

AGENDA PROCEDURE – BERWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Because Council meetings often consist of many agenda items including various and accompanying appendices it is considered helpful to send the agenda out 5 days before a meeting so Councillors have plenty of time to consider all of the items and the content.

At least three clear days before each council, committee or sub-committee meeting, Councillors should receive a summons and agenda. The three clear days is established in law because it is important to be notified of issues to be discussed. Topics requiring a decision cannot be added to the agenda after the deadline has passed; they must wait for another meeting. **Three clear days** has a specific legal meaning in relation to the issuing of the agenda. It does not include the day on which the agenda was sent out, or the day of the meeting. It also excludes Sundays, bank holidays and the days of the Christmas and Easter breaks. It is good practice to exclude Saturdays too.

It is actually unlawful to make a decision, especially a decision to spend money, without sufficient (three clear days) warning. Vague agenda items that don't specify exact business (such as Matters Arising, Correspondence and Any Other Business) are dangerous and should be avoided, because the council *cannot* make unexpected decisions.

Putting the agenda together is the clerk's responsibility. The clerk must sign the agenda and can decide how it will be set out. This process is often undertaken in consultation with the Chairman. Councillors may ask the clerk to add items to the agenda if they feel a relevant subject should be discussed. No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least (5) clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

The **4 Ws** help councillors prepare for a meeting.

What is the meeting for?

What papers must I read?

Which people do I need to consult?

What did I promise to do before this meeting?