SHADINGFIELD, SOTTERLEY WILLINGHAM AND ELLOUGH
Joint Parish Council

Conduct of Meetings

Public Participation in Council Meetings

Participation in the public forum a council meeting is not a public meeting; it is a meeting conducted in public. There is no requirement in law to provide a public forum.

As the council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement, we warmly invite members of the public, the press, the police and district, borough or county councillors to attend our meetings and contribute during the public forum.

Please respect that this is a meeting to conduct council business. Interjections are not permitted and if you disrupt business in any way, you may be asked to leave. If you feel that you do not wish to take part in the public forum or if your problem is complex, you might wish to provide information to the council prior to the meeting (at least seven days if possible) using the contact details below.

Following amendments made to the law in 2014, any person attending a council (or committee) meeting can report on the proceedings of the meeting. 'Reporting' is defined as filming, photographing, audio recording, written reporting(e.g. blogging) or oral commentary (not during the meeting).

The following rules will apply to the public forum:

The agenda will indicate when the forum takes place, which will generally be early on the agenda so that councillors can take account of any views expressed. The public participation session will normally be for a maximum period of 15minutes with an individual limit of 3 minutes which may be extended for a special presentation or at the discretion of the Chair.

Questions and comments should relate to business on the agenda and only one question on a topic will generally be received from each person and supplementary questions will be at the Chair's discretion. No question shall be repeated within a six-month period. The Chair may direct that a written or oral response be given.

A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak. Questions must be addressed to the Chair, and a member of the public must not speak for more than three minutes.

Members of the Public should note that their names, topic of discussion and what they say will be minuted by the clerk. These official minutes are open to view by the public.

If a member of the public is disruptive, they will be warned and then asked to leave the meeting. In cases of extreme or physical disturbance where the member of the public does not leave, the meeting may be suspended, and the police will be called.

Reports in the public forum

The Council provides an opportunity for the police and district, borough or county councillors to present reports. An opportunity will be given to ask questions, at the council's discretion, subject to the relevant conditions above and within an overall time limit of 15 minutes.

Reporting at Meetings of the Council or Committees

1. Except where members of the public have been excluded due to the confidential nature of the business, any person may film, photograph, audio record or use social media to report on meetings of the Council, or a committee, including any public participation session.

2. Reporting is restricted by legislation to the proceedings of the meeting, in other words from calling to order to the official closure of the meeting.

3. In accordance with Government guidelines, Council policy does not permit the filming or photographing of persons under the age of eighteen or vulnerable adults without permission of a responsible adult. Any persons who object to being filmed or photographed and have moved to an area designated for this purpose should also not be filmed or photographed. However, the Council cannot guarantee that anyone will not be filmed or photographed.

4. Any person intending to report should give notice before the commencement of the meeting to the Clerk or Chair of the Council.

5. A notice indicating that meetings may be reported by use of filming etc. will be displayed at the meeting venue and a statement about reporting will also be included in relevant notices of meetings.

6. At the start of each meeting, the Chair will announce that proceedings may be filmed, photographed or recorded and invite any members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed to move to the designated area.

7. Any filming or recording of meetings should be conducted overtly from a fixed point in an area of the meeting room specified by the Clerk or Chair.

8. Live oral commentary will not be permitted at any time.

9. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless agreement has been reached in advance of the meeting.

10. Recordings will not be made for reporting by the Council or any other person during any part of the meeting when the public and press are excluded.

11. Persons reporting on a meeting who act improperly or in a disruptive manner could be excluded from the meeting. 'Disruptive behaviour' would include any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of the meeting or impedes other members of the public from being able to see, hear or film etc., the proceedings. This might include:

• Moving outside designated public areas

• Excessive noise during debate
• Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography
• Asking people to repeat for the purpose of recording
• Failure to observe this protocol

12. Those reporting on meetings should not edit the recordings, films or photographs in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being photographed, filmed or recorded.

13. Recording and reporting the council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those recording and reporting to ensure compliance, including data protection and defamation. They will be responsible for any allegations of breaches of the law which may result from their use of recorded material and are admitted to the Council Meeting on the basis that they accept this responsibility. The Council reserves the right to initiate legal proceedings in appropriate circumstances.

14. The Council takes no responsibility for any recording made by others. It also takes no responsibility where a recording which it makes is subsequently used by any third party. Any third party making or editing a recording of a meeting shall in doing so be taken to have indemnified the Council against all actions, proceedings, costs, claims, demands, liabilities, losses and expenses whatsoever relating to the making or use of that recording.

15. The Council asserts no copyright or control over recordings of meetings made by itself or others whilst on Council premises, subject to paragraph 12 above.

16. Generally, archived recordings made by the Council, where retained, will be available on request.

Date of adoption: May 2026	Chair: C. Ellis
Date of next review: May 2027	Clerk: V. Ellis