

## Proposal For Holding Virtual Meetings

### Introduction:

On the 4 April 2020, the government brought The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 into force to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely.

### Proposal:

It is proposed that we the Parish Council use “Zoom”, which is readily available and initially free up to 40 minutes; for 11.99 per month (the basic package), this can be extended to up to 24Hrs and 100 participants, there is a special discount rate for Parish Councils at 7.99p. The Chair and Clerk have used Zoom a number of times during this period of isolation and found it reliable. It is not recommended that meetings last longer than 35 minutes without a short break.

You do not need to have Zoom on your PC, Tablet or Smart Phone; with the link provided by the host (the Clerk) you can join the meeting.

This will enable participants to be seen and heard including members of the public.

Zoom has the facility to record the meeting and this will be used in case clarification is required at a later date under the circumstances.

All future Full Council and Finance & Audit Committee meetings will take place over Zoom until further notice and the Parish Council will advertise this on its website, notice boards and social media with the following statement;

**” With effect from 4 April 2020 until May 2021, the Parish Council can legally hold remote/virtual meetings. The details for these meetings will be advertised on the Parish Council Website together with how you can participate in the meeting as member of the public”.**

### Meeting Management:

- Upon joining a meeting, you should mute your microphone and ensure your video is enabled.
- The Chair will confirm if there are any members of the public present and ask them if they want to speak during the public session.
- The Chair will remind everyone on the meeting to ensure that their microphone is on mute and that their video is enabled (this includes members of the public).
- The Chair will inform all present that the meeting will be recorded by the Council. The public session need not be recorded if anybody wishes to object.
- The Chair will then work through the Agenda supported by the Clerk as required. **The Agenda will be as concise as possible and focus on what is important, where practicable it will avoid items that may require lengthy debate. These items will be postponed until the current lockdown has been lifted. The scheme of**

**delegation approved in March 2020 will remain in place until face to face meetings are permitted again.**

- Papers for the meeting will be posted on the Parish Council Website and emailed out to all Councillors with an email address. **Every effort will be made to avoid additional papers being required.**
- If a Councillor has declared an interest in an item to be discussed they will be asked to leave the meeting at that point. When that item has been concluded the Chair will ring the Councillor concerned and invite them to re-join the meeting using the original link provided.
- In order for a Councillor to make a point regarding an item under discussion they should raise their hand and wait for the Chair to invite them to speak, at which time they should un-mute the microphone and mute it again after they have made their point.
- When a proposal is required the Chair will ask the meeting and look for a councillor who has raised their arm, the Chair will invite that Councillor to state their name and the proposal.
- The Chair will then ask for a Councillor to second the proposal and look for a Councillor who has raised their arm. The Chair will state the name of the Councillor who has seconded the proposal.
- The Chair will then ask all Councillors in favour to raise their hand and to keep it raised until he asks them to place it back down. The Chair will ask telephone participants to give their vote audibly. The Chair will confirm the number of Councillors voting in favour.
- The Chair will then repeat for any Councillor not in favour or who wants to abstain.
- “Standing Orders” will continue to be used to assist with the good management of a meeting.

**This protocol was adopted by members of Rodington Parish Council electronically by email in April 2020.**