



Welcome to the Stisted Parish Council Meeting

A Guide to Public Participation & Council Minutes (June 2026)

The Parish Council warmly welcomes members of the public and press to our meetings. We value your presence and want to ensure that your experience is positive, informative, and productive.

To help everyone understand how local government meetings operate, here is a brief guide on how you can get involved, and how the official record of the meeting is created:

1. A Meeting Held in Public, Not a Public Meeting

It is helpful to note the legal setup of our gatherings:

- **The Council's Working Session:** A Parish Council meeting is a meeting held in public, rather than a general public meeting. This means it is a formal, statutory business meeting of the elected councillors that the public are legally invited to observe.
- **The Public Session:** While there is no automatic right for attendees to speak during the council's formal business, we always set aside a dedicated "Public Participation" slot near the beginning of the agenda so we can hear directly from you.
- **Observing the Proceedings:** Once the public participation session closes, the formal council meeting resumes. At this point, the public are kindly asked to watch and listen to the debates silently, as only councillors are permitted to speak and vote on the agenda items.

2. What Can You Speak About?

- **Agenda Items:** Comments or questions should relate directly to the items of business listed on that evening's published agenda.
- **New Local Matters:** If you wish to bring a completely new issue to the council's attention, you are welcome to mention it briefly. Please note that by law, councillors cannot debate or make any legal decisions on items that are not already listed on the official agenda. If necessary, the Clerk can add your topic to a future meeting agenda.

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3. How Does the Session Work?

- **Time Allocation:** To ensure everyone gets a fair turn, the public session lasts for a total of **15 minutes**. Each individual speaker is kindly asked to limit their comments to **3 minutes**.
- **Addressing the Chair:** All comments or questions must be directed to the Chair of the meeting.

- **Responses:** The council may not always be able to provide an immediate answer, especially if an issue requires further research. In these cases, the Clerk will follow up with you directly after the meeting.

4. How Minutes Are Taken and Recorded

To maintain transparency and meet our legal requirements, the official record of the meeting is managed as follows:

- **A Record of Decisions:** By law, council minutes are a formal summary of the resolutions made and actions agreed upon by the councillors. They are not a verbatim (word-for-word) transcript or script of everything said by individuals.
- **Public Participation Record:** A very brief, generalized note of the topics raised during the public session will be included in the minutes (e.g., "*A resident raised a concern regarding local pothole repairs*"). To protect privacy, individual names of the public are generally not recorded.
- **Draft vs. Approved:** Draft minutes are usually published on the council website within a few weeks of the meeting. These remain "drafts" until they are formally checked, approved, and signed by the Chair at the following council meeting.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us keep our meetings structured, welcoming, and efficient for the whole community. Agenda papers and further council information can always be found on our website at www.stisted-pc.gov.uk

Thank you for your time and your continued interest in our parish.

References:

National Association of Local Councils

"Parish Council Meetings (England)" 9 March 2026

"Local Councils Explained" 16 June 2025