



VIRTUAL MEETING PROTOCOL

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council

DATE ADOPTED: 19th January 2021

REVIEW DATE:

1.0 Introduction

1.1. The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 was introduced to allow local councils to meet remotely. This protocol sets out how Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council will continue to operate during the pandemic.

1.2 Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council is operating on the Microsoft Teams platform.

1.3 The Town Council has paid for a subscription and informed all councillors of how to access the platform. Councillors have been asked to contact the Town Clerk if they have any technical issues in relation to access, whether that be hardware **or the need for headphones**.

2.0 Planning and Preparation

2.1 The meeting will be advertised in the normal manner (other than on the public noticeboard) and an agenda will be issued within the normal time frames.

2.2 Minutes will be circulated prior to the meeting and displayed on the website in the normal manner following formal adoption by Council.

2.3 Apologies need to be given in the normal manner.

2.4 The public are invited to observe the meeting. If they have a question to raise, they have been asked to submit it in advance of the meeting.

2.5 The normal required standards of behaviour and discussion must be applied in the same manner of a face to face meeting. Please also be patient with those who are less experienced in this platform. Please also respect confidentiality and do not breach the code of conduct, and do not make enquiries about private matter, health, home etc.

2.6 If a councillor is deemed to have an interest in a matter and would normally leave a physical meeting, then they will be invited to leave and will receive a text message (or asked to wait in the waiting room) when they can be invited back into the meeting.

2.7 There might be technical issues during the meeting and the Town Clerk might have to ask for clarification, for dialogue to be repeated in order to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard.

3.0 Process to host meetings for Councillors

3.1 The Mayor\Town Clerk will host the meeting and set up the meeting perimeters. An email invitation will be sent to councillors from the Town Clerk. They need to click on the link provided to enter the meeting.

4.0 Virtual Meeting Protocol

4.1 Before entering the meeting please ensure that you are in a private place where there is little background interference/noise/people. It is difficult to hear on occasions and some might wish to use a headset with a microphone.

4.2 On entering the meeting, you will be placed in a waiting room. The Town Clerk allows access and will facilitate your access to the meeting.

4.3 **A check will be done to establish that you can be heard**, but then all councillors other than the Chairman and the Clerk will be muted. If the Chairman invites someone to speak, they can be unmuted. **Please do not interrupt others**. If you wish to speak during the meeting, please raise your hand for the attention of the Clerk\Assistant Town Clerk. When you speak please state your name as you speak for the benefit of those who might not be able to see you.

4.4 The meeting will still be chaired in the normal manner. The Town Clerk might have a greater input to guide the meeting to the next item, as some will not have access to an agenda for the duration of the meeting (if they do not have a printer).

4.5 If there is to be a vote, please raise your hand until asked to put your hand down. If there is any ambiguity the Chair will ask each Councillor individual how they wish to vote on a matter

4.6 If you struggle with hearing during the meeting, please use the chat box to type a message which will be seen by the Assistant Town Clerk.

4.7 If people speak over others or if there is a time delay and matters are not heard the Town Clerk will ask for people to repeat, and to speak in turn. All councillors have the telephone number of the Town Clerk\Assistant Town Clerk and can send a message during the meeting if they are experiencing issues.

4.8 Members will be expected to adhere to the same formalities that apply to Council meetings held in the Council Chamber and whilst it is recognised that comfort breaks and non-alcoholic beverages are acceptable during a meeting drinking of alcohol during meetings is strictly forbidden.

5.0 Public Participation

5.1 When the agenda is produced it will invite the public to contact the Town Clerk by email if they wish to be invited to the meeting. They will be sent an agenda and on the day of the meeting will be sent a link to the meeting.

5.2 They will be asked to check this link works in advance of the meeting. On arrival at the meeting they will be held in a waiting room and let in against a list of names held by the Town Clerk. This is to avoid the entry of unknowns, as experienced in recent weeks at other public meeting where meetings have been disrupted with inappropriate displays of behaviour.

5.3 If the public wish to ask any specific questions they will need to have informed the Town Clerk of this 24 hours before the start of the meeting, by phone or by Email.