



CALLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS



Callington Town Council makes decisions that affect our whole community and wants to encourage everyone to contribute at its meetings.

We appreciate that as Council meetings work within a legal framework they may feel intimidating to some people, so we have prepared this brief guide to help you through the process.

INTRODUCTION

Town Council meetings including all full meetings or committees are open meetings. This means that the press and the general public are able to attend. There are only two exceptions, (a) when Councillors have confidential matters to discuss and pass a resolution to move into a 'Part II' (private) meeting which excludes the press and the general public; (b) the Annual Parish Meeting where only registered electors of the Parish are entitled to speak and vote.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AT MEETINGS OF THE FULL COUNCIL

Members of the public have no legal right to speak at meetings of the Council. However, Callington Town Council, as part of its community engagement, sets aside time for public participation at the **Full Council** meetings, to encourage open communication and sharing of information.

Agenda Item – Public Session

A member of the general public may under this agenda item raise in person, any matter, ask a question and/or address the Council on a specific subject/s. In all cases public comments and Council responses must be made through the Chairman of the meeting.

Members of the general public unable to attend may submit their comments, concerns or question in writing to the Clerk to the Council.

Ward Councillors – Cornwall Councillors

Ward Councillors (being Members of the Public) will be invited to address the meeting under a specific agenda item or at the discretion of the Chairman, without the legal requirement to suspend and re-convene the meeting.

Committee/s of the Council

Although open to the general public committee meetings do NOT offer the same opportunities for public participation but at the discretion of the Chairman members of the general public may be allowed to speak, if comments or questions directly relate to an agenda item.

Should you wish to address a committee meeting please notify the Clerk prior to the start of the meeting, so that the Chairman can be notified and give consideration to the request.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can I, as a member of the public, attend Council meetings? Yes, you have a right to. We welcome any interested party to attending Full Council; committee and subcommittee meetings.

How can I find out when meetings are to be held and what is to be discussed? Agendas, with details of matters to be discussed, are displayed on the Town Hall noticeboard, together with a schedule of forthcoming meetings. Agendas and minutes can also be found on our website: <http://www.callington-tc.gov.uk/meeting-minutes/>

How long do meetings last? We normally allow up to 3 hours and you can observe the whole meeting if you wish. Very occasionally, the public are asked to leave if a confidential matter is discussed. These can be items such as staff matters, legal proceedings, contracts etc which would be prejudicial to be discussed in public.

Am I only allowed to observe proceedings or can I speak? You may speak in the 10 minutes allowed for public participation at the beginning of the Full Council meeting (Public Session). The Chairman may during the course of the meeting invite a comment or clarification from any member of the public who has expressed an interest or particular concern regarding an agenda item in advance.

How long may I speak for? Usually each person may speak for up to 3 minutes. The Chairman will guide proceedings.

What subjects may I raise? You may raise questions, or comment on anything that is on the meeting agenda and (if time allows) anything within the remit of the committee or council.

Will I get an immediate reply? Not always. If it is a simple matter, you may get an instant reply. Sometimes, the matter may need investigation or to be discussed by another committee. In this case, if you give your contact details to the Clerk, we will respond. Giving advance written notice to the office will increase the chances of getting an answer at the meeting itself.

How can I get something onto the Agenda? If you submit your request to the office giving two weeks' notice it will be considered for inclusion on the formal agenda. clerk@callington-tc.gov.uk

Can I question individual Councillors? No. Council decisions are collective so no one Councillor has authority to speak on behalf of the Council. All questions and statements must be made through the Chairman of the meeting.

Can I record or photograph proceedings? Meetings that have been advertised as a public meeting could be filmed or recorded by broadcasters, the media or members of the public. Callington Town Council applies Cornwall Council's principles on filming and recording of public Council meetings, which must be adhered to. Further details can be found on the Cornwall Council website:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-democracy/reporting-and-filming-of-council-meetings/>

Are there any other rules I should know about? Only that meetings are conducted within a framework designed to ensure they run smoothly with decorum. All participants and attendees are expected to respect this throughout. If you feel you need more information our Clerk's office can answer your queries as to protocol. Our Councillors also welcome direct contact and phone and email contact details are on our website: <http://www.callington-tc.gov.uk/your-councillors/>