

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL

The Town and Hundred of Tenterden



A Corporate Member of the Cinque Ports

GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WISHING TO SPEAK AT MEETINGS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OR ITS COMMITTEES

- a) Agendas for meetings of Tenterden Town Council and its committees are published three clear working days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- b) All meetings of the Town Council and its committees are usually held at the Town Hall, either in the Assembly Room or the Mayor's Parlour. However, should another location be used, this would be stated on the agenda.
- c) Meetings of Tenterden Town Council and its committees usually commence at **7.00pm**. As several committees might meet in one evening, you might need to wait for the meeting at which you wish to speak.
- d) If you wish to address a committee, you must submit **written notice** of your intention to speak to the Town Clerk's office **no later than midday** on the day of the meeting, giving a brief outline of the subject on which, you wish to speak.
- e) You do not have to notify the Town Clerk's office if you wish to speak at a meeting of the Town Council, however, if you wish to ask a question/s then it is advised that you complete the Questions to Town Council Form, and this must be submitted at least 5 working days before the meeting if an answer is to be sought at the meeting. It should be understood that you **MUST** attend the relevant meeting to ask your questions in order for them to be tabled and responded to at the meeting. The form to submit questions and further details of this process are available on our [website](#).
- f) Representations at committee meetings should relate to an item on the agenda and concern that committee. Questions from members of the public at a meeting of the Town Council may relate to any subject.
- g) The juncture for public representations at committee meetings is indicated on the agenda, however the chairman may ask that your presentation is made later in the meeting, to coincide with the agenda item to which it relates.
- h) It should be noted that if you are unable to attend a meeting but wish a speech to be read out on your behalf, this will only be done in exceptional circumstances and at the chairman's discretion. In these instances, it is advised that you might like to consider asking someone to present on your behalf to ensure your speech is presented.
- i) **You may speak for no longer than three minutes.**
- j) You should **speak very clearly into the microphone** as acoustics can be a problem, especially in the Assembly Room.

