

UPPER BEEDING PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting Attendance Policy

INTRODUCTION

This policy is designed to promote efficient administration of meetings, avoid inquorate meetings and permit timely rescheduling of meetings where necessary. It will provide accountability for Members. Councillors have a responsibility to attend meetings when summoned to do so. The notice to attend a council meeting is, in law, a summons because Councillors have a duty to attend¹.

AIMS and OBJECTIVES

To keep an accurate record of members attendance at meetings and the reason for any absence.

POLICY

Apologies for Absence

Members shall give as much advance notice as possible of absence from any meeting. Apologies must be given to the Clerk in the first instance this may be by telephone but must always be followed up in writing giving a reason for absence.

The deadline for receipt of an apology for absence shall be the end of office hours on the same day as the meeting.

Consequences for non-attendance

A Councillor who does not attend any meetings for a period of six consecutive months will automatically cease to be a Member of the Council unless the reason for absence is approved by the Council before the end of the period².

If absence becomes necessary for extended periods, Councillors are advised to submit a request to the Parish Clerk giving the reason for absence, for approval by the Council.

Recording and Publishing Attendance

The Clerk will keep a record of attendance for all meetings in a centrally held spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will give a reason for the absence but reasons will not be included in the minutes. This is because if a Councillor were absent due to holiday, for example, they would not want this recorded as it may expose them to burglary. Also, some personal reasons would be inappropriate to reveal publicly. However, it must be noted that reasons for absence may be requested under the Freedom of Information Act and it is unlikely that this could be considered except information.

Non-attendance without apologies will be recorded as absent.

The minutes will record attendance and any apologies received and accepted. The Clerk has delegated authority to advise the meeting if the apologies received should be accepted without revealing the reason at the meeting but this will be recorded in the spreadsheet.

Adopted: September 2020 (minute reference: C0920:22)

¹ NALC Good Councillors Guide

² Local Government Act 1972 (s85)