



Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council Protocol for Remote Meetings of the Council

It was agreed by the Chairman and Clerk to use the Zoom platform for the holding of remote full Council and the Planning Committee as necessary during the COVID-19 crisis.

A pro Zoom account has been purchased by the Clerk which provides a phone link facility for those unable to join through the internet and additional security features.

In order to comply with legislation members of the public should be able to 'attend' meetings without prior notification, therefore the link to the meeting and joining information will be published on the agendas as advised by DALC.

Prior to the Meeting

It is recommended that Members attend at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the meeting in order to ensure that they are able to login and their IT is working correctly; audio and/or video, and there is no interference.

Persons attending by audio link only, must be prepared to confirm their identity for the purpose of avoidance of impersonation.

The meeting host, normally the Chairman, will ensure that the names of those attending is correct, in the case of Members will be in the format of Cllr xxxx, or in the case of a member of the public as agreed with them. The Chairman and Clerk will also be identifiable.

Attendees should consider their background if attending by video link to ensure they do not show valuables or other people in their home.

Members of the public attending will not be permitted entry to the meeting until approx. 2 minutes prior to the commencement time.

The chat facility should only be used to indicate a wish to speak. Under no circumstances should there be any private chat sent between members, this is to ensure transparency and is not permitted at normal, face to face, meetings of the Council.

Members are reminded that the meetings are formal, and they should address others as 'Cllr, Chairman, Clerk' in the usual way.

The Start of the Meeting

The Chairman will welcome those present and before proceeding with the business on the agenda will:

- Confirm that everyone present is able to hear the proceedings
- Outline how the meeting will be run including protocols for wishing to speak and vote

During the meeting

The meeting will proceed in line with normal practice.

- Individuals who have joined through the internet will be requested to mute their microphones until asked to speak. This reduces background noise and helps everyone to hear the discussions.

- Indicating to speak

- If joined by video Members wishing to speak should indicate by raising their hand

- If joined by phone Members should indicate a wish to speak, by verbalising their request and then waiting to be invited

- The Chairman will ensure that all Members are given the opportunity to speak and will regularly check if anyone wishes to comment

- Keeping track of who is present throughout the meeting may require a roll call at certain points. In the event that the Chairman loses connection the vice-Chairman will take the chair until the Member is able to re-join. Should the vice-Chairman not be present another Member will be nominated.

The Vice-Chairman of the relevant meeting must make every effort to attend and be familiar with the agenda and papers.

- Voting - The default position is 'voting by exception'. In other words, Members will be requested to indicate verbally if they wish to vote against or abstain. The Chairman, in conjunction with the Clerk, may exercise discretion as to whether a roll call is needed for any particular item of business.

The Clerk will read back the votes to ensure accuracy if there is any possibility of confusion.

- Should a Member need to leave the meeting because of a declared interest, they will be moved to the Waiting Room by the Clerk for the duration of that item of business or sign out completely if they do not intend to return. On conclusion of the matter they will be invited to re-join the meeting by the Clerk.

- Confidential, Part 2 items of business any Members having to leave will be moved to the Waiting Room by the Clerk for the duration of that item of business or sign out completely if they do not intend to return. Members of the public will also be removed from the meeting in the same way.

On conclusion of the matter any persons in the Waiting Room will be invited to re-join the meeting by the Clerk.

Members will be asked to declare that there is no-one in their vicinity able to overhear the confidential session.

The meeting Host will, if possible, lock the meeting so that no persons can enter.

- Members of the public are entitled to attend, with the exception of any closed sessions, and be able to speak in the relevant section and will be invited to do so by the Chairman.

- Anyone disrupting the meeting can be removed as normal by resolution of the Council.