



## **Etiquette at Meetings Policy**

### **West Bedlington Town Council**

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## **WBTC Meeting Etiquette Guidelines**

1. Have a short strong agenda so you can stay on track. If you do get off track, you should have a strong facilitator to get you back on track.
2. When people speak in meetings they need to speak loudly enough so that everyone hears what they're saying. Speaking softly is a subtle nonverbal action that can affect your professionalism.
3. Those wishing to speak should signal their intention to the chair and wait to be invited to speak. Speak for as short a time as possible without repetition whilst using clear concise language. The chair should take a firm line with people who speak without an invitation, but the Chair will also need to be aware of any difficulty, for example sight or hearing impairment, that may affect a person's perception.
4. Anyone who attends meetings should be aware of other people's rights to be treated with courtesy. Nobody should be insulted or be verbally attacked by another member. Leave personal opinions outside. Should one member disagree with another, then there is a friendly and courteous way to disagree.
5. The Chair has a duty to outlaw disruptive practices, first by warning offenders and then, should behaviour persist, by asking the meeting if they are happy for the Chair to ask the offender to leave.
6. Manage the meetings time effectively. Start and finish the meeting on time. Nobody wants to stay 30 minutes over each week. If meetings are consistently long then the agenda may be over crowded.
7. Try to set realistic time limitations on all actions agreed during the meeting. This can free up future agendas to concentrate on other issues.
8. You can drink, but you need permission for anything else. If you're going to eat, it needs to be OK with the entire group. You can make noise or give off smells and worst of all answer a question with your mouth full.
9. If the public are allowed to speak in a meeting there must be a clear, time restricted window to do so. Listen to public opinion, however, debate should be avoided to enable a detailed response to any concerns in due course.
10. When the meeting ends, summarise it by giving a short account of all that happened, which includes plans that were put forward, actions, any future agenda items etc.