

Receiving Public Questions, Representations and Evidence at Meetings

RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE: P&F

This is a policy/procedure document of Saltash Town Council to be followed by both Councillors and Employees.

Current Document Status			
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Version History					
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03.2021	2	AJT	P&F 09.03.2021	172/20/21l	Revised – recommended for approval
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06.2022	3/2022	AJT	FTC 04.08.2023	151/22/23a	Revised to include Planning & Licensing Committee amendments; amended deadline for questions to be received
05.2023	2023	AJT	ATM 04.05.2023	65/23/24c(xiii)	Readopted

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03.2024	2024	SB	FTC 07.03.2024	367/23/24c	Recommendation from P&F. Approved.
05.2024	2024	SB	ATM 02.05.2024	64/24/25c(12)	Readopted
02.2025	2025	LW	P&F 11.03.2025	164/24/25c(13)	Recommendation to FTC 03.04.2025 with additional amendments made at the meeting.
04.2025	2025	LW	FTC 03.04.2025	05/25/26a(13)	Approved with additional amendments made at the meeting.

Document Retention Period

Until superseded

Introduction

Members of the public have a legal right to attend decision making meetings of the Town and its Committees, except where they are excluded for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence (e.g. staffing matters or tenders for contracts). A period of fifteen minutes will be designated for public participation at a meeting and this session is recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Saltash Town Council encourages members of the public to submit a public question in accordance with its procedure. However, the Town Council respectfully asks the public to recognise that while Town Council meetings are open for the public to attend, they are not public meetings.

Submission of Questions, Representations and Evidence

Questions, **representations and evidence** must be submitted in writing using the form provided (refer to Appendix A) **no later than three working days before the meeting** either by email to enquiries@saltash.gov.uk or sent to The Guildhall, 12 Lower Fore Street, Saltash PL12 6JX.

For example; a meeting of the Town Council will be held on 5 March 2026, with submissions due by 2 March 2026.

No person may submit more than one question to a meeting and no more than one question may be asked on behalf of an organisation. **No member of the public may speak for longer than three minutes and must only ask their question including representations and evidence as submitted.**

Members of the public are welcome to submit questions in accordance with the Town Council's adopted procedures. However, if any individual fails to follow these procedures or behaves in a manner that is disrespectful, disruptive, or outside the scope of the rules, the Chairman of the meeting will stop the submission and may direct that the question is not heard.

Public questions, representations and evidence will be published in the reports pack for Members' consideration and will be available to the public. Any questions submitted after the deadline will be referred to the next meeting.

Anonymous questions will not be answered.

Order of Questions

Questions will be taken in the order in which notice was received but the Chairman of the meeting may group together similar questions. Where the enquirer is unable to be present their question will be read out by the **Chairman**.

All questions shall be put to the Chairman and no member of the public may speak for longer than three minutes. **You can only ask your question including representations and evidence as submitted;** you cannot change the question or give further information. Supplementary questions may be allowed at the discretion of the Chairman **but is limited to two minutes**, and must relate to your original question or the reply. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chairman shall direct in which order this will be.

A public question shall not start a debate at the meeting.

Scope of Questions

Questions must relate to a matter to which the Town Council has powers or duties or which affect the town of Saltash. Questions will not be allowed on matters which have previously been determined.

The Town Clerk as the Proper Officer will reject a question if:

- It is beyond the legal powers of the Town Council.
- **Requires the disclosure of confidential information.**
- The Town Clerk will inform the Chairman of the Town Council or relevant Committee of the reason(s) why.
- The Town Clerk will inform the person that submitted a public question of the reason(s) for rejection.

The Chairman of the meeting will reject a question if it:

- Is not about a matter for which the Town Council has a responsibility, or which affects the town of Saltash.
- Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive.
- Is the same, or substantially the same question as one asked in the previous six months.

Response to Questions

Questions may be answered by the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Town Councillors or the Town Clerk and will be dealt with in one of the following ways:

- A verbal response may be made at the meeting.
- The Town Clerk will be asked to respond in writing.
- The Town Council may decide to place the item on an agenda for a future meeting (or refer it to a Committee) for further consideration.
- Where the enquirer was not present at the meeting a copy of the response will be provided if made at the meeting.

Procedure in respect of planning applications

Members of the public wishing to speak about a planning application must submit in writing using the form provided (refer to Appendix A) **no later than three working days before the meeting** where the application will be considered.

The Chairman will introduce the application and invite speakers in the following order:

- The applicant or their agent
- Objector
- Supporter
- Ward Members

Following this, Members of the Committee may debate and will then vote on the application.

Where more than one objector/supporter has registered to speak, the first received will be permitted to speak. Where there are number of interested parties in an application, they are advised to coordinate their response and nominate a speaker.

Time Limits

Each public speaker has a time limit of three minutes to make their representation. At the discretion of the Chairman and with the approval of Members, a further two minutes may be permitted where new information is available.

Protocol

Members of the public should not interrupt other speakers or the Committee debate. Where Members of the Committee ask questions of a public speaker this does not entitle them to participate in the debate.

All speakers must respect the Chairman and respond to instructions accordingly.

Speakers should restrict their comments to material planning considerations only.

Please note that offensive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings of any meeting the Town Council reserves the right to curtail the contribution of that person and exclude a disorderly person or clear the public gallery.

What to expect on the night:

A handout available on the public gallery chairs to include the below information, that explains the process on the night:

‘Welcome to Saltash Town Council and thank you for submitting a public question, the following is guidance when asked to speak in the meeting.

All questions shall be put to the Chairman and no member of the public may speak for longer than three minutes.

Please only ask your question **including representation and evidence as submitted** when directed by the Chairman; you cannot change the question, **representations, evidence** or give further information.

Supplementary questions may be allowed at the discretion of the Chairman but must relate to your original question or the reply.

Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chairman shall direct in which order this will be.

We appreciate your co-operation’.

Appendix A

Submission of Questions, Representation and Evidence Form

Questions, **representations and evidence** must be submitted in writing using the form provided **three working days before the meeting** either by email to enquiries@saltash.gov.uk or sent to The Guildhall, 12 Lower Fore Street, Saltash PL12 6JX.

Name: Address: Contact details:	Date of submission:
Do you give consent for your personal details to be published and made available in the public domain, please circle below: Yes or No	
Are you attending the meeting in person to ask your question, please circle below: Yes or No	
If your question relates to a Planning or Licensing Application, please confirm the application number, name, address and whether you support or object. No member of the public may speak for longer than three minutes:	
Question, Representations and Evidence: A question must be submitted in a clear and concise manner and may include representations and supporting evidence. Each person may submit only one question. No member of the public may speak for longer than three minutes.	