



West Horsley Parish Council

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR FULL COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

This policy and guidance document is designed to promote efficient administration of Full Council and Committee meetings, and to avoid them being inquorate. It also highlights accountability for Members.

Apologies for Absence

Councillors have a duty to attend meetings when summoned to do so. The notice to attend a council meeting is, in law, a summons, because councillors have a duty to attend and to consider, in advance of the meeting, the agenda and any related documents sent with the summons.¹

Members shall give as much advance notice as possible of absence from all meetings. It is good practice to mention a future absence at a previous meeting, and to either send an email or telephone the Parish Clerk in a timely manner. It is not possible to accept an absence without a reason being given.

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) for approval.

Acceptable Reasons for Absence

The following reasons for absence from a meeting will be accepted as satisfactory:

- sickness
- work commitments
- training
- official parish council business
- official school governor or trustee business

This is not a restrictive list and any other reasons given will be considered on an individual basis.

The recording of the reason for a councillor's absence in a public document is not deemed compatible with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), therefore the minutes of council meetings will not record the reason submitted for apologies.

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 West Horsley Parish Council unless the reason for absence has been approved by the Council before the end of the period.²

The Parish Clerk as Proper Officer³, not the Council as Corporate Body, has a legal duty to discharge the disqualification to which there is no right of appeal. Councillors are therefore encouraged to monitor their attendance.

¹ The Good Councillor's Guide 2024

² LGA 1972 s85

³ LGA 1972 s112

Council-approved reasons for extended periods of absence are:

- long-term illness
- maternity/paternity leave
- bereavement

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

Adopted: 18 June 2024

Next review: June 2026