Ide Parish Council meeting 17 March 2021

Proposal to amend Standing Orders (adopted July 2018)
Presented by Cllr Nick Bradley, Chair of Ide Parish Council

1. One of many issues highlighted by the release onto the internet of recorded proceedings of Handforth Parish Council and its Planning Committee was a challenge by a member of the public in relation to that Council's Standing Orders. They did not specifically state that a representation or question from a member of the public must relate to the business on the agenda.

2. I went back to Ide PC's standing orders to check. We adopted an updated version in July 2018.

Unlike Handforth PC, our relevant clause, Clause 3e, says:

"Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda."

3. However, there is no provision for the public to question the Council on items on the agenda, which surprised me. The clause as stated makes provision for the council to seek information from electors, but not vice versa. Nor is there a provision for a member of the public to request that a topic be put onto the agenda at a future meeting.
3e is a non-compulsory clause, meaning we can amend it to reflect whatever we usually do, or decide to do in future.

4. A further aspect of the Handforth experience was that members of the public joined the meeting from far afield, and some attempted to speak and contribute to the discussion. In Ide it has been our practice to welcome any member of the public to attend the meeting, as is the law; and invite electors to participate at meetings. Note the distinction, which remains at our discretion, between the general public and electors.

5. I propose that we amend clause 3e of ide PC's standing orders to read as follows:

"Any member of the public may attend a meeting of Ide Parish Council. An elector of Ide parish may also make representations, ask or answer questions, and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend, but only in respect of the business on the agenda for that meeting. At the invitation of the Chair a member of the public who is not an elector in Ide parish may answer questions or give evidence at a meeting in respect of the business on the agenda for that meeting."

END
Nick Bradley
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