



# Protocol for Public Participation in Council Meetings

Thurston Parish Council

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**Presented to Council:** Full Council Meeting 4 March 2026

**Review Body:** Policy & Resources Committee

**Review Period:** Annually or following legislative changes.

**Next Review:** Policy & Resources Committee February 2027

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## 1. PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC FORUM

This council meeting is not a public meeting, it is a meeting conducted in public, and there is no requirement in law to provide a public forum. As the council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement, the parish council warmly invites members of the public to attend our meetings and contribute **within the public forum**. Please respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct council business.

- Public participation will be for a period of 15 minutes (*reference Standing Order 3f*)
- The agenda will indicate when the public participation will take place
- Questions and comments should address the business on the agenda
- Otherwise, in most cases, the matter will be carried forward, without discussion, to the next meeting
- Verbal questions / comments must be addressed to the Chairman and must not exceed 3 minutes in length, or longer at the Chairman's discretion
- Only one question on a topic to be received from each person but supplementary questions will be at the Chairman's discretion
- Questions asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting will not require a response or debate
- The Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response
- Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak the Chairman shall direct the order of speaking.

## 2. Reports in the public forum

This council will also provide an opportunity for the County and District Councillors to provide reports to the meeting and an opportunity to pose questions to them will be given, at the Chairman's discretion.

The overall time limit allowed for such reports will be a maximum of 15 minutes including questions.