



# MEETINGS – AIDE MEMOIRE FOR TOWN & PARISH COUNCILLORS



## BEFORE THE MEETING

- Made sure you have a copy of the agenda, supporting paperwork and draft minutes of the last meeting – you should receive these at least three days in advance
- Collect any extra information you might need
- You should know from the agenda, exactly what is to be discussed
- If you want an item on the agenda, let the clerk know in plenty of time
- Examine planning applications and visit the sites if necessary to gather information
- If you cannot attend, let the clerk know, and give the reason for non-attendance

## SOUND RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- Enter debates enthusiastically
- Give freely of your experience
- Your point of view is important
- Only one person should talk at a time. Avoid private conversations whilst someone else is speaking
- Be patient with other councillors and appreciate the other person's point of view
- Defer to the Chair

***'A GOOD DEBATE DEMONSTRATES THAT YOU HAVE CONSIDERED ALL THE OPTIONS AND HEARD DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW BEFORE MAKING A DECISION'***

**FOR FURTHER COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT TOOLS AND RESOURCES VISIT  
PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS FOR COUNCILLORS VISIT  
[WWW.BUCKSALC.GOV.UK](http://WWW.BUCKSALC.GOV.UK)**

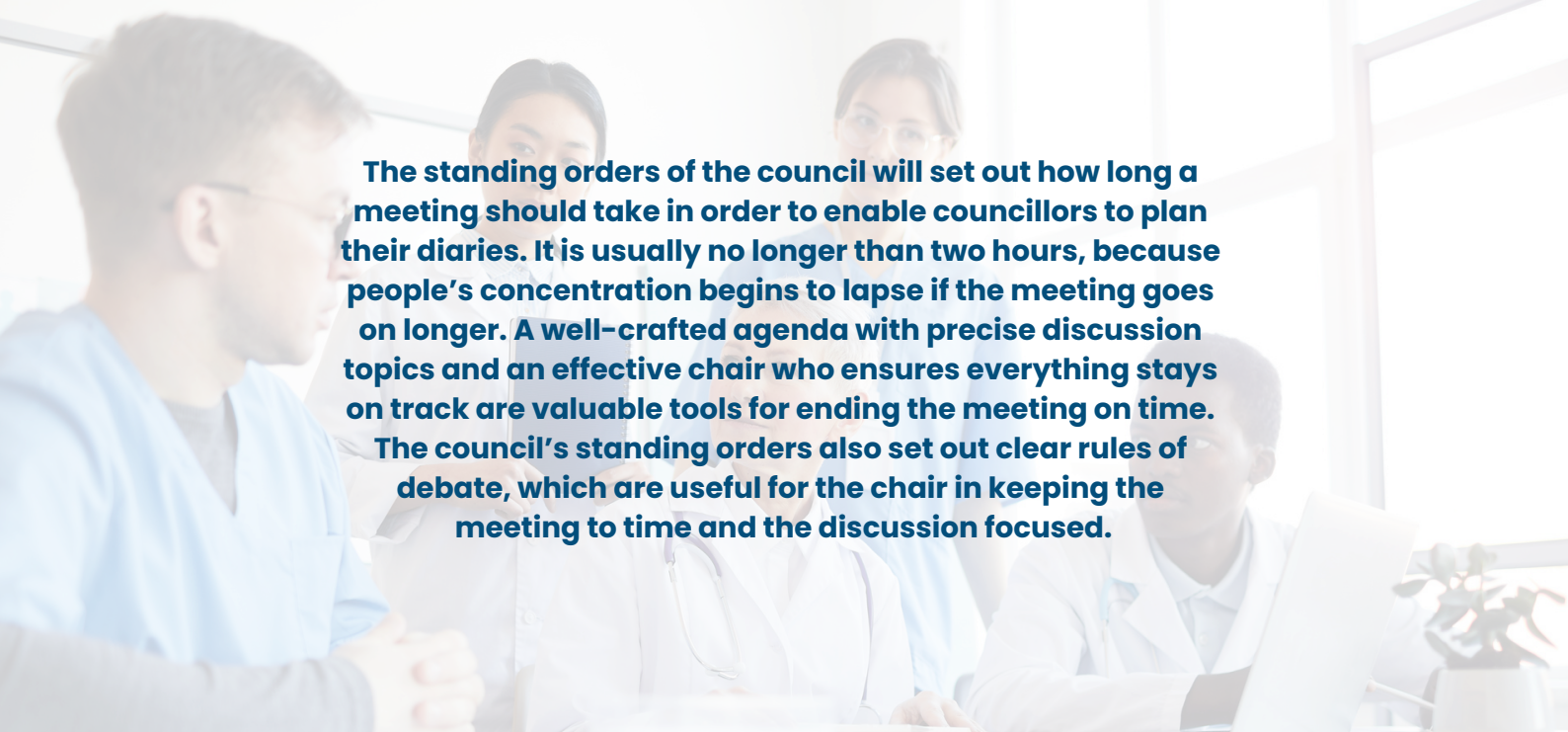
**BMKALC, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, HP20 1UA**



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**The standing orders of the council will set out how long a meeting should take in order to enable councillors to plan their diaries. It is usually no longer than two hours, because people's concentration begins to lapse if the meeting goes on longer. A well-crafted agenda with precise discussion topics and an effective chair who ensures everything stays on track are valuable tools for ending the meeting on time.**

**The council's standing orders also set out clear rules of debate, which are useful for the chair in keeping the meeting to time and the discussion focused.**

## DURING THE MEETING

- Stick to the agenda – don't discuss anything else
- There should be no 'matters arising' or any other business' as any topics discussed under these headings will not have been notified to the public in advance
- Declare any personal interest; if you consider it prejudicial you must leave the room for that item
- All discussion must be through the chairman
- Treat everyone with courtesy
- Try to keep to a timetable – no meeting should take longer than two hours
- Cheques should be signed by two councillors but the whole council should know exactly what is being spent
- Make a note of any actions you are requested to carry out
- Follow the rules i.e., your standing orders



### Remember ...

**If you have any questions, your clerk may be able to answer them, if not; you are very welcome to contact your local county association.**

## AFTER THE MEETING AND BETWEEN MEETINGS

- Carry out any actions you have promised
- Keep up to date with new developments by reading relevant literature, such as the BMKALC Website
- Attend Training events
- Read correspondence sent to the council
- Look at planning applications
- Inform the clerk re minor matters such as faulty street lighting



**If a councillor has no view on a proposal, or cannot decide, they can abstain from the vote – but this should not happen frequently. An important action of a councillor is to make decisions on what they feel best serves the community. Abstaining from the vote means that the councillor did not vote.**

**The way each councillor votes is not recorded in the minutes because all decisions are corporate, however any councillor can ask for a named (or recorded) vote before the meeting moves to the next agenda item. It is best not to do this often, as it goes against the spirit of collective decision making**