

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME**

### **1. Purpose**

This policy sets out the rules governing the procedure and conduct for Public Participation Time.

### **2. Availability of Public Participation Time**

A Public Participation Time will be held at the beginning of every meeting of Wareham Town Council and of its Standing Committees (except the Annual Council Meeting).

### **3. Who May Participate**

- 3.1. Any member of the public who is resident or works or has business in the Town or owns or occupies land or property in the Town.
- 3.2. At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public who do not fulfil the above criteria may be permitted to participate on specific major issues, for example on matters which are considered directly relevant to Wareham and the surrounding area.

### **4. How to Participate**

Indicate to the Chairman of the meeting by raising a hand that you wish to speak. On being invited to speak, stand and address the Chairman and commence by giving your name and address.

### **5. Types of Public Participation**

A participant may raise issues of concern or interest on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties, or which directly affects the Town or its people – for example, ask the Chairman of the meeting a question, make a statement or present a petition or be part of a deputation.

### **6. Answers to Questions**

- 6.1. The Chairman may answer or ask another member of the Council or the Town clerk to reply to the question.
- 6.2. An answer may take the form of a direct oral answer or, if a reply to a question cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer will be sent to the questioner.
- 6.3. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

### **7. Statements, Petitions and Deputations**

- 7.1. When a member of the public makes a statement or presents a petition or is part of a deputation, the Chairman may make a brief response or ask another member of the Council or the Town Clerk to briefly respond.

7.2. Alternatively or additionally, any member of the Council may propose that the subject matter automatically is referred to the appropriate Committee or sub-group or the next meeting of the Council.

**8. What is Not Allowed**

The Chairman will not allow any participation which in his or her opinion is of an individual or personal nature, or relates to individual applications, or is scurrilous, improper, capricious, irrelevant or otherwise objectionable.

**9. Time Limit, etc.**

Public Participation Time shall not exceed 30 minutes for full Council or 15 minutes for Standing Committees, and any speaker shall not exceed three minutes. A deputation shall not exceed five people in number, only one of whom shall speak.

**10. Record of Public Participation**

The minutes of the meeting will record briefly the nature of the question and answer where provided. For other types of participation, there will be a brief note to summarise the purport of the participation.

**11. Application of Rules**

11.1. The Chairman shall have discretion to extend Public Participation Time where he or she determines it is in the interests of good governance.

11.2. The Chairman shall decide on any issue relating to the interpretation of these rules. His or her decision shall be final.