

Annual Town Meeting

The Town Clerk explains what it is and what goes on:

The official rules are quite interesting. They state that the meeting must be held between 1 March and 1 June, and not before 6.00 pm. The agenda details all the items to be discussed and debated. It is signed by the Mayor, or persons calling the meeting, and displayed at least seven days previously. Six electors of the town may call an Annual Town Meeting and request items to be included on the agenda for debate. Although the meeting is normally administered from the Town Hall it does not stop you calling a meeting yourself and I can assist should you wish to do so. There is no rule either that says only one meeting should be held within the timeframe.

The Town Mayor must preside if he or she is present but if not, and if the Deputy Mayor is also absent, the meeting must elect a Chairman. Strictly speaking, only two people need be present for the meeting to be legally able to do business, but in reality we prefer to see as many of you as possible - the more the merrier (we hope!).

Decisions are made by the majority present. However, voting does not have to be by a show of hands - it can be vocal! He or she who literally 'shouts loudest' can win an argument and it is for the person chairing the meeting to decide how the result is recorded.

The Annual Town Meeting can discuss and resolve anything that the electors feel is important, although the Town Council and other local authorities are not bound by the resolutions. However, if the feelings of the community are strong Councillors would be remiss not to consider them, particularly with the next elections firmly in mind!

A poll may be demanded not later than the end of the meeting on any question arising, and must be held if ten or one-third of the electors present (whichever is the least) insist, or if the person presiding consents. The wording to appear on the ballot form must also be agreed before the end of the meeting. The procedure for carrying out a poll is similar to that of a normal election, and is managed by the District Council.

So, there you have it. If you have a burning issue that affects the town, and you want to discuss it openly, do let me know so that it can be added to the agenda for this year's Annual Town Meeting - this is not only your meeting, it is your right!

Taken from Clerk's Corner, The Bridge, April 2013