



# **Appendix A – Standing Orders**

## **Rules for Public Participation at Meetings**

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# **Appendix A – Teignmouth Town Council Standing Orders**

## **Rules for Public Participation at Meetings.**

Teignmouth Town Council recognises its responsibility to promote active engagement with the democratic process. However, there is no requirement in law to provide an opportunity for members of the public to question the Council or make oral representations at a meeting.

Meetings of Teignmouth Town Council are not public meetings, they are meetings held in public for which the community can observe the decision making process.

The Council has set aside a short period at the commencement of each 'standing' committee meeting for 'public participation (ask questions, make statements Standing Order 1e)

Should an individual or representative of a group or body wish to address members of the Council then the following rules are to be followed:-

### **1 Full Council and Standing Committees**

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at Full Council and its standing Committees (excluding HR and sessions held in Part II).

If an informal group have a common interest, one of their number is to be identified to speak on behalf of the whole.

To take part in public participation you must be present at the meeting to ask your question or make your statement.

If the questioner is unable to attend the meeting, they are to notify the Town Clerk's office no later than 12 noon of the day of the meeting. The Chairman can ask the question (and/or indicate that a written reply will be given). Rule 5 applies.

Copies of any questions will be circulated to councillors and will be made available to members of the public who attend the meeting.

### **2 Order**

Questions/statements will be asked in the order of which they were received, unless the Chairman decides to group together similar questions.

### **3 Notice**

A question or statement may only be taken if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Clerk no later than 3 days before the day of the meeting.

#### **4 Number**

At any one meeting no person may submit more than one question/statement.

#### **5 Scope**

The Town Clerk or Acting Clerk may reject a question/statement if it:

- is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility (powers and authorities) or which affects the Town of Teignmouth
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
- requires the disclosure of confidential information.

#### **6 Speaking at the meeting**

The Chairman will invite the individual to put the question/statement to the meeting. Any comments made or questions asked should be directed at the Chairman

In accordance with standing order 1(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chairman of the meeting may direct that question posed by a member of the public be referred to a councillor for a verbal or written response or to an employee for a written or verbal response. Written responses to questions are to be given within 3 working days by the Clerk's office.

Public and press may be excluded for the whole or part of a meeting if the Council resolves that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, or for other special reasons stated in the resolution.

All persons present will act respectfully towards every other person present and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates others. 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 other person. Any statements, questions or responses considered offensive or likely to be interpreted as threatening behaviour will not be tolerated.

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.

## **7 Planning**

Public wishing to make comments on a specific planning application being considered by the Planning Committee are welcome to do so and in this instance are invited to do so 1 day before the Planning Meeting is convened. Rule 7 applies only to Planning.

## **8 Supplemental question**

A questioner who has put a question in person can also ask one supplementary question, without notice, in response to the reply to their question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply given. The Chairman can reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds detailed under rule number 5.

## **9 Help to participate in meetings**

We encourage everyone to participate in our meetings. If you require any additional assistance, for example; help with access or concerns about participation, please discuss them with the Town Clerk and we will do whatever we can to help or to reassure you.

## **10 Chairman of the Meeting**

Ultimately, the Chairman controls and has order over the meeting and if required will call upon the Town Clerk for advice.