



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

# **Conduct and Behaviour of Visitors to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Civic Buildings**

**The Grange, Omagh  
The Townhall, Enniskillen**

2 October 2019

## **1. Introduction**

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (The Council) welcomes all visitors to its Civic Buildings, namely the Grange Omagh and The Townhall Enniskillen. The Council aims to ensure that the buildings are accessible to all, by ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all users and the preservation of order at all times within the buildings.

The following protocol sets out how the Council will implement its Conduct and Behaviour of Visitors Protocol at the Council's Civic Buildings, with particular reference to attendance at Council and Committee meetings. This protocol is also applicable to the two administration centres, namely the Connect Centres at 16 High Street Omagh and County Buildings, Enniskillen and to any meeting of the Council (formal or informal) held outside the two main Civic Buildings.

Underpinning this Protocol is the Council Standing Orders 8 – Admission to Meetings and 10 – Exclusion of the Public.

## **2. Context**

The definition of a 'Visitor' is **any** person within the Council's Civic Buildings and the immediate grounds around the Civic Buildings (or Administrative buildings – Connect Centres) or any other location outside the Council Civic or Administrative Buildings where a committee/working group/informal meeting is taking place, with the exception of Councillors and Council staff. The Protocol applies to all visitors, both invited and non-invited persons.

The monthly Council and Committee meetings are held in public. Visitors are welcome to attend in the Council Chamber, provided that the numbers in attendance comply with the relevant Fire Regulations. The Council Chamber in The Grange can accommodate four members of the press and seven members of the public. The Council Chamber in The Townhall can accommodate four members of the press and ten members of the public.

Admission of visitors to the above meetings is on the understanding that they must be seated at all times, and that no expression of opinion or noise of any kind is permitted.

### **3. Responsibilities**

The Council has overall responsibility for the maintenance of good order and conduct in its buildings. The final decision as to who is permitted to enter the Council's Civic and Administrative Buildings rests with the Council.

Whilst the Council has Security/Porters in attendance at the Civic Buildings during meetings, there is an onus on Councillors or the member of staff who have invited visitors to the building, to ensure that those visitors behave appropriately. There is also a responsibility on visitors to ensure they do not access areas which they are not entitled to enter.

In the first instance, any concerns relating to visitor behaviour should be addressed to the Security/Porters located in the Reception area(s).

Visitor behaviour does not normally cause any difficulties, but there have been occasions when Security/Porters have required further guidance from Senior Management in relation to who is permitted to enter the building. In such instances, the visitors must remain outside the Civic or Administrative Building until further direction has been given.

### **4. Entry to Council Buildings**

Generally, the Council welcomes visitors to its Civic and Administrative Buildings for legitimate business purposes. Council buildings will be open to the public during normal business hours i.e. 9.00am – 5.00pm. Access Guides which are designed to provide information for people with different access requirements are available on the website to assist with pre-planning a visit.

On the evening of a meeting, entrance to either building will be facilitated 15 minutes prior to the start of that meeting.

Visitors wishing to observe a Council or Committee meeting will be required to notify their attendance by 5.00pm, two days prior to the meeting by emailing [democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com) or telephoning (028) 303 1777 and asking to be put through to Democratic Services. Admission outside this arrangement will be considered on a case by basis, and entry will be at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.

Visitors will be required to sign in at the Reception desk and will be issued with a Security Pass.

Visitors in the Chamber must behave in an orderly and appropriate manner at all times. Behaviour that is not permitted includes shouting, interrupting Councillors or

Officers whilst they are speaking, jeering, applauding, stamping feet, hissing or booing, passing notes or papers to Councillors.

The use of mobile phones or other electronic equipment to record or video proceedings is not permitted.

In the event of an individual or group interrupting or attempting to interrupt proceedings the Chair will issue a warning and if the interruption continues, the Chair will request Security/Porters to clear the public gallery and if necessary, can recess or suspend the meeting;

In order to ensure the effective running of the business of the meeting and provide a safe working environment for all present, visitors will not be permitted to enter or remain in the meeting if they are: -

- ❖ Behaving in an unruly, disorderly or intimidatory manner;
- ❖ Showing signs of intoxication;
- ❖ Carrying flags or banners, placards, photographs or other such similar items;
- ❖ Wearing head coverings;<sup>1</sup> face masks or anything which disguise their identity.
- ❖ Wearing clothing which has the potential to cause disharmony or intimidation.

## **5. External Protests**

The Council supports the democratic rights of citizens to hold peaceful protests outside civic buildings or within the immediate curtilage. However, those leading or organising such protest events must be mindful of the health and safety responsibilities both for themselves and for the persons with them. The health, safety and wellbeing of everyone using the Council buildings is a priority and Council staff may intervene at any time to ensure compliance.

## **6. Review**

This Protocol will be kept under review every 12 months

---

<sup>1</sup> Nothing in this Code of Conduct will adversely affect the right of a member of a religious community who is required to wear head coverings such as a Turban or a Hijab.