

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 days in advance of the date of the meeting (so in the case of a Monday meeting, the agendas are usually available from the previous Tuesday).
- b) All meetings of the Town Council and its committees are held at the Town Hall, either in the Assembly Room or the Mayor's Parlour.
- 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 ask a question at a meeting of the Town Council, although it may be advisable to do so, in order to ensure that the chairman can bring any relevant information to the meeting.
- f) Representations at committee meetings should relate to an item concerning 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 (it is usually the fifth item), 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) **You may speak for no longer than three minutes.**
- i) You should **stand, and speak very clearly**, as acoustics can be a problem, especially in the Assembly Room.
- j) Before speaking, you must give your **full name and address**.
- k) 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.

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- l) 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.
- m) Answers to public questions may be given at the meeting or may be provided after the event by email or through publication on the town council website. It is at the discretion of the Chair to determine how and when responses will be provided.
- n) 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.
- o) In the event of any contentious subject, the chairman will allow **only one presentation for each side of the dispute.**
- p) 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.
- q) 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.
- r) 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.
- s) 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.