



WRABNESS PARISH COUNCIL PUBLIC FORUM POLICY

1. Meetings of the Parish Council are held in public. Members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Council as observers.
2. As part of its community engagement commitment, the parish council has a Public Forum session when members of the public are invited to speak. Otherwise members of the public have no legal right to speak during parish council meetings unless the Parish Council Chairperson authorises them to do so.
3. A Public Forum session will normally be held during the early part of a parish council meeting. The Public Forum shall be limited to a total of 15 minutes unless directed by the Chairperson of the meeting.
4. The time allotted for each member of the public to speak is limited to 3 minutes.
5. Members of the public are welcome to stay for the Council meeting after the public session as observers but will not be able to join in the discussion for the rest of the meeting.
6. Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto the Council agenda.
7. Members of the public should not be involved in the decision-making of the Council, and the Council should not make any instant decisions at the behest of members of the public on items that are not included on the agenda. As a matter of best practice, public participation is kept separate from the debate of the councillors.
8. Council reserves the right to not answer questions raised immediately, but will respond in writing as soon as practical after the meeting. Neither Councillors nor the Clerk should be expected to respond to comments made by members of the public during the public forum. If the topic they are speaking about is on the agenda, it will be debated later in the meeting using the correct process.
9. Members of the public may be excluded by a resolution of the meeting for specific confidential items such as legal and staffing matters which need to be discussed in private.
10. 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. This will avoid duplication and make the best use of the time set aside for public participation.
11. The Chairperson has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and stop the speaker from continuing to speak. If the speaker ignores the requests of the Chairperson, they will be asked to leave the meeting. If they refuse to leave the meeting, the Police may be called, or the meeting adjourned until order is restored, and the parish council meeting in public can continue.
12. All persons present should 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 should be made appropriately and politely.
13. Information handouts brought to the meeting should be placed on the table provided to avoid delaying or disrupting the meeting.
14. All statements, questions and responses must be related to the facts of the matter and not be personal in nature.
15. Members of the public do not have a right to insist on how matters are recorded in the minutes. A brief record of topics raised during the Public Forum will be included in the minutes of that meeting.