Police, County/District Councillor Reports and Public Forum

- At Council or Committee meetings held on the 2nd Thursday of each month only, there is an opportunity for the Police, District & County Councillors to give reports to the meeting.
- Written reports from Police, County and District Councillors are preferred and should be submitted to the Clerk (or Assistant Clerk) 7 days prior to the meeting.
- Verbal reports will only be accepted at the meeting when timing of events does not allow the submission of a written report
- Verbal reports should be addressed to the Chairman and must not exceed 3 minutes in length.
- An opportunity to ask questions of the Police, County/District councillors will be given at the Chairman's discretion subject to availability within the stated overall 30 minute time limit.
- All Committee meetings will include *Public Forum* as part of the *Public Participation*. *Public Forum* is an opportunity for members of the public and parish councillors to raise matters which are not on the agenda.
- Matters raised may be carried forward without discussion and agendered for the next meeting of either the full Council or suitable Committee.
- This portion of the meeting is also an opportunity for notification of items which the Council may wish to include on a future meeting agenda.

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