



## Oswestry Rural Parish Council

### Remote Meetings Policy

#### 1. Authority

*The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings)(England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and Section 78, Chapter 7 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.*

The above Regulations and legislation allow parish and town councils to hold virtual meetings. This permits persons not in the same place to attend council meetings.

Remote attendance by those participating in a virtual meeting means they will be considered to be in attendance and recorded in the minutes as such.

This policy regulates how the Parish Council will facilitate and conduct virtual meetings which will be held by Zoom<sup>1</sup>.

#### 2. Remote attendance

Anyone attending a virtual meeting must be able to:

- a) Hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members in attendance.
- b) Hear and where practicable see, and be so heard and where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting.
- c) Be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

All these conditions must be satisfied.

#### 3. Setting up Virtual Meetings

All virtual meetings will be scheduled by the Clerk in accordance with the approved schedule of Parish Council meetings for the Council year. Once the meeting has been scheduled a link to the virtual meeting will be included on the agenda for that meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Copyright ©2020 Zoom Video Communications, Inc.

#### 4. Joining Virtual Meetings

Councillors should click on the link included on the agenda before the meeting starts and the host will allow them to join the meeting. All agendas are published online which enables members of the public to click on the link and join the meeting too.

People attending meetings may join via a video link system or by telephone as long as every councillor can be heard by every other councillor and everyone else in attendance.

Those with poor internet access can join by phone by calling any of the numbers below and keying in the meeting ID when asked:

- +44 203 481 5240
- +44 131 460 1196
- +44 203 051 2874
- +44 203 481 5237

#### 5. Hosting Virtual Meetings

All virtual meetings will be hosted by the Clerk and co-hosted by the Chairman. This will allow the Chairman to chair the meeting, including being able to control who can speak by muting and unmuting councillors and members of the public.

#### 6. Running the Meeting

Before the meeting starts the Chairman will inform those present that the meeting is being recorded.

Unless invited by the Chairman those wishing to speak will raise their hand so that the Chairman can unmute them and allow them to speak. This can be done by physically raising a hand if the person can be seen or by raising the virtual hand from the Zoom control panel "Manage Participants" tab at the foot of the screen. Those who have joined by telephone will be asked to speak by the Chairman.

A councillor wishing to make a proposal should raise their hand. If they cannot be seen the Chairman will ask if they wish to speak. The Councillor will be asked to state their name before speaking.

The Chairman will ask if anyone wishes to second a proposal. If they cannot be seen the Chairman will ask if they wish to speak. The Councillor will be asked to state their name before speaking.

#### 7. Voting

Voting will be by a show of hands. If a councillor cannot be seen the Chairman will ask them to state their name and how they wish to vote.

Voting can be done by physically raising a hand if the person can be seen, or by raising the virtual hand from the Zoom control panel “Manage Participants” tab at the foot of the screen. Those who have joined by telephone will be asked to speak by the Chairman.

The Chairman will invite councillors to vote when a decision is to be made. Telephone participants will state their name and give their vote or abstention audibly. The Chairman will confirm the outcome of the vote so that the resolution can be accurately recorded in the minutes.

Standing Orders will continue to apply throughout the meeting.

Anyone who should not be present during the meeting, for example a councillor with a DPI, will be moved out to a breakout room by the host where there will be no access to the audio of the meeting.

## 8. Confidentiality

Where confidential business is to be transacted the press and members of the public will be removed from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

When confidential business is being discussed councillors must ensure that they cannot be heard by anyone else. Each councillor is responsible for ensuring they do not breach the General Data Protection Regulations.

<i>Date adopted:</i>	<i>26 May 2020</i>
<i>Minute no:</i>	
<i>Review date:</i>	<i>May 2021</i>