



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

FRM(20)08.02

This draft for consideration by FERM Committee updates the earlier Protocols document which was first adopted in 2010

PROTOCOLS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS OF THE FULL COUNCIL AND ITS COMMITTEES

Melton Parish Council meetings and meetings of its Committees are not public meetings; they are meetings conducted in public, and there is no requirement in law to provide a public forum. However it is good practice for councils to set aside time (NALC suggests 15 or 20 minutes) at meetings for the public to make statements and ask questions. This is particularly important at meetings of both Full Council and Committees likely to be of most interest to the public e.g. Planning and Transport Committee. As Melton Parish Council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement, members of the public, the press, the police and District / County Councillors are invited to attend all meetings and contribute within the public forum.

Where a council permits the public to participate at a meeting, this session shall:

- Be included as an item on the Agenda
- Form part of the council meeting in law
- Be managed by the Chair of the meeting
- May permit a Councillor to speak on a matter in which he has an interest (that is not a disclosable pecuniary interest which he is otherwise not permitted to speak about at the meeting).

Melton Parish Council's Standing Orders (currently Version 9 adopted in 2018) structure these public sessions and provide that:

- The time allocated for public participation sessions shall not exceed 15 minutes unless allowed by the Chair of the meeting
- A member of the public shall not speak for more than five minutes
- Any question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question
- Only one person is permitted to speak at a time and the order of speaking shall be directed by the Chair.

Standing Orders may confirm that public participation at a meeting is restricted to items of business on the Agenda. However currently Melton's do not contain this restriction.

As meetings are for the purpose of conducting Council business, interjections during Council business are not permitted and individuals who disrupt business in any way may be asked to leave. Where members of the public feel for any reason that they do not wish to take part in the public forum or if the issues they wish to raise are complex, it is advisable to contact the Clerk to the Council prior to the meeting via email (clerk@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01394 382224.

The public forum will also provide an opportunity for District and County Councillors (as well as other agencies such as the police) to provide reports to the meeting and an opportunity to ask questions will be given, at the Council's discretion subject to the relevant conditions above with an overall time limit of 20 minutes including questions.