



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Highfield Park Office
Hill End Lane
St Albans
Hertfordshire AL4 0RA

Village Office
83 High Street
Colney Heath
Hertfordshire AL4 0NS

Tel: 01727 825314 Email: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Virtual Meeting Policy

1. Introduction

Colney Heath Parish Council recognises the opportunities offered by meeting virtually when a physical meeting is not appropriate. This policy is to assist Chairs, councillors and members of the public and press to understand how these meetings differ from a physical meeting and to assist residents and members of the public to engage in debate and decision making.

The policy is to be delivered within 'The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020' and that are currently enacted and active on and up to 7 May 2021.

2. Virtual Meeting 'platform'

Colney Heath Parish Council will utilise Zoom to provide video communications. Zoom enables video and audio conferencing for persons using mobile devices, desktops, and fixed room systems.

3. Agenda and document publication

Councillors will continue to receive their summons as per regulation with the agenda and documents being sent by email or posted and also placed in the Council's website at www.colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

In preparation for the meeting the Clerk to the Council will publish via the summons:

- The zoom meeting link
- Meeting ID
- Meeting passcode

Agendas will be published on at least one noticeboard if this is possible given current UK Government advice. Any person unable to access the Council's website can request a copy of the agenda by email or post by contacting the Council. In cases that documents originate from a third-party electronic links will be provided where available.

4. Standing Orders

Standing Orders will continue to be used to guide the meeting in a similar way as if persons were present in a place.

5. Specific Virtual Meeting Arrangements

a. Discussions

This section applies if members are experiencing good connectivity. In the case of poor connectivity see 5c.



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During the meeting all persons other than members will be muted. 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.

During the meeting members and officers will raise their hand to indicate to the Chairman that they wish to speak on an agenda item.

All members attending the meeting will monitor their own background noise and mute their own microphones, except when speaking, if necessary, to negate interference with the meeting.

b. Voting

All voting will be undertaken by a show of hands.

c. Poor connectivity

In the case of poor connectivity, the Chairman will decide whether to continue with the meeting or to reconvene.

In the case of video not being available for some or all of members attending the Chairman can choose to continue but to operate on a roll call for councillor views on individual agenda items.

d. Attendance

If a member is believed to have 'dropped out' this will be minuted. If 'drop outs' result in the meeting becoming inquorate members will endeavour to rejoin for a period of 15 minutes. After 15 minutes if the meeting is still inquorate the Chairman will suspend the meeting and reconvene at a later time and date subject to the statutory days of notice. Members will be emailed to advise of the suspension.

e. Telephone attendance

Persons wishing to attend by telephone are advised to contact the Clerk in advance in order that processes can be put in place to enable appropriate engagement.

6. Virtual Meeting Etiquette

Normal Standing Orders apply with regard to Conduct at Meetings and all attendees are expected to be mindful of the difficulties people 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 Chairman. For a member of the public or press this may result in them being dismissed from the Zoom meeting.



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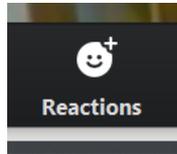
7. Declaration of Interests

A councillor that 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

8. Public Participation

The Clerk will read any pre submitted addresses from the press and public. Questions will be taken.

It is impossible to hear if everyone speaks at once. To facilitate this please use the 'reactions' button at the bottom of the Zoom screen and raise your virtual hand if you'd like to speak. If joining by telephone please press *9 to raise your hand.



9. Confidential Matters

Confidential matters will be dealt with through a separate Zoom meeting that is available to members only. On conclusion of the non-confidential matters on an agenda the meeting will be suspended for members to rejoin using the confidential zoom meeting link that will have been provided to members only.

10. Recording

Zoom meetings will be recorded. Copies of the audio recording will be made available on request to members, the press and members of the public.

11. Information

The chat box on the Zoom meeting will be disabled for all Committee and Council meetings.

Policy issued by Lisa Chaplin, Clerk of the Council (ref: 19/03/2020 20/132)

16th April 2020

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

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

Last updated 16/06/2020

www.colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

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