

## AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings of the Parish Council are not public meetings. Members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Council as observers and may record the meeting at their discretion.

Members of the public have no legal right to speak unless the Chair authorises them to do so. However, as part of its community engagement, Audlem Parish Council sets aside time for public participation at an agreed point when members of the public are invited to speak. Otherwise, the public may only speak at the Chair's discretion

Members of the public are not directly involved in the decision-making of the Council, and the Council will not make any instant decisions on items that are not specifically included on the agenda. As a matter of best practice, 'Public Participation' will be kept separate from the debate of the councillors.

Members of the public are entitled and welcome to stay for the Council meeting (as observers) after the public participation session but will not be able to participate in the rest of the meeting.

Members of the public may be excluded by a resolution of the Council for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence (e.g. staffing matters, tenders for contracts, some legal matters)

### **RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

- Public Participation shall not exceed fifteen minutes unless directed by the Chair
- The time for each member of the public to speak is limited to 3 minutes
- If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic, they should nominate one person to speak on their behalf. This will avoid duplication and make the best use of the time set aside for Public Participation.
- The Chair has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and will not be accepted and stop the speaker from continuing to speak. If the speaker ignores the requests of the Chair, they will be asked to leave the meeting, if they refuse to leave the meeting, the meeting may be suspended or the Police may be called upon to remove them from the meeting
- Members of the public do not have a right to insist items be placed onto the Council and/or Committee agendas.
- Only the Council may decide on the style, content and accuracy of the minutes
- A question raised by a member of the public during Public Participation may receive a response by the Chair or Clerk. If the question cannot be answered at the time of asking the Clerk will respond by e-mail after the meeting.
- A brief record of topics raised during Public Participation will be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- All statements, questions and responses must be related to the facts of the matter and not be personal in nature. There should be no personal reference made to any persons or persons identified at the meeting.

**Please note:** Offensive and/or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. If a member of the public disrupts the proceedings of any meeting the Council reserves the right to curtail their contribution. If a member of the public persists in disrupting the meeting after receiving two warnings from the Chair, the third reminder will result in the person(s) causing the disruption to be asked to leave the meeting. If a member of the public refuses to leave the meeting the Police will be called up to remove them.