

# Llangoedmor Community Council

## **Meeting Etiquette and Predetermination Protocol**

### **Introduction**

This protocol provides guidance to Llangoedmor Community Council (LCC) members on general expectations around meeting etiquette and the concept of predetermination.

### **Background**

Elected members of Llangoedmor Community Council (LCC) sign the adopted Code of Conduct, which highlights the expectation to follow the Seven Principles of Public Life:

#### *Selflessness*

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

#### *Integrity*

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

#### *Objectivity*

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

#### *Accountability*

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

#### *Openness*

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

#### *Honesty*

Holders of public office should be truthful.

#### *Leadership*

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

### **Civility and Respect Pledge**

Llangoedmor Community Council has signed the 'Civility and Respect' Pledge, demonstrating that it is committed to treating members, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.

# Llangoedmor Community Council

## **Meeting Etiquette**

Meetings are held in accordance with Llangoedmor Community Council's adopted Standing Orders. They provide a framework regarding the formalities, order, duration and decision-making processes of meetings. All members are provided with a copy of the Standing Orders and it is available on the website.

In order to support the Standing Orders, this protocol sets out how members should behave in meetings:

- ***Be polite and respectful***  
Take turns in speaking, raise your hand to speak and only speak when invited to do so by the Chair. Do not hold side discussions when a meeting is in progress.
  - ***Be considerate***  
When in meetings, be attentive to your body language. Speak clearly and considerately when addressing others.
  - ***Be precise***  
Remain on topic. Agendas must be followed, and agendas are agreed between the Chair (as appropriate) and Clerk/relevant officer.
- Be prepared***  
Good decision-making is based on meaningful contribution and debate. Members should thoroughly review all materials provided in advance of a meeting, including the agenda and supplementary documents.
- ***Be punctual***  
It is beneficial for members to arrive 10-15 minutes before the meeting starts, and to stay for the duration of the meeting. If you are going to be late, please advise the relevant officer prior to the meeting and if you must leave prior to the anticipated finish time, please make this known before the meeting commences.

Mobile phones should be switched to silent during the meeting.

## **Pre-determination**

It is very likely that members will be predisposed to a particular view on an issue or question which needs to be formally decided at a meeting. The views of members on a particular topic or a certain issue might even be known by others.

As a member you should not be afraid to express views on issues. Indeed, it is entirely acceptable in law for a member to be predisposed to a certain viewpoint that they would like to be agreed at a meeting. However, in doing so it is important that you avoid giving the impression that you have already made up your mind and that your part in the decision is a foregone conclusion. This is because the decision made at a meeting (council, committee or sub-committee) is at risk of being deemed invalid or quashed if it can be demonstrated the member(s) had appeared to exercise bias or had a closed mind when they voted.

A member must be open to fair consideration of the information and argument that is

# Llangoedmor Community Council

presented at the meeting. In a legal action challenging the validity of a resolution because of the apparent bias or predetermination of a matter by member(s), the court would ask from the perspective of a fair-minded and well-informed observer whether the member(s) had refused to consider relevant information or views at a meeting before they voted on the issue.

## **Guidance**

It is always advisable to avoid giving the impression that you have made up your mind prior to the decision-making meeting and hearing the officer's presentation.

Try to avoid doing or saying something before the proper decision-making meeting takes place that shows you have already – and finally – made up your mind on the issue.

If you are unsure or have concerns regarding pre-determination, please speak to the Clerk.