

REMOTE MEETINGS ETIQUETTE AND PROTOCOL

This document covers when a remote meeting needs to involve a wider audience - in this case, the public.

Before the meeting, (agenda / documents):

- The agenda will be published according to usual committee rules (i.e five working days before a meeting) and published on the Council's website.
- As documents need to be referred to during the meeting, share them with participants in advance and ensure that every page and slide has a number. If possible, attach the public agenda pack to the meeting invite.
- If appropriate for observers to be able to see the documents as well, post links to each document on your council website.
- Meeting invites will be sent to committee members, relevant officers and other participants as applicable with a link to the meeting virtual software.

Before the meeting, Participant etiquette:

- When a public meeting it is appropriate to wear suitable business-like clothes.
- When a public meeting it is appropriate that the room you choose to use should be suitable with little background distractions, noise and uninterrupted access from other occupants.
- Join the meeting promptly to avoid unnecessary interruptions.
- Turn off or mute your mobile phone.
- At the beginning of the meeting the Chair will ask you to state your name and ask you to confirm that you can hear/see proceedings. This is important for the purposes of recording attendance and transparency of the meeting.
- Mute your mic when you're not talking. This is to ensure that only 1 person at a time speaks and helps with noise echo.
- If you'd like to speak raise your hand. The Producer/Clerk will unmute your mic and bring in each member to speak.
- Only speak when invited to by the Chair.
- State your name before you make a comment.
- If you're referring to a specific page or slide mention the page or slide number.

Chairing an online meeting:

- Ensure every participant has stated their presence at the start of the meeting for attendance purposes.
- Invite specific participants by name to speak or to respond to a point.

- If you're not sure who would like to speak next, invite participants who would like to make a point to raise their hands visibly on screen. You can then invite them by name in turn.

Role of the Clerk at meeting

- Committees should have a clerk / producer to make notes to create the formal minutes and to note the attendance list.
- The Clerk starts and stops the sound recording.
- For the smooth running of the meeting, it will help if the clerk can assist the Chair in spotting who wishes to speak and keep a list of the order of speaking.
- The Clerk checks the meeting is quorate. If it becomes inquorate, alert the Chair.
- The Clerk can pause (adjourn) the meeting.
- The Clerk will verbally repeat the votes cast.
- The Clerk is responsible for when the meeting becomes exempt and members of the public need excluding. They can switch some active participants and the observers off, so they are paused and have neither 'live' visual or audio feed whilst the committee deliberates in private or the clerk or a lawyer present gives the committee advice.
- The clerk will share the presentations for the meeting for the officers to present each application information. The officers will ask for the next slide when required.

The Clerk (producer) can:

- Switch on each active participant's microphone when they are invited to speak and to switch them off afterwards
- Mute someone speaking at any time
- Mute everyone speaking except themselves at any time
- The officers present / clerk need to be able to give presentations and display documents (maps and plans etc) and to speak over them.

Role of each Committee Member:

1. Signing the Minutes of the previous meeting

- The chair will ask the committee to agree the minutes of the previous meeting.
- The chair will undertake a roll call by alphabetical order and ask each Member to verbally indicate that the minutes can be signed and then the chair will summarise the position and physically sign on the video conference the original set of minutes.

- Once the Pandemic is over the file minutes will be collected from the Chair and kept for the archives.

2. Disclosures of pecuniary or personal interest

- Once the agenda has been published each member will submit any disclosures in writing to the Democracy@charnwood.gov.uk email address.
- At the meeting the clerk will read out the disclosures received in writing and ask members to visibly raise their hands if they have further disclosures to make.
- Further disclosures can then be made by the member for recording in the minutes.
- If a member has declared an interest in one of the items under consideration and is required to leave the meeting, at the appropriate time the clerk will ensure the member has left and at the appropriate time after the item has been considered will re-invite the member back into the meeting.

3. Speaking

- When speaking at the meeting the member needs to visibly raise their hand so the Chair can ask them to speak. The clerk will make a note of the order in which the members are to speak and unmute their mic in sequential order or the member can unmute their own mic to speak.
- Members need to be aware of the time limit for the duration of the meeting and ensure that their comments/questions are succinct and on point.
- If the Chair, Legal Advisor or the clerk consider the comments being made to be inappropriate or straying far off the point they can mute the member speaking.

4. Voting

- The clerk will complete roll-call of all present committee members in alphabetical order and ask them to state their vote. The Chair will be asked to cast their vote last in case of a tie in voting and that they are required to cast a second vote.
- It is possible officers or the legal advisor may wish to step in during the voting process, the clerk can then mute the member and introduce the officer / legal advisor.
- The Clerk or Legal Adviser in the case of Plans Committee will also check the voting (as it occurs) and then verbally confirm the totals of yes/no/abstain of the vote.

Deputations from public: Add as participants

- It is common practice for members of the public who wish to speak at a committee to give advance notice.
- Those wishing to speak could be added as participants rather than as observers to the meeting.
- In effect, this may require requesting their email address in advance of the session so that they can be sent the joining link for participants.
- Presentations from the public would be handled in the same way as contributions from committee members.
- They should be informed of the meeting etiquette and directly invited to speak by the Chair.
- The Chair should be clear on the time limit for speaking, and give participants' notice when they have 1 minute / 30 seconds remaining. A bell / sound will be used.

Software specific notes

There is a time lapse from when the mic is unmuted and each member / officer appears on the screen to speak.

Please note: the meeting can only run for four hours on this software.