

Agenda item

## **Remote Meetings Guidelines**

Following the new regulations, the Parish Council will be holding some meetings using Zoom on-line meeting platform. This procedure is to adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting to be held on 16th July 2020.

### **1. Introduction**

Hugglescote & Donington Le Heath Parish Council (The Council) recognises the opportunity offered by virtual meetings during times when. physical meetings are not appropriate. These guidelines have been produced to help participants understand how virtual meetings will be held.

The Regulations mentioned in this Policy will be currently in force until 7th May 2021.

The policy is prepared in line with the 'The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020'.

### **2. Standing Orders**

Standing Orders will still be used to guide meetings in a similar way to physical meetings. This Policy is a temporary appendix to the Council's Standing Orders

### **3. Virtual meeting platform**

Hugglescote & Donington Le Heath Parish Council will use Zoom as its virtual meeting platform. Zoom enables video and audio facilities access for a range of devices including mobile phones, iPads, laptops and desktop PCs. In preparation for meetings, the clerk will publish the following information on the agenda:

- Zoom meeting link
- Meeting ID
- Meeting passcode
- Audio dial in telephone numbers

### **3. Before the Meeting / Publishing agendas**

Councillors will be summoned to meetings with an agenda and relevant documents sent via email. Agendas will be published on the Parish Council website [www.huggdonpc.org.uk](http://www.huggdonpc.org.uk) An agenda will be published on the Hugglescote Community Centre noticeboard. Any member of the public and press who wishes to "attend" the meeting will need to download Zoom.

Please visit <https://zoom.us/support/download> where you will be able to download the App. The website gives tutorials and demonstrations on how to download Zoom and how to join meetings.

The Clerk will put a link, on the website, to join the Zoom meeting The Clerk will also include the meeting ID and password.

The Clerk will upload to the website the papers to support the meeting the day before the meeting.

Members of the public are welcome (as usual) to send any questions or comments to the Clerk (if not virtually attending) prior to the meeting via email to, or by calling the Clerk. These must be received by 12 noon on the day of the meeting. The Clerk will present any representations received to the Councillors to address.

#### **4. The meeting**

The Chair of the Council will Chair the meeting or in their absence a nominated Councillor.

Members of the public will enter a “waiting room” on Zoom and wait for the Clerk to approve their attendance. It would be helpful if members of the public could “name their videos” so that the Chair and Clerk can refer to them correctly.

All attendees will be muted on entry to the meeting.

Members of the public will be able to make representation during the public forum.

Members of the public will be asked to “put their hand up” using the icon on Zoom or in person if they wish to speak during the public forum.

The Clerk will “unmute” members of the public who wish to speak at the instruction of the Chair.

At the conclusion of the public forum the Clerk will “mute” all members of the public.

The required standards of behavior and discussion are the same whether in remote or face-to-face meetings. Members of the public who use or display inappropriate or offensive language and/or behavior will be removed from the meeting to the waiting room. This includes any inappropriate backdrops on display on the video.

The Council will discuss, via email, prior to the meeting any items which are considered sufficiently confidential as to warrant exclusion of members of the press and public under the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and will advise of the outcome of any discussions at the meeting.

#### **5. Voting**

The Chair will ask Councillors to vote by a show of hands in front of their cameras. Any Councillor only using audio must confirm their vote verbally to the Chair. If any vote is unclear, the Chair will ask Councillors, in alphabetical order, to confirm their vote. Whilst voting takes place, all participants must be on “mute”.

## **6. Specific virtual meeting requirements**

Discussions during meetings, all attendees other than Councillors, will be muted. During the meeting, Councillors and officers will raise their hand to indicate to the Chair they wish to speak. The Chair will ask Councillors accessing the meeting via telephone audio if they wish to speak.

Councillors are asked to be considerate and not to speak over one another.

### **Poor connectivity**

In the case of poor connectivity, the Chair will decide whether to continue the meeting or to reconvene. In the case of video not being available for some, or all Councillors attending, the Chair may choose to continue, but to operate a roll call for Councillor views and votes on individual agenda items.

## **7. Attendance**

If a member is believed to have 'dropped out' this will be minuted. If 'drop-outs' result in a meeting becoming inquorate, members will endeavour to re-join for a period of 15 minutes. If, after 15 minutes, the meeting remains inquorate, the Chair will suspend the meeting and reconvene at a later date, subject to the statutory meeting notice requirements. Councillors will be sent a group email to inform them of the suspension.

For further information see The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/392/contents/made>

## **8. Virtual meeting etiquette**

The existing Code of Conduct applies in relation to Councillors' conduct at meetings. All attendees are expected to be mindful of the difficulties which can be experienced in relation to the operation of technology. Behaviour that is contrary to the Code of Conduct, or the etiquette expected during meetings, will be dealt with at the discretion of the Chair. This could include attendees being removed from the Zoom meeting.

## **9. Declarations of Interests**

A Councillor who has declared an interest that requires them to leave the meeting will be placed in the waiting room. On conclusion of the item for which the declaration is made, the Councillor will be returned to the meeting.

## **10. Public participation**

The clerk will read out any pre-submitted addresses from the press and public. Any members of the public wishing to speak will be invited to do so during the relevant section of the meeting. At all other times, except during public participation, members of the public and press will be placed on mute and are permitted to observe proceedings only.

## **11. Confidential matters**

Confidential matters will be dealt with in a closed session. Once Councillors have voted to move to a closed session, members of the public and press will be asked by the Chair to leave the meeting. A closed session will be the penultimate item on an agenda, with the last item being to close the meeting.

## **12. Recording of meetings**

Zoom meetings will be recorded by the clerk to aid accurate minute taking and for no other purpose. Recordings will be deleted following approval of the minutes at the subsequent meeting.

## **13. Other Zoom functions**

The chat box will be disabled to offer enhanced security.  
Screen sharing will be disabled for all attendees other than the clerk, who may use this function at times.

Hugglescote & Donington Le Heath Parish Council  
16 July 2020