



Bishopston Community Council

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
POLICY

June 2024

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Introduction

This policy is produced in accordance with The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Section 48 of the 2021 Act (Chapter 3 of the Statutory Guidance for Community and Town Councils) makes provision for public participation at full community council meetings or those part of meetings which are open to the public.

The person presiding over the meeting must give members of the public in attendance a reasonable opportunity to make representations about any business to be discussed at the meeting, unless doing so is likely to prejudice the effective conduct of the meeting. This does not mean that members of the public can take part in debates, but they must be given reasonable opportunity to make representations about business to be discussed.

The Meeting

Bishopston community council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement.

A council meeting is not a public meeting, it is a meeting held in public, however there is now a requirement in law to provide a public participation forum and Bishopston Community Council welcomes the opportunity to offer this facility.

The council warmly invites members of the public, the press, business and third sector organisations, the police and county councillors and other organisations to attend meetings and they are given reasonable opportunity to make representations about any business listed on the agenda to be discussed at the meeting.

When participating in a meeting, members of the public are asked to please respect the fact that:

- This is a meeting to conduct community council business and interruptions during council business are not permitted unless at the invitation of the Chair of the meeting. If the business is disrupted in any way the person/s causing the disruption may be asked to leave
- Meetings are places of work for councillors (by election) and for staff (by employment), and those at work should be treated with respect. Illegal or otherwise aggressive or abusive language or behaviour will not be tolerated

Operating Procedures

The following operating rules (approved and adopted at the Full Council meeting held on June 24th 2024) apply to public participation:

- Public participation must relate to part of the agenda of Council, Committees and Subcommittees
- The public will be invited to address council on any matter on the agenda, but this does not imply dialogue, though councillors may ask for clarity through the Chair of the meeting
- Public Participation is limited to electors or those qualified to be electors in the electoral community of Bishopston Ward
- Any member of the public wishing to speak at a meeting must notify the Clerk no later than 3 days prior to that meeting being held

- Persons wishing to speak in Welsh may do so but should be aware that the listeners may not understand what the speaker is saying. If translation facilities are required, then speakers are asked to give 3 days' notice so that translation can be arranged
- Persons wishing to speak in language other than English or Welsh may do so, but should be aware that the listeners may not understand what the speaker is saying
- Persons under the age of 18 are welcome to speak during the forum, but those under 16 years of age are asked to demonstrate parental/guardian consent or be accompanied by an adult with parental/guardian to act as supporting adult
- Public participation during the forum is only permitted regarding items already on the agenda, and the matter may be addressed immediately or carried forward without discussion
- A maximum of three minutes is permitted for a member of the public to speak, and only one person may speak on any agenda item, excepting that two people may speak if opposing views are being expressed ie one for and one against a particular matter. This may be extended at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting to a maximum of 3 for and 3 against if time allows
- Supplementary comment or question is solely at the discretion of the chair of the meeting
- Neither Councillors nor the Clerk should be put under pressure to respond immediately to comments made at the meeting. 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 brief note of topics raised at public participation will be included in the minutes of the meeting, but personal details of individuals, libellous, offensive or discriminatory comments will not be minuted
- No subject may be repeated within a 6-month period for a particular issue

General Guidance

Members of the Public are advised to make the most of their three minutes by preparing notes carefully.

If people want to speak on the same item, it is advised that they get together in advance to agree thoughts and nominate one person to speak for all.

Participation in meetings by persons other than members of the public

The council will provide an opportunity via the agenda for CCOS councillors to attend and report to meetings and respond to any questions or queries from community councillors.

A written report may be sent if attendance in person is not possible. At the council's discretion the overall time limit on this section is 20 minutes.

The community council may, from time to time, invite guest speakers to address the council on particular matters of interest or topicality. This will take place as an agenda item separate from the Public Participation Forum.