



St Albans
CITY AND DISTRICT

speaking at meetings



There are many opportunities to speak at meetings. You can put your point of view to members of the council at meetings where decisions are made.

Your questions answered:

Which meetings can I speak at?

- **Council** - During public question time you have up to three minutes to ask a question at meetings of the council. You may also present a petition to council and speak to it. Petitions should be lodged with the the Head of Legal & Democratic Service not less than 14 days prior to the meeting and contain not less than 30 minutes on the current Register of Elections.
- **Planning committees** - One person can speak for up to three minutes for, and one person against, a planning application. You will not be able to ask questions.
- **Licensing & general purposes committee** - Up to six people can speak on agenda items for up to three minutes each. You will not be able to ask questions. Names must appear on the current Register of Elections.

How do I go about speaking at full council?

Questions should be sent in writing to the Head of Paid Service at the District Council Offices - address overleaf, or by e-mail to questions@stalbans.gov.uk by midday two working days before the date of the meeting to which they relate.

All questions must include the name and address of the questioner and the name of the council member to whom the question is to be put, if applicable.

A supplementary question to the original question can be put at the meeting without notice.

Questions to council should:

- Relate to matters for which the council has a responsibility or which affect the district.

Questions to council should not:

- Be defamatory, frivolous or offensive.
- Be substantially the same as a question put during the last six months.
- Seek the disclosure of exempt or confidential information.

To speak at a meeting please contact us on one of the following telephone numbers on the day of the meeting:

• **Planning meetings:**

St Albans and Sandridge: 01727 819344
the rest of the District: 01727 819345
between 10.00am and 2.30pm

• **Licensing & General Purposes:**

01727 819519 between 9.00am and 3.00pm

You can only speak on items contained on the agenda for meetings of the planning and licensing & general purposes committees.

One person can speak in favour and one against a planning application at a planning meeting.

If you wish to ask questions at council or speak at licensing & general purposes, your name must appear on the current Register of Electors for the City and District. This does not apply for planning meetings.

How will I know what's coming up?

Annual calendars and weekly lists of committee meetings are published in advance on the notice boards at the council offices and at: www.stalbans.gov.uk

Agendas and copies of reports can be obtained from the council offices one week before the meeting or on the website (above).

Details of planning applications can be obtained by telephoning 01727 819469 in the week prior to a meeting.

The Cabinet also produces a Forward Plan covering key decisions to be made in the coming months. This will be published in the local press and this can be accessed at www.stalbans.gov.uk

What if I want to speak on a petition?

A petitioner can speak to the council or a committee for up to three minutes on any petition delivered to the Head of Paid Service, 14 or more days before the meeting and containing not less than 30 names on the current Register of Electors.

Will what I say or ask be recorded?

In order to keep minutes concise, it is not possible to record everything that is said at a meeting. The names of people speaking or asking questions are given in the minutes but the questions asked or statements made are not included, other than at the full council meetings.

If you have submitted a written question to council or are unable to attend the meeting to hear the reply given, a written answer will be sent to you.

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Procedures for speaking at meetings

You should arrive about 5-10 minutes before the meeting and introduce yourself to the corporate administrator, who will be wearing a name badge.

- Please give your name, address and details on the item on which you will speak.
- You will be shown where to sit and the procedures will be explained.
- When your item has been introduced on the agenda you will have up to three minutes to speak on the item, after which a timing device will sound.
- Please return to your original seat after the timing device has sounded and the item will be considered by the committee.
- At council meetings, the mayor will invite you to put your question during the 30 minute public question time.

This leaflet can be obtained in alternative formats, eg. in braille, large print, on audio tape, on computer disk or e-mail by contacting the council's corporate administration section - see address details on the back cover.

Talking to Councillors in advance of meetings

The council now has portfolio holders, who are members of the cabinet and are responsible for specific service areas.

You can also contact your local area ward councillors to discuss issues in advance of their consideration at meetings.

Contact details for portfolio holders and ward councillors can be obtained from the corporate administration section - details below or from the Council's website.

Further information on Speak Out, the council and its committees can be obtained from:

Corporate Administration,
St Albans District Council,
St Peter's Street,
St Albans AL1 3JE

01727 819519 or 81952/0/3/4/5/6
e-mail: corporateadmin@stalbans.gov.uk