

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

Guidelines for the public attending meetings of the Planning & Transportation Committee.

If you have an interest in a particular planning application you may find the information below about procedure at planning meetings useful.

Councillors serving on the Planning & Transportation Committee are listed on the Town Council website www.alton.gov.uk. Officers usually in attendance: The Town Clerk and/or the Finance & Administration Manager - meetings commence at 7.00 pm prompt.

Before a meeting begins you should let the officer in attendance or the Chairman know in which application you are interested and whether you wish to take advantage of the opportunity to speak to Councillors on the matter when the meeting formally opens. It is normal practice for Councillors to consider these applications first.

If a Councillor has an interest in an application to be discussed (e.g. if they know the applicant, the developer etc) they must declare their interest under the Agenda item 4: Declarations of Interest whereby Councillors are *reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. You must withdraw from the room when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.* Councillors may request a Dispensation under Agenda item 5 which will be considered by the Committee which if granted will allow Councillors with pecuniary interests to speak and vote.

If the Chairman declares an interest, another Councillor will be elected to chair the meeting for that item.

On reaching item 6 of the agenda the Chairman will invite those members of the public that wish to address the Committee to speak. Officially the rules of the Town Council allow 10 minutes for members of the Public to address the Committee. Should a large number of people wish to speak on a particular application it has proved more manageable (and saves repetition of points) for 2/3 people to be nominated to speak to the Committee. When speaking, please avoid repeating what has already been stated but do indicate if you agree or disagree with previous speakers.

The Chairman will have the discretion to halt the public should they begin to stray from planning grounds or make inappropriate or offensive statements.

Once the public session has concluded the Committee will then formally debate the applications listed in the agenda, taking into account the representations made by the members of the public. **Members of the public must not interrupt or heckle during this debate, and will be asked by the Chairman to leave the chamber should such activity occur.**

Please note that the Committee acts as a consultee to East Hampshire District Council (the Planning Authority), which makes the final decision on the application. However the Town Council does play an important part in the process and its views are taken very seriously by the Planning Authority. Members have a variety of decisions available to them – most usually to object (stating the reasons why) or have no objection. They can also suggest that certain matters be further explored or that particular conditions are attached to an application.

The Chairman will ensure that any members of the public present are clear about the decision made by the Committee. However, should you wish to follow up information after a meeting has taken place please email: info@alton.gov.uk or telephone: 01420 83986.

If the Committee is unable to reach a decision on the night and feels that viewing the site in question will be of benefit, Councillors may defer an application pending a 'site visit'. If a site meeting is held, councillors attending may informally discuss what they have seen afterwards and intimate to the clerk their inclination, but the decision will formally be taken at the next scheduled meeting.

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