

# 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 Chair of the Parish Council must chair the Parish Meeting; the Chair will have the usual powers and authority of Chair and has a casting vote in addition to their own vote.
- the Clerk to the Parish Council organises and takes the minutes of the Parish Meeting.
- 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 Chair and Vice-Chair.

Some of the differences are as follows:

- 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.
- At a Parish Meeting, with the exception of the Chair, 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, whilst at a meeting of the Parish Council members of the public may speak only at the Chair’s discretion.
- The press and general 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 Chair; please raise a hand if you wish to speak 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 summary

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

A 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 Chair.