

## **A Brief Guide to Attending Meetings**

The Parish Council hopes that this short guide will help residents and others when attending our meetings. If you have any questions about attending a meeting, please contact the Clerk for help and guidance.

### **Q1. Why are meetings held ?**

Meetings of the Council are the principal means by which Council members discuss and agree matters over a wide range of issues affecting the community.

### **Q2. When are meetings held ?**

Our meetings are held on the third Monday of every month. We meet in Scarning Village Hall, Dereham Road. A timetable of meeting dates and venues can be found on our website ([scarningpc.info](http://scarningpc.info)). Our meetings usually start at 7pm.

### **Q3. Who can attend meetings ?**

All our meetings are open to the public.

### **Q4. Who can speak at meetings ?**

Although the law permits anyone to attend meetings, there is no automatic right for members of the public to speak, as our meetings are not classed as public meetings, but as meetings of the Parish Council. However, in order to encourage open communication and transparency, the Parish Council has designated a period of Public Participation at its meetings. This is shown on the Agenda and is usually at the start of the meeting. Please note that once the Public Participation period closes, the public is no longer permitted to speak at the meeting.

Please note there are certain circumstances when members of the public may be asked to leave the meeting. For example, if there is a discussion of a personnel issue where the confidential information of the employee must be protected. If this occurs, you will be advised the reason for excluding the press and public from that part of the meeting. Generally, this item is at the end of the meeting.

### **Q5. How do I know what is on the Agenda ?**

The Agenda is published on the Council's website ([scarningpc.info](http://scarningpc.info)) and the parish noticeboards via a QR Code at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting.

### **Q6. How do I raise an issue ?**

It is best to contact us in advance if you wish to raise an issue at a Council meeting. This is because the Council is unable to make a decision binding in law unless a specific item is included on the Agenda for each of our meetings. If your question is not on the Agenda, the Council's consideration of it will be delayed until a subsequent meeting. Please submit full details to the Parish Clerk at least seven working days in advance of the next meeting. The sooner your request is made to us, the easier it will be to include it on the agenda, as, for instance, we may need to come back to you for clarification and/or to request additional information based on your initial correspondence.

**Q7. If I attend a meeting can I raise an issue that is not on the Agenda ?**

Yes, but please bear in mind that the Council's consideration of the issue may have to be delayed until a subsequent meeting as the Council is unable to make a decision binding in law unless a specific item is included on the agenda.

**Q8. For how long can I speak ?**

You will usually be allowed 5 minutes. At the discretion of the Chair, you may be allowed slightly longer, but only in exceptional circumstances.

**Q9. Will the Council respond to my concerns ?**

Yes, on a case by case basis.

**Q10. Am I allowed to film, photograph or record Parish Council meetings ?**

The law permits you to film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of a meeting of the Council. This does not extend to live verbal commentary. Filming and photography are only permitted in a designated area. No flash photography or additional lighting can be used without prior consent. If you wish to report on a meeting, please notify the Council Chair or the Clerk so that you can be afforded reasonable facilities. Persons under the age of 18 are not to be filmed or photographed. All persons who do not wish to be filmed or photographed must be afforded the opportunity to say so and will be seated in an area designated for this purpose.

We hope you find the meeting useful and we welcome your feedback as we are always looking to improve.

Please submit any comments to the Parish Clerk (Clerk@scarning-pc.gov.uk)