



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ
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Virtual meeting protocol Adopted by the Parish Council on 15th December 2020

1. Introduction

Appleton 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'

Appleton 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 agenda in an email as normal. The agenda will also be put on the noticeboards and on the Parish Council's website. www.appletonparishcouncil.org.uk. The following will also be on the agenda;

The zoom meeting link

- Meeting ID
- Meeting passcode

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. Any review and amendments to the standing orders will have to be approved by the Parish Council.

5. Specific Virtual Meeting Arrangements

a. Discussions

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

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 or ask the Chairman to speak.

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

The chairman of the Parish Council will ask each Parish Councillor individually what their vote is on every matter. If any Parish Councillor has any objection this must be raised immediately at the meeting and addressed.

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.

Whilst the meeting is going ahead no eating will be allowed. However, drinking water will be allowed.

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 only reporting officers and members of the Parish Council present. All members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting and the clerk will ensure that only members of the public and reporting officers are present before any confidential agenda item can be discussed.

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.