

Cyngor Cymuned Tregofwyn

Colwinston Community Council

Public Question Time Protocol

Only Council Members and Officers are permitted to speak during the course of the meeting. The law does not allow members of the public to take part in debates. However, this Council will allow members of the public the opportunity to address the Council and agree to deal with such a request as follows.

The law dictates that no item can be debated by Council unless it has been placed onto the agenda and published in the proper manner. Any public representation should be requested in good time in order for it to be included on the agenda.

- Matters to be raised must relate particularly to the business of the Council and be a matter for which the Council has responsibility or relate to the wellbeing of the Colwinston Community.
- The Chairman will formally acknowledge the matter raised and decide in which order matters will be heard. The hearing will usually commence following the declaration of Interests. If the hearing is to occur during the course of the meeting, then the council members will suspend standing orders to allow the public to address them.
- The Chairman will advise the person to keep to 5-10 minutes, which will include any interactive questions from members
- Questions should be forwarded in advance of the meeting to council. The Chairman may reject a question or a supplementary question if it is defamatory, frivolous or abusive. Questions that are substantially the same as a matter raised in the previous six (6) months or requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information may also be rejected.
- Councillors should not respond to matters raised in the open forum unless asked to do so by the Chairman e.g., in the case of a simple question asked requiring a simple answer. However, there should not be any discussion of matters raised
- Council Members will debate this item when the meeting has convened or re-convened. At that point, the member of the public is relegated to being an observer only and cannot take any further part in discussions. They can remain listening

If the Chairman decides to allow the person to speak prior to the meeting, without the item being on the agenda, then no decision can be taken at that meeting. The proposal would be put on the agenda of the following meeting.

Legal Reference – Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960