

# **BELMONT RURAL**

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Public Participation at Parish Council Meetings**

#### **Background**

Belmont Rural Parish Council wishes to encourage Members of the Public to become more involved in the business of the Parish Council, whilst acknowledging that decisions must ultimately remain with Parish Councillors. The purpose of this procedure is to clarify the ways in which Members of the Public may speak during Parish Council meetings or raise matters for Parish Council consideration.

#### **Before Parish Council Meetings**

- All Parish Council meetings will be advertised on Parish notice boards no later than one week before a meeting is held, and a copy of the agenda will be placed on notice boards no later than three clear days before a meeting.
- Any resident of Belmont Rural Parish may raise a matter or concern relevant to the business of the Parish Council at any time in writing, addressed to the Parish Clerk. Any correspondence received will be reported to the Parish Council under agenda item "correspondence" at each meeting.

#### **Public Participation during meetings**

- At the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting, parish electors in attendance at a meeting may be invited to speak on any agenda item provided that any such public participation is relevant to the business of the Parish Council.
- A separate time will be set aside during the meeting for members of the public in attendance to raise matters of concern which are not otherwise associated with an agenda item.
- No individual speaker will be permitted to speak for more than 3 minutes in total in order to ensure that as many views as possible can be heard.
- The total amount of time dedicated to public participation in any meeting will not exceed 15 minutes unless the Parish Council resolves otherwise.
- All comments must be addressed to the Chairman of the meeting.
- Abusive or offensive language or behaviour will not be permitted.
- Members of the Public in attendance may appoint a spokesperson if they so wish.
- Nothing in this procedure conveys an automatic right for any Member of the Public to speak on any subject at any meeting.

#### **Parish Council response**

In response to any matter raised by a Member of the Public in writing or in person, the Parish Council may:

- Note any comments made
- Provide an immediate verbal response
- Defer discussion pending receipt of further information
- Defer discussion to the next meeting. This will always be required where an item is raised which is not an agenda item and/or which requires expenditure of public monies
- Delegate response to the issue to an individual Parish Councillor or the Clerk.