

REPRESENTATIVE PROTOCOL

Guidelines for Councillors representing the council on another body and/or within the village

Scope

It is of paramount importance that Councillors represent both the Council and themselves in the correct manner to ensure that both are not mis-quoted or mis-represented and views belonging to one or the other are not confused in conversations or meetings.

Situations

Councillors may be requested, or volunteer to be, a Council representative on another body. This could include attending a group as the Council's representative or, attending a meeting of another authority as the Council's representative to pass on information or ask a question.

Also, as most Councillors live and/or work in the village, they may often be stopped by residents who have information, ideas, or problems which they wish to be resolved or assistance with.

A Councillor as a Representative

Euxton presently has a number of groups with Councillor representatives attend on its behalf, including:

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| Chorley Liaison meeting | Neighbourhood Working meetings |
| Planning Committee | and others |

Whilst attending these groups, Councillors attending as the Euxton Parish Council representative, should **only** put forward the views agreed by the Council, and **not** their own personal views. In principle, all Councillors should abide by the democratic decisions of the Council once made.

If you are attending a meeting as the Euxton Parish Council representative but feel you have a view, questions or objection which you would like to express as an individual or is a view held by another group or committee then this must be clearly communicated to the meeting you are attending (see examples 1 & 2 below).

No member of the Council should misrepresent or do something 'in the name of the Council', which they have not been authorised to do so by the Council.

Any councillor asked to express a opinion on Council policy or expenditure or potential policy or expenditure should always advise any requester that they have no power to bind the Council and any opinion on policy or expenditure can only be made by the Council collectively at a properly constituted meeting of the Council.

A Councillor as a Resident

Councillors may sometimes be stopped by residents, when they are out and about, who have information or ideas for them to listen to or problems which they wish to be resolved or passed on. It is important that these queries are noted for either; passing on, handing over or raising with the Council (see examples 3 & 4 below).

No member of the Council should promise or agree to do anything, which they have not been authorised to do by the Council or do something 'in the name of the Council', which they have not been authorised to do by the Council.

Examples

1. The Parish Council decided it supported a particular planning application. You have decided to attend the Planning Committee at Chorley Council because you, personally, don't like the planning application in question and have a strong objection towards its design and position.

If you speak at Committee and introduce yourself as 'Parish Councillor for Euxton' then you may only offer its' view which was decided at a Council meeting.

If you wished to express your personal view at this meeting about the application, then you should **not** introduce yourself as an Euxton Parish Councillor and make it very clear to the meeting that you are expressing your 'Personal View'.

If you do not make yourself clear about whose views you are expressing at the meeting then the Parish Council could be mis-quoted as not liking or objecting to the application, when this was not the case.

2. You have been asked to attend a community meeting as the Council's representative, to gather information of what is happening and to see if any items will affect Euxton. You are only attending the meeting as a representative of Euxton Parish Council and otherwise you would not be invited to this meeting.

The meeting goes off track and begins discussing an item which is not at all relevant 'to Euxton' but that you are interested in and have knowledge about. If you engage in conversation regarding issues, opinions or objections you should make the meeting clearly aware that this is your own personal view and not the views of the Parish Council - remembering that you are only there because of the Parish Council.

3. A resident has noticed a pot hole in their road and does not know who or how to report it, so, knowing you are a Parish Councillor, has asked for your help.

If you know who the problem belongs to ie; Borough Council, County Council or another, tell the resident. If not, tell them you will report to the Clerk to investigate.

In the case of a pot hole, and you know it is a County issue, you could take a look, even take a photo and note of the exact position and severity of the hole and then report straight on to the correct authority (ie LCC) using their reporting systems; or pass information on to any of the local Borough or County Councillors to take forward; or pass information to the Clerk to report on; or pass on to the resident the information so they could report the fault themselves.

4. A resident approaches you because they know you are a Parish Councillor. They ask you to consider their idea which they feel would make things better for their age group. You go to take a look at an area of land where they are suggesting changes and discuss the project with a land owner. You agree with the resident that the Council thinks this is a good idea and promise that the Council will carry out this project. These actions described are wrong in a number of ways.

- You should never be seen to be acting on behalf of the Council, by getting involved in discussions which the Council is not aware of ie, with a land owner.
- You as an individual should not be giving the Council's 'endorsement' or 'agreement' to anything without its express permission or knowledge.
- You should not be agreeing to carry out any works, however small, on behalf of the Council.

A recommended course of action for you, to an approach of this kind, would be to listen to the idea and logic of the suggestion, note down particulars or positions and then raise this at a Parish Council meeting for it to consider as a future project.