



PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

◇ Denotes Council meeting

▪ Denotes committee meetings

- ◇ ▪ 1. Paddock Wood Town Council wishes to encourage the public to attend its full council and committee meetings. Where appropriate, it also welcomes public participation in its deliberations (e.g., consideration of planning applications). If members of the public wish to communicate with the council about business which is not included on the agenda for a meeting they can contact the council office at any time by letter, email, or phone call.
- ◇ ▪ 2. Notification of forthcoming meetings is published on the Paddock Wood Town Council website.
- ◇ 3. Full Council meetings are held on the third Monday of the month and begin at 7.45pm unless otherwise advertised. All key documents are available from the Council's website at [Paddock Wood Town Council – Kent, England \(paddockwood-tc.gov.uk\)](http://paddockwood-tc.gov.uk). The meeting agenda is also posted on Town Council noticeboards around the town, where possible.
- ◇ ▪ 4. All Town Council meetings (including committees) are open to the press and members of the public. However, from time to time, confidential items may be discussed in which case the press and members of the public are excluded in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.
- ◇ ▪ 5. Members of the public have a right to attend any meeting but no right to speak unless permission is given by the Chairman. Anyone wishing to address a meeting of Paddock Wood Town Council, or its committees must be a resident of Paddock Wood or if not a resident, seek permission to speak prior to the commencement of the relevant meeting. Members of the public may not question Councillors or enter a debate with them.
- ◇ ▪ 6. Members of the public may submit comments on any agenda item in writing to the Town Clerk or council members (including by e-mail).
- ◇ ▪ 7. The chairman of a meeting may read out all or part of a written submission or summarise a submission or group of submissions making a similar point. Where

allowed by the Freedom of Information Act 2000, requests for confidentiality will be respected.

- ◇ 8. At full Council meetings 15 minutes is set aside at the beginning of the meeting for members of the public to address the council or ask questions on specific agenda items. Each person may speak for a maximum of three minutes. The chairman of the meeting may curtail any speech (for example, if inappropriate language is used).
- ◇ ▪ 9. Members of the public may not use these sessions to criticise or complain about the Council or Councillors. Any such issues should be addressed via the Council's Complaints policy which can be found on the Town Council website. Complaints about individual Councillors cannot be dealt with by the Town Council. These must be addressed to the Monitoring Officer of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- ◇ 10. Questions should be submitted in advance either in writing or by phoning the town council office two working days before the meeting in order that the relevant information can be gathered. At the meeting, the resident should read out the question so that the answer may be given.
- ◇ 11. Members of the public may nominate another resident to read out their question if they are unable to attend the meeting. The council may respond at the meeting or send a written response.
- ◇ ▪ 12. At Committee meetings the chairman will consider requests to speak on any agenda item but is not obliged to grant all or any of them. Requests to speak should be notified to the appropriate Clerk verbally or in writing before the start of the meeting, indicating to which agenda item their request relates. Later requests will not be considered.
- ◇ ▪ 13. Where more than one person makes a request to speak, the chairman may ask those wishing to make a similar point to appoint a spokesman. The number of people invited to speak will be limited to a maximum of three.
- ◇ ▪ 14. In most cases, priority will be given to requests to speak in the order they are notified to the Clerk. This may be varied at the discretion of the Chairman where necessary. Persons invited to speak are required to give their name and address and state their interest in the matter under discussion.
- ◇ ▪ 15. A brief record of topics raised will be included in the minutes of meetings, but members of the public do not have the right to insist on how matters are recorded.
- **Non-members of committees:** Councillors who are not members of a committee may speak at the direction of the Chairman, but not vote at such meetings.
- **Co-option:** The Town Council may agree to co-opt interested members of the public to assist with Working Groups/Committees/sub-committees formed to deal with certain defined projects.

Contact details for the Town Council: General enquiries, written submissions or verbal requests should all be sent to the appropriate Town Council Officer. Details can be found on the Paddock Wood Town Council website at [Paddock Wood Town Council – Kent, England \(paddockwood-tc.gov.uk\)](https://paddockwood-tc.gov.uk)

- ◆ Finally, please note that if a member of the public interrupts the proceedings of any meeting the Council reserves the right to remove the person from the meeting.