



High Coniscliffe Parish Council

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS POLICY

Date of review	Reviewed	Approved	Comments
June 2025		August 2025	Policy written and approved
March 2026			
March 2027			

Introduction.

In preparing this Policy, the Parish Council have referred to guidance published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

A meeting of a Parish Council is not a public meeting, it is a meeting held in public.

Whilst there is no requirement in law to provide a Public Forum, the High Coniscliffe Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to offer this facility and is committed to community engagement, allocating time for public participation at an agreed time when members of the public are invited to speak.

The Agenda will indicate when public participation will take place. Fifteen (15) minutes in total is allocated for this section of the Agenda; five (5) minutes for each member of the public to speak.

Members of the public do, however, have a statutory right to attend meetings as an 'observer'.

Members of the public may be excluded, by a resolution of the meeting, for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence e.g, staff matters, tenders for contracts and legal issues.

As a matter of best practice, the Public Forum will be kept separate from the debate of the Parish Council. By law, the Parish Council is required to publicise its Agenda at least three clear days before each meeting, therefore, only business contained within the Agenda can be considered at any meeting.

If a matter raised is not on the Agenda for that meeting, the Chair will inform the questioner as to how the matter will be dealt with. This may be an immediate oral response, a more detailed written response or, alternatively, the Chair may ask the Parish Clerk or a Parish Council Member to review the matter for inclusion on the Agenda for a subsequent meeting.

Members of the public shall not be involved in the decision making of the Parish Council and the Parish Council should not make any instant decision at the behest of members of the public on items that are not included in the Agenda. Neither Parish Councillors or Parish Clerk should be put under pressure to respond immediately to comments made under public participation.

Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto an Agenda, nor insist/influence or direct how matters are recorded in the Minutes. A brief record of topics raised at public participation will be included in the Minutes of a meeting, which are not recorded verbatim.

No question may be repeated within a six (6) month period for that particular issue.

All persons present will act respectfully and not in a manner that demeans, insults, threatens or intimidates others. Offensive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. The Chair and/or the Parish Clerk reserve the right to curtail such behaviour and/or seek to exclude anyone acting in this manner.