

Procedure to support discussion and decision-making at Parish Council Meetings

Briefing Papers

1. The Clerk is the responsible officer with the duty of drawing up the agenda for all Parish Council meetings. The Clerk will consult the Chair and Vice Chair of the meeting about the agenda prior to publishing it.
2. The Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, will decide if any Briefing Papers are needed to support the agenda items. The decision will be based upon: Is the agenda item complex enough to warrant a Briefing Paper; would a Briefing Paper provide helpful information to facilitate discussion and good decision-making?
3. The Clerk will approach a Councillor to ascertain if he/she is willing and has the time to write a short Briefing Paper. If so, the Clerk will supply any useful information that is available.
4. Councillors who write Briefing Papers for all matters other than planning applications must not seek to persuade but solely to provide even-handed facts that allow other Councillors to form their own views. (In the case of planning applications, Councillors may continue to make draft recommendations because of the time-consuming complexity of many planning applications).
5. If the Clerk perceives a problem with the Briefing Paper, perhaps because it is too long, biased, unclear etc then the Clerk will discuss the Briefing Paper with the Chair/Vice Chair and the writer with a view to it being modified. In the rare event that

agreement cannot be achieved, then the Briefing Paper will not be distributed with the agenda.

6. Under Freedom of Information legislation Briefing Papers may be requested by residents and must be released into the public domain by the Clerk.
7. The Clerk will send out any Briefing Papers together with the agenda.
8. Councillors are requested to read Briefing Papers before the relevant Parish Council meeting so they may join in with discussions and help the Parish Council make the best possible decisions.

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