

Dartington Parish Council Virtual Meetings Protocol

The protocol is prepared under The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 made under s 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 that are currently enacted for meetings up to 7 May 2021.

Advice from DALC is that virtual meetings should be limited to 1 hour where possible and focus on what is essential.

1. Councillors are to be summonsed as per regulations and the agenda and any papers will be emailed to Councillors and uploaded to the Parish Council (PC) website. No agendas will be published on physical noticeboards.
2. Virtual meetings will be carried out using Zoom which enables video and audio conferencing via mobile devices, desktops, and fixed room systems. The Clerk will host the meetings.
3. In preparation for the meeting the Clerk will publish the Zoom meeting link, the meeting ID and the meeting passcode to Councillors, to those members of the public who are signed up to the PC email list, and to the PC website.
4. Standing Orders will be used to guide the meeting.
5. Voting will be by a show of hands.
6. If a councillor declares an interest that requires them to leave the meeting, he/she will be placed in the waiting room until the item for which the declaration is made is concluded.
7. During the meeting:
 - All persons other than Councillors and the Clerk will be muted by the meeting host.
 - Councillors will monitor their own background noise and mute their own microphones, except when speaking, to negate interference with the meeting.
 - Councillors will raise their hand (ideally using the symbol) to indicate to the Chair that they wish to speak on an agenda item.
 - The Chat function will be disabled.
 - The Clerk will record the meeting for the purpose of minute taking.
8. During the public participation period, members of the public will be required to 'enable video' in order for them to be visible to the Chairman and will raise their hand to indicate that they wish to speak. Their microphone will then be unmuted, and they can address the meeting. Following the conclusion of their address the microphone will be muted.
9. Normal Standing Orders apply with regard to Conduct at Meetings and all attendees are expected to be mindful of the difficulties people may experience with regard to the operation of technology. Behaviour that is contrary to the intended outcomes of the meeting will be dealt with at the discretion of the Chair. For a member of the public this may result in them being dismissed from the Zoom meeting.
10. In the case of poor connectivity, the Chair will decide whether to continue with the meeting or to reconvene.
11. Confidential matters will be dealt with through a separate Zoom meeting available to Councillors only.

Kate Wilson 2/5/2020