



Landulph Parish Council Meeting Guide

This guide gives you an outline of what happens at a parish council meeting.

Meeting schedule

Landulph Parish Council meetings are held on the *third Monday of each month (except in August when no meeting is held). The meeting dates are available in the minutes, and on the agenda, which are published on the parish noticeboards and on the Parish Council website. *Please note: the dates are sometimes subject to change, so it is worth checking for any updates.

Each year (usually the third Monday in May) two important meetings are held:

1. The Annual Parish meeting – which is an opportunity for parishioners to meet to discuss relevant issues (this is not a parish council meeting but is often chaired by a Parish Councillor);
2. The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council meeting – at this meeting the Council's Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Councillor Representatives to various Committees are appointed.

Members of the public and the public forum

Parishioners are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings, and there is an opportunity for members of the public to speak to the Council during the 'Public Forum' sections at the start and end of the meeting, when asked to do so by the Chairman of the meeting. Should you be unable to attend but wish to comment on the agenda, please email the Clerk in advance and your comments will be included in the appropriate part of the discussion.

It is important to be aware that, although the Council may be able to give a simple, brief response to what you have said, it is difficult to discuss a matter and give advice if no advance notice is given. If you would like the Council to take action about something, you need to be clear about exactly what you would like the Council to do. It can then be added to the next meeting's agenda, when the Councillors will discuss it and make a decision.

Agenda items

Councillors can put forward a notice of motion to the Clerk in advance of the meeting, which is a request for a specific issue to be discussed at a Council meeting. The law does not allow the Council to make decisions about matters that are not on the published agenda, which is published at least 3 clear working days (including Saturdays) before the date of the meeting.

Governance and Decision making

The Parish Council needs to adhere to relevant legislation, policies and guidelines, including its own Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and Code of Conduct. These documents are available on the [Parish Council website](#). At each meeting there should be at least three Councillors present otherwise the meeting is not 'quorate' and cannot go ahead. The Council considers the parish as a whole when taking decisions.

Apologies

Councillors must attend council meetings unless they have a good reason for not attending, for example if they are ill. If a Councillor is unable to attend, they must send their 'apologies' to the Clerk along with an acceptable reason for absence.

Declarations of Interest by Councillors

The Code of Conduct states that Councillors must declare if they have a personal involvement in an agenda item – for example, if an application for planning permission is on property that they own. This is called ‘declaring an interest’. Councillors are not allowed to discuss agenda items in which they have declared a ‘pecuniary’ interest (ie. one that relates to money) although they may make a statement. The Councillor will leave the room while the item is being discussed. In certain circumstances Councillors may be granted a dispensation which enables them to take part in Council business where they have declared an interest, the decision to grant a dispensation is made by the Full Council.

Minutes

Minutes are the legal record of what was decided at a meeting, written by the Clerk. A draft version of the minutes are sent out to all Councillors after each meeting, and an ‘unapproved’ version is added to the website. At the next meeting, the Chairman will check that Councillors are happy that the draft minutes (including any amendments) are a true record of the meeting. It is only when the Chairman has signed the minutes that they become an official record.

Finance Update and Accounts for Payment

In practical terms, the Clerk deals with day-to-day accounts and the giving and receiving of payments, but it is the Council as a whole that is responsible for Council finances, and this point in the meeting requires the Councillors to look at:

- The payments to be made this month. The Clerk has compiled a list of payments that need to be made to staff, suppliers and others. Councillors must approve this list and sign the relevant cheques.
- The bank reconciliation is where the Council compares the Council’s bank balance with the Council’s accounts to check for any discrepancies.
- When the Council looks at budget monitoring, it is looking at how the current financial situation compares with the planned budget for the whole financial year to check that the finances are where they should be.
- Precept setting is when the Council looks at the current year’s spend, and estimates the budget required for the next financial year taking into account inflation and forecast budget spend.

Planning

Every month the Council will consider any planning applications that have been received for the parish. The Parish Council does not make final decisions on planning applications, but as a ‘consultee’, it can comment on the plans and give an opinion that the planning authority (Cornwall Council) should take into account. The link to any planning application and its documentation is provided on the Parish Council agenda.

Confidential “Part Two” closed session

Some items on the agenda are classed as confidential and that part of the meeting is closed to the public. For practical reasons, this is normally held at the end of the meeting. Examples of the type of confidential discussions include:

- Engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees:
- Terms of tenders and negotiations for contracts;
- Preparation of cases in legal proceedings: and
- The early stages of any dispute.

Working Groups

In addition to public Parish Council meetings, various Working Groups have been set up for specific projects. A Working Group can consist of both Parish Councillors and members of the public, and the group’s Terms of Reference will be agreed in advance at a public Full Council meeting. A Working Group cannot make decisions, but will bring any proposals to a Full Council meeting, so that all Councillors can make a decision which is recorded in the minutes. Copies of the Working Groups’ Terms of Reference (along with other Parish Council documents) are available on the [Parish Council website](http://www.landulph.org.uk).

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Version 1 Adopted by Landulph Parish Council 19.12.2022