

THEALE PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH MEETINGS

- Purpose – to discuss parish affairs
- Meeting consists of local government electors of a parish
- The parish meeting of 15th February 2018 has been convened by the chairman of the parish council

Notice of the meeting must be given at least 7 clear days beforehand (not including day of notice publication and day of meeting) and must specify:

- Time and place of meeting
- Business to be transacted at the meeting
- Signed by person(s) convening the meeting

Notice is given by posting the notice in some conspicuous place or places in the parish, and in such other manner the person convening the meeting considers desirable.

The meeting shall not commence earlier than 6pm.

The chairman of the parish council, if present, must preside at the meeting. If he is absent then the vice chairman, if present, must preside.

If the chairman and vice chairman are absent then the meeting may appoint a person to take the chair.

Rights of the public to attend

A parish meeting is open to the public, including the press. However, the public (those who are not electors in the parish) may be excluded from the whole or part of the meeting if the parish meeting resolves (by way of voting) that publicity may be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution.

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulation 2014 permits any person to report on its proceedings. This includes filming or recording.

Restrictions:

- No person shall be permitted to give an oral report or commentary during the meeting
- Some individuals may not wish to be filmed etc therefore a separate area may be made available for them. If a person does not wish to be recorded then this cannot be accommodated under the law and he must choose not to speak.

- Children and the vulnerable – filming or recording of children and the vulnerable can only take place with the consent of a responsible adult (child = parent, legal guardian or teacher: vulnerable = medical professional, carer or legal guardian).

The person presiding should remind those who wish to film/record of those persons sitting in a separate area.

Anyone filming/recording must ensure they use any personal data disclosed at a meeting in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Voting and polls

Only local government electors for the parish may vote at the meeting. Each elector can give one vote on any question and no more.

Care should be taken to clearly identify electors and non-electors present at the meeting.

A question to be decided by the meeting shall be decided by the majority of those present and voting. In the case of an equality of votes, the person presiding shall have a casting vote in addition to any other vote he may have. The decision of the person presiding as to the result of the voting shall be final.

A poll may be demanded before the conclusion of a meeting on any question arising at the meeting.

A poll cannot be requested if no decision is reached on a matter.

No poll shall be taken unless either (i) the person presiding at the meeting consents or (ii) a poll is demanded by not less than ten, or one third of the electors present at the meeting, whichever is less.

If a poll is demanded great care should be taken over the exact form of words to be used for the question to be put to the poll. The question must be capable of being answered by a simple YES or NO. The question should be simple and easy to understand. The wording of a poll question cannot be amended after the meeting.

A poll subsequent to a meeting shall be a poll of those entitled to attend the meeting as local government electors and shall be taken by ballot. If a poll is demanded, the chairman of the meeting shall notify the district council and the council shall appoint an officer to be returning officer. Essentially, the procedure is similar to that of electing a local councillor.

Resolutions

The parish meeting's resolutions shall not be binding on the parish council. The resolutions provide an indication of the views of the electors who attended the meeting. It is good practice for the parish council to consider them formally as it may, subject to having the relevant statutory powers, wish to take action in respect of such resolutions.

The minutes of the meeting must be signed at the same or next parish meeting by the person presiding at the meeting. Signed minutes must be retained.

Expenses of a parish meeting

The expenses of a parish meeting, including the expenses of a poll, shall be paid by the parish. Therefore the cost will be borne by the parish council and, ultimately by the local government electors as it will be paid for out of the council tax precept.