Welcome to the Council meeting of Barlaston Parish Council

A quick guide to 'Public Open Forum' at meetings

What is a Parish Council meeting?

A Parish Council meeting is a business meeting for the Parish Council. It is where the Councillors discuss issues and make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council.

Parish Council meetings are held in public, the public have a right to come and observe the business conducted at the Council meeting.

Can I address the Council with questions, ideas or concerns at a Parish Council meeting?

YES! While legislation allows the public to observe Parish Council meetings there is no statutory right for the public to speak at a Council meeting so, as part of its community engagement strategy, Barlaston Parish Council sets aside some time for the public to address the Parish Council during its monthly meetings. This time is near the beginning of the meeting and called 'Public Open Forum'.

Are there any guidelines for the 'Public Open Forum?

There are some guidelines the Council ask the public to observe during 'Public Open Forum'. These guidelines help the Council to continue to run an efficient and balanced meeting.

- Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of the business on the agenda. **New items cannot be resolved at the meeting, if agreed these can be added to the next agenda.**
- The period of time designated for the entire 'Public Open Forum' session at a meeting shall not exceed **20 minutes** unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.
- An individual member of the public shall not speak for more than **5 minutes**.
- A question shall not require an immediate 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.
- A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chairman of the meeting.
- 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.

Other than the 'Public Open Forum' item on the agenda can I join in with the rest of the meeting?

Outside of the 'Public Participation' item on the agenda, members of the public are very welcome to stay and **observe** the meetings proceedings. However, legislation does not permit members of the public to join in with the debate of Council or comment on any other items on the agenda. The Council kindly ask that this is respected at all times.



Council; Councillors; Clerk; Residents.

Working together as a team we all help to change our community for the better. We look forward to meeting you soon.

Disorderly Conduct at Meetings

The Councillors and the Clerk of Barlaston Parish Council are a friendly and hardworking team who welcome the input of the residents of Barlaston.

The Council respectfully request that no member of the public disrupts the transaction of business at a meeting. Where a member of the public actively disrupts the Council meeting the rules on disorderly conduct are as follows:

1. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this is ignored, the Chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
2. If person(s) disregard the request of the Chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may propose that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The proposal, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
3. If a resolution made in (2) is ignored, the Chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.