



## **OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Lisa Blondrage, C/O Ouston Community Centre, Iris Crescent, Ouston, Chester Le Street, DH2 1RJ Tel: 07917 440 556 Email: [oustoparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:oustoparishcouncil@gmail.com)

### **Public speaking at Parish Council meetings**

Ouston Parish Council encourages public participation at its meetings. To ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to talk, we have introduced guidance on how you can best have your say, and make the most of your time when you speak.

To ensure everyone gets a fair-share of the available time you will only be able to speak once for up to three minutes.

#### **GENERALLY**

- You will be asked to give the Clerk your name and address. This is to establish that you are a parishioner. Non-Parishioners may only speak if invited to do so.
- To make the best use of your time, please be brief and to the point. You may find it helpful to rehearse what you have to say to ensure that everything is included. You will not be allowed to over-run your time.
- You may find that if there are significant numbers of objectors / supporters that it would be better to appoint one person to speak for you all.
- Written submissions, photographs or display material will not be accepted at the meeting, but may be sent to the Clerk at least 5 days before the meeting, so they can be copied and given to the Councillors.
- Please avoid derogatory or defamatory statements. If the Chairman feels that this is the case you may be asked to stop speaking. The Council does not tolerate inflammatory or abusive behaviour towards its councillors, staff or members of the Parish.
- Owing to the short time you have to put your views across, it may not be appropriate to bring plans or elaborate visual aids to illustrate your points.

#### **PROCEDURE AT THE MEETING**

- Most meetings of the Parish Council take place in Ouston Community Centre on Iris Crescent. Please check with the Clerk before the meeting in case there



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has been any change. If you want to speak, please arrive at least 15 minutes before the meeting and introduce yourself to the Clerk.

- You will be asked to sit in the public area.
- The Chairman will announce that Public Participation has commenced and if you wish to speak, invite you to do so. Please note the meetings are recorded on a Dictaphone to ensure accuracy and transparency.
- If you are speaking on an issue for which there are other speakers who hold differing views. Objector(s) will be invited to speak first, followed by the supporter(s).
- You will be invited to speak for up to three minutes. The time limit will be strictly enforced and the Chairman will notify you when you have 30 seconds left. Please have the respect and courtesy you would wish for yourself when others present their thoughts.
- After you have finished speaking, you may be asked questions by the Councillors to clarify issues that have arisen.
- After Public Participation section of the Agenda, the Parish Council will continue with items as listed in the Agenda. You are welcome to sit and listen to the debate and other workings of the Council, but will not be able to take part in further discussion.
- If the item you have raised is not on the agenda, Members will not be able to debate or vote on the item. This is proper Council procedure.
- The Chairman has responsibility for the smooth running of the meeting. His/her decision on procedural matters is final.
- Please note that the Council will generally not comment on planning matters until a formal application to Durham County Council has been made.

To contact the Clerk call 07917 440 556 or email [oustonparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:oustonparishcouncil@gmail.com).