

Public Participation at Parish Council Meetings

Meetings of a 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, Parish Councils can set out a time for public participation at an agreed time when members of the public are invited to speak. If matters raised are not on the agenda these can be used to form part of the agenda for a future meeting at the discretion of the Council. Members of the public can stay for the remainder of the meeting as observers, but will not be able to join the discussion unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

Wellow Parish Council Standing Orders state that

- The session will be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes
- The time for each member of the public to speak is 3 mins

On occasion the Chairman can extend the time if he/she deem this necessary.

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 participation. Members of the public do not have the right to force items onto the agenda nor to insist on how matters are recorded in the minutes

A question raised by a member of the public during a public speaking session shall not require a response and there should be no debate or discussion between the Council and the public.

A brief record of topics raised will be included in the minutes of that meeting

All persons present at a meeting will treat others with respect ; all statements, complaints, or criticisms must be made politely; relate to the facts of the matter and not be personal in nature.