



WHATTON-IN-THE-VALE PARISH COUNCIL

**GUIDANCE ON ATTENDING REMOTE 'VIRTUAL'
PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS USING A COMPUTER,
TABLET OR SMART PHONE**

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Table of Contents

Introduction 3

Basic Requirements. 3

 Introduction3

 Hardware3

 Operating Systems4

 Additional Software4

 Tablet and Phone Users.....4

Joining a Meeting..... 4

 Introduction4

 The Meeting Link.....4

 Accessing the Meeting through a Web Browser5

 Accessing the Meeting through the ZOOM app (Tablet or Phone).....5

 Waiting Room5

 Troubleshooting Audio5

Conduct at a Meeting6

 Recording of the Meeting..... 6

 Parish Councillors 6

 Members of the Public (and Press)..... 6

 Open Session for the General Public (and Press) 6

Summary..... 8

 Accessing from a Web browser.....8

 Accessing the Meeting from a Tablet or Phone using the Zoom App9

Document Information 10

Introduction

With the relaxing of the 'in-person' regulations, Parish Council Meetings can now be held with 'remote' attendance.

Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council has elected to use **ZOOM** as it's platform for holding Parish Council Meetings. This document is intended to provide guidance for joining (and in the case of the general public, observing) a Parish Council Meeting.

IMPORTANT: The Meeting will be recorded in both audio and visual formats. The recording will form part of the Public Record.

Basic Requirements.

Introduction

The following is the basic computer requirements needed to access the meeting. The Parish Council has made it as easy as possible to join a meeting, but obviously there are minimum requirements to allow members of the general public to 'attend' the meeting.

In this section we identify the basic computer hardware and software required to access a meeting.

It goes without saying that users will require an adequate Broadband connection. Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTP) is available in the parish and those using that service will have a more than adequate connection to participate. Those using 'slower' connections should be OK with audio but is unlikely to be an acceptable solution for video.

Hardware

A fairly modern Desktop, Laptop or Tablet should in most cases be adequate, providing it has the following:

- A sound system (for hearing the meeting).
- A microphone an essential for Parish Councillors, optional for members of the Public except where they wish to raise an issue in the period reserved for comments from the general public.
- A video camera, optional but extremely useful especially for Parish Councillors.

Most modern laptops are equipped with a Camera, Microphone and adequate speaker system.

iMacs, Apple Laptops and iPads, iPhones, android, Linux and windows tablets and laptops have cameras, microphones and sound systems built in.

For Windows and Linux desktops you will need to check whether it has sound and video capability.

'VIRTUAL' PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Operating Systems

macOS, iPad, iOS, Windows 10 and Linux can all support attending a **ZOOM** meeting.

Additional Software

When first visiting a Parish Council Meeting you will be prompted to download a **ZOOM** plug-in for your browser. We suggest that you download the plug-in, all the advice and instructions in this document assume that you have downloaded the plug-in.

Tablet and Phone Users.

If you are joining the meeting using a Tablet or Phone instead of using a Web Browser, you can download the **ZOOM** app.

For Apple Devices (iPad and iPhone) search for Zoom on the Apple App Store, download and install it.

For Android devices (Tablets and Smart Phones) search for Zoom on the Google Play Store, download and install it.

To join the meeting, you will need to enter the Meeting ID and Password which will be available on the Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Website, the Menu option is:
Parish Council | Meetings | Remote Meeting Protocol.

Joining a Meeting.

Introduction

Parish Councillors will receive an e-mail inviting them to the meeting, the e-mail will contain a link to the meeting which can either be clicked from the e-mail or the link can be 'cut and pasted' into the browser of their choice.

Members of the public can join the meeting by clicking on the appropriate link from the Parish Council website (www.whatton.org). Fuller details of the location of the link is given later.

THE MEETING WILL BE OPEN 15 MINUTES BEFORE THE MEETING START TO ALLOW COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ENSURE THAT THEY CAN SEE, HEAR AND COMMUNICATE WITH THE MEETING BEFORE IT BEGINS.

The Meeting Link

The Link can be accessed in number of ways:

- By selecting the meeting from the Events calendar and following the link on that page.
- By selecting the following menu option: Parish Council | Meetings | Remote Meetings Protocol

'VIRTUAL' PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Accessing the Meeting through a Web Browser

You access a meeting using a web browser (i.e. Internet Explorer, Edge, Firefox, Chrome or Safari). On windows the recommended browser is Edge (Windows 10), on apple devices, Safari.

When accessing a Meeting for the first time, **ZOOM** will offer to download a 'plug-in' for your browser, it is highly recommended that you allow the download. If you have used **ZOOM** before the 'plug-in' will have already been installed on your system although there may be a later version which **ZOOM** advises you to download.

Where joining a meeting you should see a 'dialog box' with the options of:

- JOIN WITH COMPUTER AUDIO
- TEST SPEAKER AND MICROPHONE

The test speaker and microphone option does just that, test whether you can hear through your speakers and speak will test your microphone. You will then be given the option to join with Computer Audio.

Accessing the Meeting through the **ZOOM** app (Tablet or Phone)

If you are accessing the meeting using a Tablet or a Phone it is recommended that you use the **ZOOM** app.

To join the meeting, you will need to launch the **ZOOM** app and enter the Meeting ID and Password which will be available on the Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Website, the Menu option is:

Parish Council | Meetings | Remote Meeting Protocol.

That is all you will need to do to access the meeting.

