

POLICY NUMBER	M.33
POLICY SUBJECT	Ward Meetings
ADOPTION DATE	25 March 2010 (C.20/0310)
LAST VARIATION DATE	26 November 2020 (C.05/1120)
LAST REVIEW DATE	26 November 2020 (C.05/1120)

Policy Objective

To establish principles for the scheduling and conducting of Ward Meetings.

What is a Ward Meeting?

Ward Meeting – an informal meeting of Ward Councillors with their residents and ratepayers in order to improve Council’s engagement with its community.

General Principles

Council recognizes that Ward Meetings can be an effective means of two-way communication between Councillors and the community. Ward Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the following general principles:

1. No Ward Meetings are to be held in the period between the opening of nominations and the date of the applicable election;
2. The discretion to call a Ward Meeting rests solely with the Ward Councillors – no other person can call a Ward Meeting;
3. For South Ward, a majority of the Ward Councillors must agree for a Ward meeting to be called and for North Ward, both Councillors must agree for a Ward meeting to be called;
4. A minimum 1 month notice is to be given for a ward meeting except that a lesser notice for a meeting can be provided if the unanimous support of all ward Councillors is provided. Note if insufficient notice is provided either less or no advertising of the meeting may occur;
5. There is no requirement for a minimum or maximum number of Ward Meetings per annum;
6. Note that there is no compulsion for Councillors to call a ward meeting, particularly as Councillors may have identified alternatives to Ward Meetings;
7. Advertising of Ward Meetings – two notices (1 each over 2 weeks) in the Manjimup Bridgetown Times in the two weeks preceding the meeting. Also notices will be placed on Council noticeboards and the Shire website and social media;
8. Shire officers are not to attend Ward Meetings in an official capacity – the meetings are solely for councillor participation;
9. Councillors from other wards are able to attend a Ward Meeting but will only be permitted to participate with the approval of all Ward Councillors;

10. The Ward Councillors will determine the need for a Chair at each meeting;
11. It is the responsibility of the ward Councillors to take notes of the meeting. All ward Councillors that attended the meeting are to agree to the content of the notes;
12. Any notes taken by a Ward Councillor at their own Ward Meeting will form an official record and the Ward Councillor will have to ensure he/she retains the notes as a record under the State Records Act. If the Ward Councillors compile agreed notes from the meeting and submit them to the Shire Administration this will have fulfilled their responsibilities under the State Records Act;
13. Minutes will be included in the Councillor Information Bulletin if requested by any of the Ward Councillors;
14. Refreshments in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits can be provided;
15. The purpose of the meetings is primarily to receive comment from members of the public attending the meeting – each councillor can be given a set period of time during the meeting to raise issues for consideration by the audience; and
16. Ward Meetings are not part of the formal governance structure of the Council and have no decision making power.