

Annual Parish Meeting Rules

The Local Government Act 1972 states that *'for every parish there shall be an Annual Parish Meeting for the purpose of discussing parish affairs'*.

A Simple Guide to Parish Meetings

Parish Meetings are quite distinct from meetings of the Parish Council, although the two are often confused.

The confusion arises for several reasons:

- if present, the Chairman of the Parish Council **must** chair the Parish Meeting; Chairman will have the usual powers and authority of Chairman and has a casting vote in addition to his own vote.
- the Clerk to the Parish Council organises and takes the minutes of the Parish Meeting, who should make all arrangements including the best practice of providing beverages/light refreshments and the appropriate associated parish meeting expenses will be paid by the council.
- the Annual Parish Meeting often takes place on the same evening as the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.
- The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council is similar to a usual parish council meeting except it includes the annual election of the Chairman and Vice-Chair.

Some of the differences:

- The **Parish Meeting must not be held earlier in the day than 6pm** whereas there are no time restrictions on meetings of the Parish Council. It must be held on premises that supply alcohol.
- At a Parish Meeting, except for the Chairman, **councillors rank the same as other members of the public electorate.**
- **Any person on the electoral register of the parish is entitled to speak at a Parish Meeting**, at a meeting of the Parish Council, members of the public may speak only at the Chairman's discretion.
- The press and public have a right to attend Parish Meetings, **but anyone not on the electoral register of the parish is classed as a 'stranger'** to the parish and does not have the right to vote or speak.
- All procedures must be followed as if it were a normal council meeting with the difference that any decisions or votes to be made on an agenda item of the Parish Meeting **are decided by a majority of those present and voting. Each resident of a parish eligible to vote at an election, has one vote per issue.**
- **All remarks shall be addressed to the Chairman**; if you wish to speak, raise your hand and the Chairman will decide the order of speaking if more than one person wishes to speak.
- **Anyone entitled to and wishing to speak, shall do so for no longer than 2 minutes maximum** unless the chairman decides otherwise.

In a summary

A Parish Meeting is a meeting where people of the parish may speak about parish matters on the parish meeting agenda.

Parish Council Meeting is a meeting of the parish councillors, members of the public may only speak in public forum or at the discretion of the Parish Chairman.