Waiting Room

When joining the meeting you will first enter a virtual 'waiting room' you will be 'admitted' to the meeting from the waiting room.

Troubleshooting Audio

If you have a problem hearing the meeting:

- Ensure that you have audio on your device.
- On the bottom right of your **ZOOM** screen there is an icon for the microphone next to it is an upward chevron. Click on the chevron and select the appropriate sound settings for your system. That should resolve the issue.

Please note: In order to ensure any background noise from individual users' microphones does not impinge on the meeting the default setting for the microphone is MUTE (off).

'VIRTUAL' PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Conduct at a Meeting

Recording of the Meeting

The minutes of the meeting will be recorded by the Clerk as is usual. In addition, the meeting will be recorded in both Audio and Visual. The person speaking at any one time will be the focus of the recording. This is another reason why microphones must be muted during the meeting unless one is speaking.

Attendees must appreciate that the recording will form part of the public record of the meeting.

Parish Councillors

As with a 'physical' meeting the conduct at a remote meeting is governed by STANDING ORDERS. Please ensure that you are fully aware of those Standing Orders in particular the 'Rules of Debate' which are of particular relevance to this type of meeting.

Members of the Public (and Press)

Members of the Public and the Press are by law allowed to attend and OBSERVE Parish Council Meetings. Members of the Public or Press MAY NOT speak, intervene or otherwise disrupt the meeting.

Open Session for the General Public (and Press)

There is no legal requirement for the Parish Council to hold an open session.

However, Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council reserves a period of 15 minutes when Standing Orders are suspended, and Members of the Public are allowed to raise issues of concern to the parish. During this period (Open Session) as Standing Orders are suspended it is solely a matter for the Chairman to invite members of the public to speak and set the duration allowed for speaking. Additionally, the Chairman is the sole arbiter as to whether the comments are cogent, relative to the Parish and or to the powers of the parish council and do conform with acceptable conduct.

Members of the Public must not speak until requested to by the Chairman and may only speak for the period of time allotted by the Chairman.

When raising an issue, the member of the public is required to:

1. Provide their name and
2. to state whether they are a registered *elector* of the Parish, if not in what capacity they are raising the issue.

In raising an issue member of the public must not:

1. Express defamatory, racist or any offensive views and
2. Must not express information or a view that could lead to either directly or indirectly to identify an individual or individuals.

Please note: It is unlawful for the Parish Council to discuss any issue which is not on the Agenda. There will therefore be no discussion or comment on any issues raised by members of the public. Parish Councillors may if they place sufficient weight on the issue schedule a discussion for a future meeting, equally they may deem it not an issue for the Parish

'VIRTUAL' PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Council. Whether or not to place the issue on a future agenda will be decided at the relevant Agenda item (typically the last item on the Agenda) at the meeting the issue was raised.

Summary

Accessing from a Web browser.

1. **EVERYONE SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE MEETING WILL BE RECORDED AND WILL FORM PART OF THE PUBLIC RECORD.**
2. Ensure that you have a Broadband connection.
3. Ensure that your computer (device) has sound capabilities, that is as a minimum, speakers. If your device does not have this minimum sound capability, there is no point trying to access the system.
4. Check if you have a microphone installed. If you don't you can still join the meeting but will only be able to observe.
5. Join the meeting early, it is available 15 minutes before the meeting is due to start to confirm you are able to access the meeting.
6. When you have tested your 'set-up' to make sure it is working, PLEASE MUTE YOUR MICROPHONE – THIS IS A MUST TO ENSURE THAT AMBIENT BACKGROUND NOISE FROM MULTIPLE ATTENDEES DOES NOT CAUSE A DISTRACTION AT THE MEETING.
7. If you have video available (i.e. a webcam or equivalent) please enable it.
8. If you are a Parish Councillor and wish to speak, please either:
 - a. If you have video enabled raise your hand,
 - b. If you do not have video enabled use the 'Chat' facility to message the Host (Chairman).
9. If you are a member of the general public and wish to speak, please either:
 - a. If you have video enabled raise your hand,
 - b. If you do not have video enabled use the 'Chat' facility to message the Host (Chairman).
10. All attendees should keep their microphones 'muted' unless directed by enable by the Chairman. This is important to stop any ambient or other sounds disrupting the meeting.
11. Parish Councillors who have declared an interest an Agenda point will be transferred to the waiting room and readmitted when the issue has been discussed.
12. For members of the public wishing to speak at the meeting, please ensure that the issue you want to raise conforms with the criteria in the 'Open Session for the General Public (and Press)' section of this document. Please ensure that your content is coherent and cogent.

'VIRTUAL' PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Accessing the Meeting from a Tablet or Phone using the Zoom App

- 1. EVERYONE SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE MEETING WILL BE RECORDED AND WILL FORM PART OF THE PUBLIC RECORD.**
2. Ensure that you have a broadband (or the case of a Phone or Sim enabled Tablet a 3g connection).
3. Join the meeting early, it is available 15 minutes before the meeting is due to start to confirm you are able to access the meeting.
4. If you have video available (i.e. a webcam or equivalent) please enable it.
5. If you are a Parish Councillor and wish to speak, please either:
 - a. If you have video enabled raise your hand,
 - b. If you do not have video enabled use the 'Chat' facility to message the Host (Chairman).
6. If you are a member of the general public and wish to speak, please either:
 - a. If you have video enabled raise your hand,
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