

## Asking Questions at Cabinet Meetings

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If you would like to ask a question at a meeting of the Cabinet you may do so provided that you give three working days notice by contacting Democratic Services. Your question should be addressed to the Leader of the Council or the relevant Portfolio Holder.

## Further Information

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If you would like any further information or have any queries please contact:

Democratic Services  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN1 1RS

Telephone: 01892 526121  
Fax: 01892 554255  
e-mail: [committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

## Accessibility

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Accessibility into and within the Town Hall – in response to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Council has provided the following

features to overcome physical barriers to access:

- There is disabled access with automatic doors and an 'out of hours' assistance button via Main Reception on Monson Way.
- There is a wheelchair accessible lift giving access to the first floor where the committee rooms are situated. There are a few steps leading to the Council Chamber itself but there is a flat form chairlift in the foyer.
- Hearing Loop System – the Council Chamber and all the Committee Rooms have been equipped with hearing induction loop systems. The Council Chamber also has fully equipped audio-visual system.

If you need this publication in large print, audiotape or any other format, please contact us on 01892 526121.



# Your Right to Speak

at full Council, Cabinet, Committee  
and Board meetings  
of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

**This leaflet explains how you can speak at most of the Council's full Council meetings and Cabinet, Committee and Board meetings. Your right to speak at meetings of the Planning Committee is explained in a separate leaflet 'Your Right to Speak at Planning Meetings'.**

**You also have the right to ask questions at meetings of the full Council and details are outlined in another leaflet called 'Full Council – Asking Questions'.**

## Details of Meetings

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The Council arranges a number of full Council, Cabinet, Committee and Board meetings, each dealing with specific issues. Matters to be discussed are contained in the agenda for that meeting together with reports prepared by officers which form the basis of the discussions and contain recommendations for decision.

Agendas are published five working days before the meeting and copies are available on our website ([www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)) and at the meeting. You can also obtain a copy from the Democratic Services Officer on 01892 526121 and they are available at the Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells.

## Start Times and Venues of Meetings

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Most meetings are held at the Town Hall, Crescent Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells. Car parking is available in the multi-storey car park in Crescent Road.

Each meeting has its own starting time and these are publicised outside the Town Hall. Further information and confirmation of dates and times of meetings are available by telephoning Democratic Services, or on the Council's website.

## Advance Notice is Required

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If you wish to speak at a meeting, you must telephone Democratic Services by 4pm on the working day before the meeting is held. You will be asked for your name and address and the matter on which you wish to speak. You should also tell us if you are speaking on behalf of an organisation or association, or if you have any special requirements (such as wheelchair access).

The number of speakers is limited to four and places are allocated on a first come first served basis. You are, therefore, encouraged to register to speak as soon as you are able. In addition, Parish/Town Council representatives can also register to speak on an item.

If you wish to put your comments in writing you must do so three clear working days before the date of the meeting in order for the full Council, Cabinet, Committee or Board to be able to consider them.

## Meeting Procedure

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Providing you have given notice that you wish to speak, you should arrive at the meeting venue at least 15 minutes before it is due to start and make yourself known to the Democratic Services Officer. This will allow time for the Officer to advise you of the procedure, show you where to sit and also tell you when the item you wish to speak on is likely to be discussed. Each meeting is chaired by a Councillor who will tell you when you may speak. Depending on the matters being discussed this may be at the beginning of the meeting or when the specific agenda item is reached.

## Time Limits for Speaking

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In the interests of ensuring that the business of the meeting is dealt with speedily and efficiently, time limits are set for speakers. Each will be allocated three minutes to speak and shall not speak further unless asked to do so by the Chairman to clarify a point of fact. Where several members of the public wish to make the same points they will be encouraged to select a spokesperson.

## Guidance for Speaking

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Begin by giving your name and address and also indicate whether you are speaking as an individual member of the public or as a representative of an organisation or association.

Try to speak clearly and do not rush your words. It is useful sometimes to prepare some notes in advance to ensure you do not miss any points which are important to you. Please try to be as brief as possible and avoid repeating points. Remember, other people are probably waiting to speak. It is important that you stick to the agenda item under discussion. The Chairman will not permit you to stray on to other, or irrelevant, issues. Please do not interrupt the meeting or do anything to interfere with its smooth running.

## General Matters

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It is important that you are aware of the laws of slander and you do not therefore say anything in public about a person which is derogatory or defamatory or not true, even if you believe it to be true – you may be sued and have to pay compensation.