

Fountains Abbey Parish Council

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Addendum to Standing Orders - Remote Meetings

Based on advice given by YLCA May 2020

1. INTRODUCTION:

The following Standing Orders are an addendum to the Standing Orders (SOs) for Fountains Abbey Parish Council to enable the effective management of meetings held remotely due to the Coronavirus pandemic; in all other matters, the Fountains Abbey Parish Council Standing Orders apply.

Please note also that the authority to hold remote meetings flows from specific emergency legislation, ie that passed during the COVID pandemic period, unless there is such legislation in force then remote meetings have no legal force.

2. CONVENING:

A remote meeting of the Parish Council shall be convened accordance with Paragraph 10 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The council will ensure that all non-confidential meeting papers are available on its website and where possible, on the website of the principal authority for its district area.

3. CHAIMAN'S ROLE:

All meetings shall commence with a statement from the Parish Council Chairman or the Clerk, outlining the procedures to be undertaken to hold a lawful and effective remote meeting and will highlight the requirement for all councillors and non-councillors with voting rights to observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

4. PRESENT:

Councillors are deemed present for the purposes of any remote meeting, when they can speak, hear, and be heard (and where practicable see and be seen) by all those in attendance (whether by video conferencing or by telephone).

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Where the council has taken reasonable measures to provide guidance and support to a councillor to join a remote meeting, but that member is experiencing difficulties that are outside of the control of the council, the lack of attendance of the member shall not invalidate a properly convened and quorate meeting

All councillors present will be required to state their name prior to the commencement of the meeting.

5. QUORUM:

No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

6. VOTING:

Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.

The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.

At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

7. METHOD OF VOTING - where members are joining the meeting by ZOOM or telephone

- a. The chairman will request a response to each proposal verbally, from each member present.
- b. The chairman will confirm that response verbally.
- c. Where a Councillor is present at the meeting by telephone only, the Clerk shall ask him/her to state his/her voting intention and then repeat the answer back to him/her for confirmation.
- d. The chairman will read out all votes cast once collected.
- e. The minutes will reflect the decision of the council.

8. COUNCIL DISCUSSION IN MEETING:

On each item of business to be transacted, which requires discussion (where members are joining the meeting by telephone):

- *The rules of debate, as set out in Fountains Abbey Parish Council Standing Orders will apply.*
- *The Chairman will ask each member, in turn, whether he/she wishes to contribute to the discussion.*
- *After each member has been heard, the Chairman will call for a proposal on the item of business to be transacted, by a member present (member to state their name prior to making the proposal)*
- *Once a proposal is moved, if required, the Chairman will call for that proposal to be seconded by a member present (member to state their name prior to speaking)*

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- *The Chairman will request any amendments to said proposal from each member present, prior to moving to a vote on that proposal.*

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AN ITEM OF BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED AT THE MEETING:

A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting; a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.

The Chairman will ask each member of the public, joining the meeting by telephone, if they wish to contribute to this session.

Members of the public joining the meeting by video link shall physically raise their hand – the clerk/vice-chairman will make a note of these and they will be invited to speak by the chairman.

11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC:

All meetings of the council and its committees must be available for the press and public to attend (i.e. open to the public).

- The council may resolve to exclude the press and public, from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings), due to publicity of the matter being prejudicial to the public interest, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons.
- When using the Zoom platform the host of the meeting, ie. The Clerk, shall remove the relevant participants following the passing of the appropriate resolution.
- In consideration of the above the Clerk shall draft agendas such that all matters which may require consideration after exclusion of the press and public at the end of the list of business to be transacted at that meeting (agenda) but remember. All such matters must be specified on that agenda
- All decisions emanating from a 'confidential' part of a Parish Council meeting shall be carefully recorded in the minutes and the time at which the meeting became confidential shall be accurately recorded.