

MEETING ATTENDANCE POLICY & GUIDANCE

This policy and guidance document is designed to promote efficient administration of meetings, avoid meetings being inquorate and permit timely rescheduling of meetings if required. It also highlights accountability for Members.

Apologies for Absence

Members shall give as much advance notice as possible of absence from all meetings although this does not have to be in writing it is good practice to mention future absence at a previous meeting, send an email to the Town Clerk, or telephone the Town Clerk or her nominated representative in a timely manner.

The deadline for receipt of an apology with reason for absence is 5pm on the same day as the meeting (sending an email or leaving a message on the answerphone after the office has closed is not acceptable as this may not be checked ahead of the meeting).

Members are individually responsible for ensuring they either attend a meeting following receipt of the summons or submit a valid reason for absence (not just an apology which is simply good manners) for approval.

Apologies for absence must be made directly by the Member concerned in advance and not via a third person such as another Member at the meeting; and the reason must be approved by affirmative resolution and recorded in the minutes by Council.

Extended Periods of Absence

A Member who does not attend any meetings for a period of six consecutive months will automatically be disqualified as a Councillor for Folkestone Town Council unless the Member has a **statutory excuse** (Membership of the Armed Forces in time of War) or the **reason** for absence was approved by affirmative resolution by the Council before the end of the period¹. The Town Clerk as Proper Officer² not the Council as Corporate Body has a legal duty to discharge the disqualification to which there is no right of appeal. Group Leaders are therefore encouraged to monitor their members attendance and independent members are reminded they are responsible for monitoring their own attendance.

Council approved Reasons for Absence include:

Long Term Illness / Hospitalisation / Doctors Fit Note / Self Isolation
Bereavement / Funeral
Maternity / Paternity / Childcare

If absence becomes necessary for extended periods, members are advised to submit a request to the Town Clerk giving the reason for absence, for approval by Council.

Recording and Publishing Attendance

For all meetings of the Council, the Town Clerk records Members' attendance or non-attendance whether with or without apologies, this information is stored in a centrally held spreadsheet kept for that purpose which is also published on Council's website.

The Minutes of Meetings will show:

- Members in Attendance

- Members Apologies with Reason
- Members Absent with Accepted Reason or Statutory Excuse
- Members Absent

This Policy and Guidance Document will be reviewed annually or should legislation dictate.

¹ Local Government Act 1972, S. 85

² Local Government Act 1972, S. 112