

## **Public Participation at Stoke St Michael Parish Council Meetings**

Meetings of the Parish Council are not meetings in which the public are able to engage with the council other than in the public session held after the opening of the meeting. However, members of the public have a statutory right to attend as observers and listen to the debates. Stoke St Michael Parish Council encourages public participation at its meetings and participation in the public session.

To ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to speak in the public session, we have introduced this guidance on how you can best have your say, and make the most of your time when you speak. The public session is limited to a maximum of thirty minutes and to ensure everyone gets a fair-share of the available time, you will only be able to speak once for up to three minutes. However, if there are more people wanting to speak then the session allows the maximum time for individuals to speak may be reduced, with the time being divided equally between each person.

- To make the best use of your time, please be brief and to the point. You will not be allowed to over- run your time.
- If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic, please nominate one person to speak on the subject. This will avoid duplication and make the best use of the public participation period.
- Owing to the short time you have to put your views across photographs or display material will not be accepted at the meeting, but may be sent to the Clerk at least 3 days before the meeting, so they can be disseminated to the Councillors. The same applies to written submissions.
- Please avoid derogatory or defamatory statements. If the Chairman feels that this is the case you may be asked to stop speaking.
- The Chairman has the right to say that any question or statement is inappropriate and will not be accepted.
- Neither Councillors nor the Clerk should be put under pressure to respond immediately to comments under public participation. Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto the council agenda nor to insist on how matters are recorded in the minutes.
- A question raised by a member of the public during a public participation session shall not require an immediate response. Where additional research may be required a written response may be provided at a later date. There should be no debate or discussion between the Council and the public, although members of the Council may seek clarification on matters raised in the public session.
- If matters raised by the public 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 Council can only pass resolutions regarding items on the published agenda.

Adopted