

MENDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Contact us via the Parish Clerk, Sharon Jones tel 01449 766139, email parishclerk@mendleshampc.org

Welcome to our meeting.

Thank you for taking the time to attend a Mendlesham Parish Council meeting. Your attendance is very much appreciated. Any feedback or comments you may have about the meeting and its content will be most welcome.

This document aims to identify who is who, what is going to happen and how you can get involved in the work of the Parish Council, including joining in with the discussion at this meeting.

Who's who?

The Parish Council is an elected tier of local government and is a legal entity in its own right. It raises and spends money for the benefit of the local community. Mendlesham Parish Council has 11 Parish Councillors, who serve as unpaid volunteers.

Each year, one of the Councillors is elected as Chairperson. The Chairperson chairs meetings and has a casting vote in case of a tied vote. The Chairperson is responsible for keeping the meeting to time, managing debate and ensuring that all Parish Councillors have opportunity to speak and vote.

The Clerk is a part-time employee of the council. The Clerk provides advice and administrative support to the Council. The Clerk serves as a key contact point between members of the public and the Council.

Parish Council meetings are open to the public. Anyone can attend. Our County Councillor, District Councillor and local police representative usually attend Parish Council meetings and provide written or verbal reports to the Council.

What is going to happen?

A Parish Council meeting is governed by legislation and the Council's own rules, known as 'standing orders'. It is important that these rules are followed.

The meeting follows an agenda which is displayed in advance of meetings on Parish noticeboards. The Clerk should offer you a copy of the agenda before the start of the meeting. The Council may only make decisions about issues which are on the agenda.

Legally, only Parish Councillors and the Clerk are allowed to speak during a Parish Council meeting. Only Parish Councillors can vote. However, Mendlesham Parish Council is keen to hear from members of the public when it meets. This is made possible by 'closing' the formal part of the meeting and 'opening' it to members of the public. This happens each time the Council meets in a Public Forum and to allow reports to be presented by people who are not Parish Councillors. The meeting can also be 'closed' at other times, at the discretion of the Chairperson, to allow a member of the public to speak on a particular issue.

How can I get involved?

Mendlesham Parish Council depends on the active participation of those who live in the Parish for its success. You can get involved in many ways.

First, you could become a Parish Councillor. The best Councils elect their Councillors through contested elections. This has not always been possible in Mendlesham because of lack of candidates! The Community has also identified via the Parish Plan, that the Council would be more representative of the Community, if there were more women and younger people standing for election.

Second, you could work in the Parish as a volunteer. There are a huge number of opportunities for all kinds of people. Contact the Clerk for more details.

Finally, you can speak when the Council meets. In the Public Forum, you can make comments, ask the Council to take some action or ask questions. Your questions and comments may relate to topics on the agenda or any other matter. It is also the practice of Mendlesham Parish Council to welcome participation from members of the public throughout the meeting. If you want to speak, raise your hand and wherever possible, subject to time constraints and the need to keep debate balanced, the Chairperson will allow you to speak.