**LITTLE ECCLESTON WITH LARBRECK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Public Participation Policy**

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| **Issue No** | **Date Agreed** | **Min Ref** | **Details of Amendments** |
| 01 | April 21 | 810/21 | New Policy |
| 02 | Sept 24 | 1250/24 | General review and new email address/website added.Paragraph on instant decisions addedQuick guide added to the policy to be available at meetings |

Members of the public and press are welcome to join the meeting.

A Parish Council meeting is not a public meeting, but a meeting that is held in public. All members of the public have a statutory right to attend council meetings as observers, but as part of our commitment to community engagement, we also choose to set aside time at each meeting public participation for questions from parishioners. Members of the public are welcome to attend to ask questions about agenda items or issues causing concern. Submissions (to the Parish Clerk) in advance of the meeting are welcomed so that questions can be answered more fully.

Members of the public are very welcome to stay for the remainder of the Council meeting, as observers, but will not be able to join in any subsequent discussions. If confidential items (e.g. staffing issues) are discussed, members of the public may be excluded.

**Guidance**

Please note, public participation is not a question and answer or a debating time, rather an opportunity for you to make your views known to Councillors or to bring forward new ideas which you would like the Council to discuss. The period of time designated for public participation at a Council meeting, in accordance with our Standing Orders, shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting.

Again, in accordance with our Standing Orders, each member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes. If there is an interested group of objectors or supporters, it is recommended that a spokesperson is appointed to speak on behalf of the group to ensure effective use of the time permitted.

The Council will not make any instant decisions at the behest of members of the public on items that are not included in 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.

**Principles of public participation**

* The Chair will decide in which order matters will be heard.
* The Chair will decide whether an immediate response will be given at the meeting or to respond to the matter in writing. Written responses will be provided within 10 working days.
* Each member of the public is entitled to speak once in respect of each matter and for a maximum of 3 minutes, with 15 minutes being allocated overall for the questions from parishioners’ section. (These limits may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.)
* Questions must be addressed through the chair. All those present will act respectfully and will not act in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates others. Offensive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated, and Council reserves the right to curtail the contribution of and exclude anyone acting in this manner.
* Public time is not minuted, but a summary of how many people attended will be recorded.
* Questions must relate to the business of the council, be a matter for which the council has responsibility or related to the well-being of the parish.
* The Chair, or clerk, may reject a question, or a supplementary question, if it is not about a matter over which the council has responsibility, if it is defamatory, frivolous, abusive or substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the council in the past 6 months or requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information. Where a question has been rejected a letter will be sent to the questioner setting out the reasons for the rejection.
* The Chair has the discretion to alter the order in which questions are asked.
* Councils and other local government bodies are required to allow any member of the public to take photographs, film and audio-record the proceedings, and report on all public meetings. While no prior permission is required to carry out this activity, it is advisable that any person wishing to film or audio-record a public meeting let their local government staff know so that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting.

If you have any minor issues i.e.streetlights not working, litter problems etc then please visit the Parish Council website which provides details of how to report a problem.

Website: lewlparishcouncil.gov.uk

Clerks email: parishclerk@lewlparishcouncil.gov.uk

**Welcome to the Council meeting of**

**Little Eccleston with Larbreck Parish Council**

*A quick guide to ‘Public*

*Participation’ at meetings*



**What is a Parish Council meeting?**

A Parish Council meeting is a business meeting for the Parish Council. It is where the Councillors discuss issues and make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council.

Parish Council meetings are held in public, the public have a right to come and observe the business conducted at the Council meeting.

**Can I address the Council with questions, ideas or concerns at a Parish Council meeting?**

**YES!** While legislation allows the public to observe Parish Council meetings there is no statutory right for the public to speak at a Council meeting so, as part of its community engagement strategy, Little Eccleston with Larbreck Parish Council sets aside some time for the public to address the Parish Council during its monthly meetings. This time is before the meeting begins and is called ‘**Public Participation’**.

**Are there any guidelines for ‘Public Participation’?**



There are some guidelines the Council ask the public to observe during ‘Public Participation’. These guidelines help the Council to continue to run an efficient and balanced meeting.

* Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of the **business on the agenda**.
* The Council will not make any instant decisions at the behest of members of the public on items that are not included in 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.
* The period of time designated for the entire ‘Public Participation’ session at a meeting shall not exceed **15 minutes** unless directed by the Chair of the meeting.
* An individual member of the public shall not speak for more than **3 minutes**.
* A question shall not require an immediate response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question.
* The Chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
* A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chair of the meeting.
* Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
* Public time is not minuted, but a summary of how many people attended will be recorded.

**Other than the ‘Public Participation’ item on the agenda can I join in with the rest of the meeting?**

Outside of the ‘Public Participation’ item on the agenda, members of the public are very welcome to stay and **observe** the meetings proceedings. However, legislation does not permit members of the public to join in with the debate of Council or comment on any other items on the agenda. The Council kindly ask that this is respected at all times.



Council; Councillors; Clerk; Residents.

Working together as a team we all help to change our community for the better.

**Disorderly Conduct at Meetings**

The Councillors and the Clerk of Little Eccleston with Larbreck Parish Council are a friendly and hardworking team who welcome the input of the residents of Little Eccleston with Larbreck.

The Council respectfully request that no member of the public disrupts the transaction of business at a meeting. Where a member of the public actively disrupts the Council meeting the rules on disorderly conduct are as follows:

1. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this is ignored, the Chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
2. If person(s) disregard the request of the Chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the Chair of the meeting may propose that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The proposal, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
3. If a resolution made in (2) is ignored, the Chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.