



## **Redenhall with Harleston Town Council**

Clerk: Mrs. C. Crane

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS:**

You are welcome to let your Council know if anything in the Town is of concern so that action can be considered on your behalf.

The Public Forum is an opportunity for members of the public to

- (a) make representations,
- (b) answer questions or
- (c) give evidence relating to the business to be transacted.

Below gives you advice on taking the opportunity to speak at Town Council meetings.

#### **At which meetings may I speak?**

You have no legal right to speak unless the Chairman authorises you to do so.

All public meetings of the Council will give an opportunity for members of the public to speak. Meetings of the Town Council are not public meetings, but members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the council as observers. However, as part of its community engagement, The Town Council can set out a time for public participation at an agreed time when members of the public are invited to speak.

#### **How will I know when to speak?**

The Chairman will adjourn the meeting and invite public comments.

#### **Are there items I may not discuss?**

Matters that are confidential or commercially sensitive may not be addressed in public.

#### **How do I know what is on the agenda?**

The agenda is published on the Town Councils website and the Council's notice boards.

#### **How do I arrange to speak?**

It is preferred that you contact the Clerk prior to the meeting or raise your hand when the Chairman invites the public to speak.

#### **What should I say?**

The Council prefers you to identify yourself and to state your concern briefly and clearly.

A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the Chairman of the meeting.

A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except

when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

### **For how long may I speak?**

The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed (20) minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.

A member of the public shall not speak for more than (5) minutes, except at the discretion of the Chairman

### **May several people present a comment together?**

Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

### **May I raise an issue that is not on the agenda?**

Members of the public may make representations, answer questions, and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

Items wanting to be raised that are not on the agenda will be at the discretion of the Chairman as no decision can be made at that meeting.

### **Can I provide written information?**

Yes, material of this sort must be given to the Clerk well before the meeting for circulation.

### **Will the Council respond to my concerns?**

The Council may not be able to respond to your question immediately, some additional research may be required. A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given, so please leave your contact details.

### **When will a decision be made?**

There is no given timescale for decisions but please feel free to contact the Clerk sometime after the meeting if you wish to have an update.

### **Am I allowed to film, photograph or record parish council meetings?**

Yes. The law changed in August 2014 and you are now permitted to do so. It is preferred that you inform the Clerk prior to the start of the meeting.

## **Prefer a casual setting?**

**Feel free to visit the Town Councillor Drop-In Surgery every 3rd Saturday from 10 am to 12 pm at Harleston Information Plus, 8 Exchange Street, Harleston. It's a chance for residents to connect directly with council members. Go to [www.harleston-tc.gov.uk](http://www.harleston-tc.gov.uk) for more information.**