

# Saltford Parish Council – Public engagement guidelines

The public and press are welcome to attend Saltford Parish Council's meetings. Once published, you will find an agenda available on the SPC website [here](#).

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Saltford Parish Council has Public Time at every meeting. In accordance with standing orders, the Parish Council can receive any addresses or statements by members of the public, limited to **three minutes per person** in respect of any item of business included in the agenda that the Council is resolving a response on. 'Public Time' is for a maximum 15 minutes, and how the item is conducted is at the discretion of the Chair.

If you wish to speak in public time, please add your name to the Speakers' Registration Sheet available on arrival before the meeting starts. You will be asked to give your name and to state the agenda item(s) that you wish to refer to. This is a Public Meeting and your name and a summary of what you say may be recorded in the notes of this meeting but will not be published in SPC's minutes. Saltford Parish Council will also retain the information provided here in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and in accordance with our policies and procedures.

It is not appropriate to claim to speak on behalf of another person without their express permission being submitted to the Parish Clerk in advance, by midday of the day of the meeting. All remarks by members of the public must be addressed to the Council as a whole through the Chair and not to an individual councillor. Comments made during public time may be briefly recorded in the minutes. Comments are not recorded verbatim.

In line with national guidelines, there can be no dialogue with you by councillors about what you say. This is to ensure that no "unlawful" decisions are made inadvertently and to ensure that Councillors retain an open mind before the agenda item is discussed later in the meeting. The lack of dialogue in public time should not be interpreted as a lack of interest or engagement by the Council. It is simply good practice. Councillors may ask questions about your submission but solely for clarification. Once you have spoken, you are free to leave the meeting at any time, but you are also free to wait and listen to any other speakers in Public Time and the later discussion or decision.

## DURING THE MEETING APART FROM PUBLIC TIME

Saltford Parish Council welcomes members of the public who wish to observe the proceedings of the Council. You may stay for as long as you wish. However, members of the public should remain silent throughout the meeting.

Cheering, clapping, booing, cries of "hear-hear" and comments or utterances of any kind on proceedings will be considered disorderly conduct (Standing Order 10) as it could be considered that these are an attempt to influence the elected councillors' participation and decision making. If, in the opinion of the Chair, there has been a breach of this standing order, the Chair will express this opinion and then any councillor (including the Chair) may move that the person be asked to be silent or be excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, will be put to the vote straightaway and without discussion. If such a resolution is disobeyed, the Chair may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary.

Saltford Parish Clerk (January 2024)