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL

The Town and Hundred of Tenterden

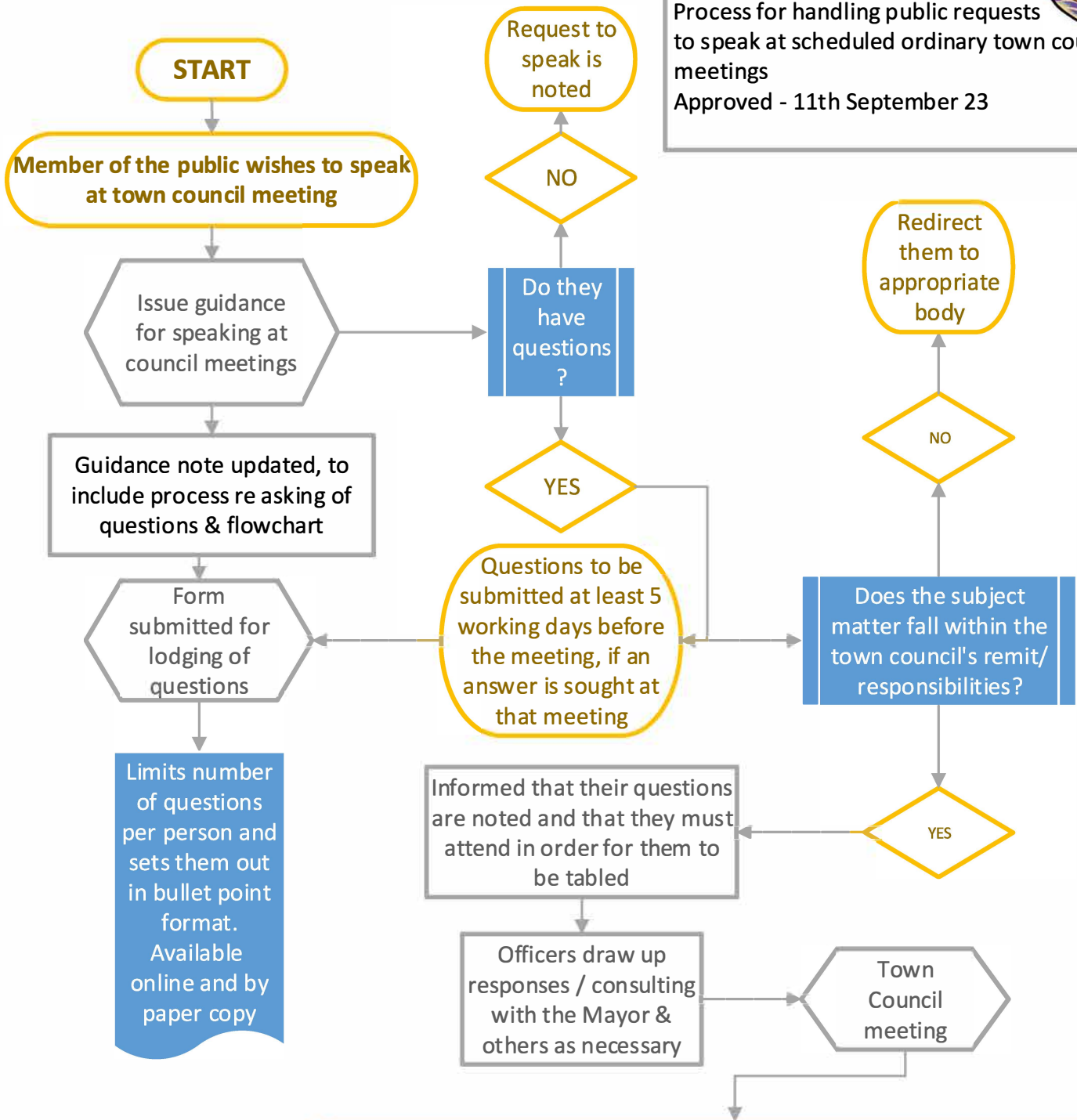


A Corporate Member of the Cinque Ports

- k) Before speaking, you must give your **full name and the road/avenue/lane on which you live.**
- l) Although three minutes may seem like a long time, it can go very quickly when you are speaking on a subject about which you are passionate. It is a good idea to have your key points written down so that you can be sure you have covered everything.
- m) Public open session should not be used to raise complaints against individuals, (whether they be councillors or officers) or in respect of services provided by the town council. Such matters are covered by the town council's Complaints Policy which sets out how matters of this kind are handled.
- n) Answers to public questions may be given at a meeting of the Town Council if the procedure included in (e) above is followed. For committee meetings, it is at the discretion of the chairman to determine how and when responses will be provided.
- o) If you know the outcome you are looking for, be sure to make it plain to the Councillors, so that there can be no misunderstandings.
- p) In the event of any contentious subject, the chairman will allow **only one presentation for each side of the dispute.**
- q) At a committee meeting **you are not permitted to participate in the debate** which stems from your question or presentation, unless you are asked by the chairman to clarify any details.
- r) If the committee is to discuss matters of a confidential nature, it will be moved into closed session and members of public and the press will be asked to leave the room. The reason for moving into closed session will be given. You will be invited to return to the meeting chamber when the confidential business is complete.
- s) The minutes of the meeting will not disclose sensitive personal information, but the meeting is open to the public, the press, and will normally be live-streamed via audio. You should only disclose information which you are happy to be known by the public.
- t) The minutes of the meeting are not a verbatim record and will instead only give a summary of matters raised. Speeches may however be published in full along with the minutes if requested by the speaker. In this instance, copies must be provided to the Town Hall, no later than 3 working days after the meeting in question.



Tenterden Town Council
 Process for handling public requests
 to speak at scheduled ordinary town council
 meetings
 Approved - 11th September 23



Statements and questions taken in order received
 Must be present if to be tabled
 Written response may be given if complex/lengthy response needed
 Time limit of 15 minutes for this agenda item
 Time limit for each speaker remains at 3 minutes
If questions are posed without prior notice, answers will normally be provided within 10 working days of the meeting.