

NUTHALL PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY FOR THE CALLING OF FACT FINDING MEETINGS

WHAT ARE THEY?

It is a meeting of Councillors and other invited representatives to meet and exchange information appertaining to a Council matter. It is not a Council meeting and the normal rules appertaining to the calling of meetings (as set down by the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12 / Public bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 Section 1 will not apply).

The Council should always consider its duty to be fair to all individuals, groups or companies and ensure that it offers equal access to all parties that may have an interest when scheduling such a meeting either during or as part of the same or by holding identical meetings. In the case of the latter the same representatives of the Council should attend all related meetings.

WHO CAN CALL ONE?

A fact finding meeting can take place on resolution the Main Council or the Finance and General purposes committee which can then stipulate the members that will attend. Alternatively if any two of the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Main Council and Finance and General Purposes committee agree then a meeting can be called but **all** Councillors must be invited. The date and time of any such meeting should be agreed by the persons calling the meeting and along with a statement of what it relates to should be given to the Clerk or acting responsible officer. The persons calling the meeting should stipulate if the Clerk or any employee is required to attend or not and in the case of the Clerk if notes are required to be taken.

The Clerk will circulate with the invitation along with the attached guidance notes to all parties. It will be on the agenda for the Council to note at the next Main Council meeting that a meeting was called, who called it, the date and time it took (is due to take) place, those in attendance, any interests declared, and the matter that was being discussed.

AT THE MEETING:

CHAIRMAN: The first business will be to elect a Chairman from those Councillors present for the duration of the meeting. If there is more than one person wishing to chair the meeting it will be decided on a show of hands. If there is an equality of votes then the most senior member of the Council will have a casting vote, aka. Main Council Chairman, Main Council Vice Chairman, F&GP Chairman, F&GP Vice Chairman.

GUIDANCE NOTES: The Chairman will ensure that everyone is aware of and understands the notes issued and the scope and limitations of what may take place in relation to the matter being discussed. The Chairman must pay particular attention to ensure that all parties that the meeting in no way constitutes a Parish Council meeting and, even if all Councillors are present this should not be inferred.

MINUTES: All parties, including Councillors should be encouraged to make their own notes. The Clerk, if in attendance and asked to do so may make notes which, if requested by the Council may be circulated but it must be clear that these are not to be regarded as Minutes at any subsequent meeting.

INTERESTS: Councillors with an interest, personal or prejudicial should declare it at the start of the meeting and act in accordance with the Councillors code of conduct relating to that interest.

DURATION OF MEETING: The duration of any such meeting shall not exceed 90 minutes.

NUTHALL PARISH COUNCIL

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR ALL PARTIES THAT ARE ATTENDING A FACT FINDING MEETING.

The meeting is not a Council meeting and is not binding on any party.

The first business will be to elect a Chairman from those Councillors present for the duration of the meeting. If there is more than one person wishing to chair the meeting it will be decided on a show of hands. If there is an equality of votes then the most senior member of the Council will have a casting vote, aka. Main Council Chairman, Main Council Vice Chairman, F&GP Chairman, F&GP Vice Chairman.

Requests for approval or otherwise must not be asked for or given

Councillors in particular must take care not to infer any opinion that may appear to compromise their independence.

The recommended format of the meeting is that each party in turn makes an opening statement of what they wish to gain from the meeting. This should be concise and the order of speech should be determined by the Chairman.

This should be followed by a question and answer session, through the Chairman. The Chairman shall have the right to stop a party speaking if he considers that adequate time has been allocated to that party on that subject.

Any party may request that a statement of fact that is likely to be relied on at a subsequent Council meeting be written down and signed by the party making it, either at the meeting or within three working days of it. An e-mail from the person concerned will be accepted as a confirmed statement.

Each party should be given the opportunity to make a closing statement (without reply) as the final part of the meeting.