

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL ESSENTIALS

No. 6: Meeting Reports and Motions



1. Background

- 1.1. Parish Council meetings are often busy with a lot of information to digest and decisions that need to be made. It is therefore important to manage the agenda effectively in order to keep the meeting to its recommended 2 hour time frame.¹
- 1.2. The Council cannot lawfully make a decision or agree an action unless a clearly worded proposal is on the face of the agenda². All readers of the proposal must be able to understand what it means.
- 1.3. There are three principal forms of agenda items once the opening elements have been concluded.
 - 1.3.1. Approval of statutory responsibilities, reports and governance, usually brought by the Clerk.
 - 1.3.2. Reports providing information to the Council and the community relating to progress on current activities or information from other groups.
 - 1.3.3. Motions (or proposals) for decisions and actions

2. Statutory responsibilities

- 2.1. Usually brought by the Clerk for approval of accounts, payments and governance documents.

3. Reports

- 3.1. Reports are for information only. They do not require any decisions and do not create further actions. Reports should be:
 - 3.1.1. Concise and clear
 - 3.1.2. Cover a single topic on the agenda.
 - 3.1.3. Where the same person has multiple activities to report on, they should provide separate reports for each agenda point.
 - 3.1.4. Should be published at least a week before the meeting and no later than the agenda.
 - 3.1.5. Any questions or clarifications on the report should be referred back to the author before the meeting so that the report can be adjusted, if necessary, ahead of the meeting. This should reduce questions at the meeting and improve the quality of reporting to both the Council and the community.
 - 3.1.6. Requests for action included in a report can never lawfully be agreed.

4. Motions (Proposals)

- 4.1. Proposals are part of the agenda that require the Council to make a decision.
- 4.2. On the face of the agenda there needs to be a clear but brief description of the decision required by the council. For example, *“Proposal to purchase a storage shed for council tools and equipment costing £1,900”*
- 4.3. The supporting information should contain the following:
 - 4.3.1. **Heading:** Date of meeting, agenda item, action recommended (which is the proposal on the face of the agenda) and Author
 - 4.3.2. **Background: Why action is recommended.** Brief description of the situation that is behind the proposal.
 - 4.3.3. **Requirement Definition: What action is recommended.** Brief description of the requirements to address the situation.
 - 4.3.4. **Options: Are there different solutions?** Brief description of possible solutions.
 - 4.3.5. **Suppliers and Costs:** If this is for the purchase of goods or services, provide details at least three suppliers with costs supported by quotes.
 - 4.3.6. **Recommendation:** Include here the rationale behind the recommended action. If this is not the least cost option, provide an explanation why.

¹ WMPC Standing Orders 3 x

² Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119 and WMPC Standing Orders 9 b