

## **MEETING CONDUCT**

The main purpose of parish council meetings is to debate the issues and take decisions on the items published on the agenda. They are not meetings to receive reports (each councillor is required to fully brief themselves on all issues to be discussed prior to the meeting) and they are not meetings to consult or debate matters between the councillors and the parishioners. In preparing for any meeting, councillors are required and parishioners are requested to remember the 5 'W's of meeting preparation:

- What is the meeting for?
- What part should I play?
- What papers must I read in advance?
- Which people do I need to consult?
- What did I promise to do before the meeting?

The conduct of the meeting must follow the council's published Standing Orders. A good meeting is one:

- which has a clear agenda which is followed
- where people speak in turn without interruption
- where all councillors, and public when invited, are given the chance to speak
- where the chairman is in control
- where adequate, but not excessive, amounts of time are spent on the agenda items
- where clear decisions are taken and minuted
- where all discussions are polite and good-humoured, and
- where all attendees are happy, even if decisions don't go their way

By comparison, bad meetings tend to be characterised by aggressive behaviour, constant repetition of the same points or making points which are digressive or irrelevant, interruptions, more than one person speaking at the same time, 'private' or side conversations, and resolutions or decisions which are unclear