

HOATH PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Parish Council is made up of five unpaid members who all represent Hoath Parish on various matters. It is the first tier of local government, the other two being the District Council (Canterbury City Council) and the County Council (Kent County Council).

Full Council is usually held on the second Monday of the month at 5.45pm at the Village Hall, Hoath. The public is very welcome to attend, and the Councillors encourage comments to be made during the open sessions part of every meeting.

Parish Councillors are always available to hear your views or to answer questions on any subject relating to the Parish. Surgeries are available if you would like to speak to a Councillor for a private discussion. Please contact the Parish Clerk who will arrange a meeting with the Councillor of your choice.

The Parish Council also works with other principal authorities and can report issues such as planning concerns, overgrown trees, footpaths, drainage, flooding, roads, and street signage to the relevant authorities on your behalf. You should let your Council know if anything in the parish is of concern, so that action can be considered on your behalf.

Q1. At which meetings may I speak? All public meetings of the Council provide an opportunity for members of the public to speak.

Q2. How will I know when to speak? A public question session is held at the start of each meeting. The Chair may also adjourn the meeting and invite public comments at her discretion.

Q3. Are there items I may not discuss? Matters that are confidential or commercially sensitive may not be addressed in public. This includes personnel matters.

Q4. How do I know what is on the agenda? The agenda is published on the website and on the Council's noticeboard ahead of the meeting. Past minutes are also available online.

Q5. How do I arrange to speak? Please contact the Clerk prior to the meeting or raise your hand when the Chair invites the public to speak. Questions should address a specific item on the agenda, otherwise the Council may not be able to give a full response at that time.

Q6. What should I say? The Council prefers you to identify yourself and state your concerns briefly and clearly.

Q7. For how long may I speak? You will be allowed a maximum of three minutes. At the discretion of the Chair, you may be allowed slightly longer in exceptional circumstances.

Q8. May several people present a comment together? Yes. You may find it easier to get together with other residents to present your view or even choose a spokesperson to ensure that you do not exceed your time allowed.

Q9. Can I provide written or visual information? Yes, this material must be given to the Parish Clerk a week before the meeting, for circulation to the Councillors.

Q10. Will the Council respond to my concerns? Yes, on a case-by-case basis. If an item is not on the agenda no decision can be made at that meeting. The Council may not be able to respond to your question immediately, perhaps some additional research is required, so you may be asked for your contact details.

Q11. When will a decision be made? There is no given timescale for decisions, but please feel free to contact the Parish Clerk a week after the meeting if you wish to have an update.

Q12. Am I allowed to film, photograph or record Parish Council Meetings? Yes, the law changed in August 2014, and you are now permitted to do so. The Parish Clerk would prefer to know prior to the start of the meeting.