

Winterbourne Parish Council

Protocol for remote meetings

Introduction

On 4th April 2020 the Government introduced The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 which allows local councils to meet remotely. These regulations apply to meetings held before 7th May 2021.

These procedures set out how Winterbourne Parish Council will implement and comply with the above temporary regulations and are valid only while the above regulations are in force.

Technology

For the purposes of holding remote meetings, Winterbourne Parish Council will use Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>).

Members will advise the Clerk of any technical issues relating to access to these meetings.

Preparation for Meetings

The meeting will be advertised on the Council's website and all members and officers due to attend will be issued with a notice and agenda by email. This will be within the usual time frame for meeting notices.

Minutes will be taken in the usual way and displayed on the website. Minutes will be circulated after the meeting and signed at a future face-to-face meeting once restrictions have been lifted.

Where a member is unable to attend a meeting, apologies will be submitted and received in the usual way.

The meetings will be open to the public and ways of accessing the meeting will explained on the meeting notice.

Where a councillor has an interest in a matter and would normally leave a physical meeting, they will exit the meeting. They will either wait in the virtual "waiting room" or leave completely and be advised by text message by the Clerk when they can return to the meeting.

The Meeting

One person (the Clerk or a designated councillor) will set up and technically host the meeting. An email invitation, with an explanation of how to access the meeting, will be sent to all members.

The Clerk may request that the meeting is recorded, to facilitate the writing of meeting minutes. This will be the only reason for such recording, and any recording will be deleted once the minutes are approved and published.

If a vote is required, the Chairman will ask each member in turn to express their vote verbally.

Public Participation

The meeting will be open to the public and information of how to access meetings will be included in the meeting notice. All members of the public wishing to observe the meeting will be provided with the meeting password by the Clerk on request.

Members of the public wishing to raise a question at the meeting should notify the Clerk of the question in advance of the meeting.

The meeting host may remove anyone from the meeting who is being disruptive, using offensive language or interrupts the meeting proceedings.

Relation to other policies and procedures

The Clerk will ensure that Data Protection requirements are followed when organizing remote meetings.

This policy adopted at the Winterbourne Parish Council meeting held on 13/5/20