

signed 22/7/22

LEIGH & BRANSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Parish Council meetings are not public meetings, but meetings conducted in public. Members of the public are welcome to attend as observers and have a legal right to do so.

There is no legal right for members of the public to speak at parish council meetings but as part of Leigh & Bransford Parish Council's commitment to community engagement the agenda includes an item for Public Participation when members of the public are invited to speak. This will take place early in the agenda so that Parish Councillors may consider any views expressed by members of the public when reaching their decisions.

The agenda is the official order of business for Parish Council meetings. By law, the parish council cannot take action on items or issues that are not on the agenda. 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 Council.

As a matter of best practice, the public forum will be kept separate from the debate of the councillors and members of the public should not be involved in the decision-making of the council.

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 unless invited to do so by the Chairman. The public are asked to respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct council business and interruptions during council business are not permitted.

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).

Leigh & Bransford Parish Council has consulted with the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils ("CALC") and the following information, based on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Legal Topic Note 5e November 2021, is for those members of the public wishing to address questions or comments to the Parish Council.

- This session will be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes as set out in the council's Standing Orders
- The time for each member of the public to speak is limited to 3 minutes as set out in the Standing Orders.
- A person who speaks at the meeting shall direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic, then they should nominate one person to speak on their behalf. This will avoid duplication and make the best use of the public participation period.
- Written statements must be received by the Clerk at least 3 days prior to the meeting.
- The Chairman has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and will not be accepted.
- Neither Councillors nor the Clerk should be put under pressure to respond immediately to comments made under public participation.

- Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto the council agenda nor to insist on how matters are recorded in the minutes. Requests for agenda items made by members of the public will be considered and included on the agenda at the discretion of the council.
- A question raised by a member of the public during a public speaking session shall not require an immediate response nor start a debate on the question.
- A brief record of topics raised at public participation will be included in the minutes of that meeting. Libellous, offensive, or discriminatory comments will not be minuted.
- If the issue is on the agenda, then it will be discussed under the appropriate item. If members of the public leave the meeting before the item is discussed, they are requested to leave their contact details with the Clerk before leaving the Council meeting if they wish to receive a reply to their query.
- All persons present will act respectfully towards every other person present and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates him or her. All statements, questions and responses, challenges to statements, complaints or criticisms must be made 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 reference to personal views on any person.
- Please note that offensive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings of any meeting the Council reserves the right to curtail the contribution of that person and exclude a disorderly person.

Signed.....

John Shy

Date.....

26/7/22

Note: Participation in Parish Council meetings is one way for members of the public to communicate with the council. Others include telephoning or writing to the parish council, messaging through our website www.leighandbransford.org.uk or emailing the clerk at clerk@leighandbransford.org.uk or the chair at chair@leighandbransford.org.uk.