

Bishop's Itchington Parish Council
REMOTE MEETING PROTOCOL

Date adopted	8 February 2021
Next review due	February 2022

About this protocol

1. This protocol is to assist councillors, clerks and members of the public when attending or participating in public council meetings held via online conferencing platforms such as (but not limited to) Zoom, Teams, Skype and Webex.
2. The council's adopted Standing Orders shall continue to be used to assist with the good management of a meeting.
3. The council's adopted Code of Conduct shall apply.

Protocol for Remote Meetings

4. Joining instructions shall be included on the summons and public notices of the meeting.
5. Upon joining a meeting, participants are requested mute your microphone and encouraged to enable their camera and where the conferencing platform allows, display their name (this equally applies to members of the public and press).
6. The chairman will confirm if there are any members of the public present and ask them if they wish to speak during the public session.
7. The chairman will inform all present that the meeting may be recorded (it is courteous to inform the meeting if you are or intend to be recording, as this will allow attendees who do not wish to be recorded to take steps, accordingly).
8. The chairman will work through the agenda supported by the clerk as required.
9. The agenda will be as concise as possible and focus on what is important. Where practicable it will avoid items that may require lengthy debate. These items may be postponed until the current lockdown has been lifted.
10. Any scheme of delegation approved at the May 2020 meeting will remain in place until face-to-face meetings are permitted again.
11. Papers for the meeting will be posted on the parish council website and emailed out to all councillors with an email address. Every effort will be made to avoid additional papers being required.
12. If a councillor has declared an interest in an item to be discussed for which the Code of Conduct requires it, they shall leave the meeting when that item is discussed.
 - a. If the conferencing platform has such a facility, the councillor(s) with an interest shall be placed in the virtual waiting room or lobby until the council is ready to move on to the next item of business, whereupon they shall be readmitted to the meeting.
 - b. If the conferencing platform does not have a virtual waiting room or lobby, the councillor(s) with an interest shall be required to disconnect from the meeting and be invited to re-join at a time notified by the chairman or when telephoned by the chairman.
13. When confidential items are to be discussed following a resolution to exclude the public and press per s.100A of the Local Government Act 1972, members of the public and press shall be excluded from the meeting.

- a. If the conferencing platform has such a facility and it is appropriate (for example, a confidential item is to be discussed part way through the agenda):
 - i. Members of the public and press shall be placed in the virtual waiting room or lobby for the period of exclusion
 - ii. Members of the public shall be readmitted before further normal business is transacted.
 - b. If the conferencing platform does not have a virtual waiting room or lobby and the confidential item to be discussed is part way through the agenda, the public and press shall be required to disconnect from the meeting and re-join at a time notified by the chairman. Further normal business shall not be transacted prior to that time. Note that, if the confidential item has not been concluded, the chairman may give further 're-join times' as necessary to conclude the item.
 - c. If the confidential item to be discussed is the final item on the agenda, members of the public and press shall be required to disconnect from the meeting. No further normal business shall be transacted, thereafter.
14. A councillor who wishes to make a point regarding an item under discussion shall raise their hand (using either the 'raise hand' feature of the platform, or by raising their hand so it is visible to the camera). The chairman will invite the councillor(s) with raised hands to speak in turn. When invited to speak, they should un-mute their microphone and mute it again after they have made their point. If any member has joined by telephone only, the chairman will invite them to speak before proceeding to a proposal.
15. When a proposal is required the chairman will:
- a. Ask the meeting and look for a councillor who has raised their hand by means described in paragraph 14. The chairman will state the name of the councillor and invite them to make their proposal.
 - b. The chairman will then ask for a councillor to second the proposal and look for a councillor who has raised their hand. The chairman will state the name of the councillor who has seconded the proposal.
 - c. The chairman will then ask all councillors in favour to raise their hand and to keep it raised until he asks them to place it back down. The chairman will ask telephone participants to give their vote audibly. The chairman will confirm the number of councillors voting in favour.
 - d. The chairman will then repeat step c. for any councillors against and councillors who wish to abstain.