Barnoldswick Town Council
Public Participation Policy

Adopted November 2026

Field	Detail
Policy owner	Town Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer
Applies to	Attendees at Council meetings
Contact	Civic Hall, Station Road, Barnoldswick, BB18 5NA | 01282 788090 | clerk@barnoldswicktowncouncil.gov.uk
Review cycle	At least every two years, or sooner if legislation, guidance or Council arrangements change
Status	Adopted 11 Nov 2026

1. Public Participation

Barnoldswick Town Council welcomes members of the public to attend its meetings and provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise matters of local interest, ask questions and make representations to the Council.

Members of the public have a right to attend meetings of the Council which are open to the public. Public participation is intended to encourage community engagement but does not form part of the Council's decision-making process.

2. Open Public Forum

A period of up to 15 minutes will normally be provided at the beginning of meetings of the Full Council for public participation.

The time allowed for an individual member of the public to speak will normally be limited to 3 minutes.

Members of the public may:

- make representations in respect of business included on the agenda;
- ask questions relating to the work of the Council; and
- raise matters of local concern for consideration by the Council.

The Chair may vary the order or length of contributions where necessary to ensure that the meeting is conducted fairly and efficiently.

3. Agenda Items

Where a matter is included on the agenda, members of the public should address their comments to the relevant agenda item.

Members of the public should not seek to participate in the debate between Councillors unless specifically invited to do so by the Chair.

4. Matters Not on the Agenda

Members of the public may raise matters which are not included on the meeting agenda.

The Council will not normally make an immediate decision on a matter raised during public participation which is not included on the published agenda.

Where appropriate, matters raised may be:

- referred to the Town Clerk for consideration;
- referred to the appropriate Council committee;
- included on the agenda of a future meeting; or
- referred to another authority or organisation where the matter falls outside the Council's responsibilities.

The Council may consider a matter at a future meeting at its discretion and in accordance with its Standing Orders and legal obligations.

5. Speaking on the Same Subject

Where more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same subject, they are encouraged to nominate one person to speak on their behalf.

This is intended to avoid duplication and to ensure that the maximum number of people have an opportunity to participate.

Only one person may speak at a time. The Chair will determine the order of speaking where necessary.

6. Questions and Responses

Members of the public should not expect an immediate answer to every question raised during the public participation period.

Where an answer cannot reasonably be provided at the meeting, the matter may be referred to the Town Clerk for a response following the meeting.

Members of the public wishing to receive a response should provide their contact details to the Town Clerk.

7. Conduct

Members of the public attending and participating in Council meetings are expected to behave respectfully and courteously.

Contributions should be relevant to the matter being raised and should not contain offensive, abusive, threatening or defamatory language, or constitute personal criticism of Councillors, Council employees or members of the public.

The Chair has responsibility for maintaining order and may require a speaker to stop speaking where their conduct is inappropriate or disruptive.

The Chair may also take such other action as is permitted by the Council's Standing Orders and by law.

8. Public Attendance After the Forum

Members of the public are welcome to remain at the meeting following the public participation session as observers.

Members of the public may not participate in the Council's debate or decision-making unless invited to do so by the Chair.

The public and press may be excluded from a meeting, or part of a meeting, where the Council resolves to do so in accordance with legislation and its Standing Orders.

9. Prior Notification

Members of the public are encouraged to notify the Town Clerk in advance if they wish to speak at a Council meeting, together with a brief indication of the subject they wish to raise.

Advance notification will assist the Council in managing the meeting and, where appropriate, providing a response.

Failure to provide advance notification does not prevent a member of the public from attending a meeting or requesting to participate, subject to the Chair's control of the meeting.

10. Responsibility of the Chair

The Chair is responsible for managing the public participation session and ensuring that all participants are treated fairly.

The Chair may:

- determine the order in which participants speak;
- enforce the time limit for individual contributions;
- request that a speaker remains relevant to the matter being discussed;
- stop a contribution which is inappropriate or disruptive; and

- take any other reasonable action necessary to maintain the orderly conduct of the meeting.

11. Council Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with Barnoldswick Town Council's Standing Orders.

Where there is any conflict between this policy, the Council's Standing Orders or applicable legislation, the Standing Orders and legislation shall take precedence.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically by Barnoldswick Town Council and may be amended where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance or Council procedures.

Adopted by Barnoldswick Town Council: _____

Minute Reference: _____

Date: _____

Review Date: _____