

Introduction to the Annual Meeting

Every Parish and Town Council are required to hold an Annual Meeting. Its purpose is to elect the Chairman and Deputy Chairman for the that year. By law it has to be the first item on the agenda.

Chairman (as defined under the Local Government Act 1972 s15 can be man, woman, non binary or any identity identified by the individual). It is just the legal power to elect a Chair.

Councils cannot run a meeting without a Chairman, in the Chairman absence this would be the Deputy, in the absence of both the meeting will elect a Chair for that meeting.

- **The first item is taken by the standing chair (in this case Kevin)**
- Nominations will require a proposer and a seconder (in order to stand)
- Councillors will vote by a show of hands
- Should there be more than one nomination, Councillors will vote on each one
- Should the vote be tied the standing chairman will have the casting vote, which they must use

- **The second item is election of Deputy Chair**
- As above

- **The third item is apologies for absence**
- Councillors have a duty in law to attend Council Meetings and are therefore summoned
- If you cannot attend you must send your apologies to the Clerk before the meeting
- If you fail to send apologies and do not attend for six months, you will loose your seat automatically. So it is important that the apologies are recorded in the Council minutes.
- You can go on holiday, be unwell, or have other commitments but just remember to issue apologies.
- Absence can also affect the legal quorum for a meeting, if not enough Councillors attend the meeting cannot make any decisions or run at all.
- A Quorum is one third of Councillors present.
- Dedham has nine Councillors and the quorum is three.

The forth item is declarations of interests

Every Councillor has to fill out a declaration of interest form, this can be completed up to 14 days of taking office. Declarations of interest have to be made at a Council Meeting if it will affect the business to be transacted.

- Pecuniary interest of you as Councillor and your Spouse/Partner

Pecuniary interests include your property, where you work or your business, shares you own in a local business (£25,000 or above), anything that would affect you or your spouse/partner financially.

- Non Pecuniary Interests are memberships to local groups, clubs, organisations including the Masons.
- If you declare a Pecuniary interest you must declare it at the item or if it becomes apparent though the meeting. Once declared you must leave the room for that item and return to the table after.
- If you declare a non pecuniary interest, you declare it at that item or if it becomes apparent through the meeting. Once declared you may remain, take part in the debate and vote.
- If you have a pecuniary interest you may request a dispensation in writing up to the time of the meeting to the Clerk. You will leave the room and the Council will decide either to grant a dispensation (allow you to stay, take part in the debate and vote, allow a partial dispensation which will allow your to speak but then leave the room for the debate and vote, refuse the request.)

- **The fifth item is approval of the minutes**

- It does not matter if you were present or not, you may vote on the minutes. The law requires the minutes to be approved and signed by the Chairman and they become the legal record of the meeting kept into perpetuity.

- **The sixth item is Have Your Say**

- This is the public's opportunity to raise an issue or speak on an item
- Members of the public have a right to attend but not to speak during the meeting unless invited to do so
- Dedham PC allows a maximum of fifteen minutes for the public forum
- Councillors from the Borough or County may be present and if so, may give a report during this item, within the time frame permitted.

- **The seventh item is to consider the current working party arrangements and remit** and decide whether to keep it, change it or amalgamate some of the groups. The Council also has the opportunity to consider whether a Committee structure would be better.

- Working parties meet informally, are not open to the public, no minutes but may have notes of the outcome. Working groups can make no decisions but can make recommendations to the Council. The Council decides the remit and number of Councillors that will serve on it.
- Committees are formal meetings requiring legal notice, agenda, minutes and the public may attend. They can have the devolved power to act, make decisions and have a budget to spend on its remit. Again the Council decides its remit, budget and number of Councillors that will serve on it.

The benefit of having Committees with devolved powers is that it reduces the length of the Council Meeting agendas and spreads the load of responsibilities.

The benefit of Working Groups is that they spread the load of the responsibilities and can make recommendations to Council Meetings.

- **The eighth item is the agree expenditure**

- This will include expenditure after the last meeting and expenditure due now or in the next month

Voting

- Voting is by a show of hands
- Decisions are made by the majority, present and voting
- A tied vote is decided by the Chairs casting vote

Speaking

Please do not be afraid to speak, all Councillors have a valid view or perspective and all voices are of equal worth.

The role of the Chair is to conduct the meeting, they may invite Councillors or public to speak but also ensure that the meeting runs at a reasonable time to prevent Councillors being kept at the meeting all night. They may bring a meeting to order, move items up the agenda or change its order, suspend a meeting (adjourn), close a meeting, remove any disruptive Councillor or member of the public

- If you wish to speak raise your hand and the Chairman will invite you to speak
- Please do not speak over another Councillor
- Please do not interrupt someone else speaking
- Respect each other as per the Code of Conduct

