

## CHECKLIST FOR HOLDING AN IN-PERSON COUNCIL MEETING

Following the government announcement of further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4 July, both NALC and SLCC strongly advise local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face-to-face contact.

If the council wishes to consider returning to face-to-face meetings then there are a range of issues that will need to be addressed before this can take place. This checklist will help the council ensure this decision is made in accordance with relevant regulations and requirements.

Further guidance related to COVID-19 can be found on the NALC and SLCC websites.

	Item	Confirmed
1	<p><b>There is no way for the council to conduct business except through a face-to-face meeting.</b></p> <p>The council staff and councillors are unable to conduct business without a face-to-face meeting.</p> <p><i>Note: The <u>government rules</u> still state that we should all work from home if we can.</i></p> <p><b>General business can be carried out without meeting</b></p>	✓
	<p>The council is unable to make use of telephone or online technology to conduct quorate council meetings.</p> <p><i>Note: Local councils <u>have the powers</u> to hold public meetings remotely by using video or telephone conferencing technology until May 2021. Parish meetings do not have such powers to meet remotely.</i></p> <p><b>NPC does not have this facility, but see 5 below</b></p>	
	<p>The council has a reasonable business need, or legal need to meet in person at this time.</p> <p><i>Note: The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2020 state that a public authority can only hold a gathering of over 30 people if certain conditions are met</i></p> <p><b>NPC has a requirement to co-opt new members, which requires councillors to hold an open ballot</b></p>	
2	<p><b>Action has been taken to seek a number of options for an appropriate venue for the council meeting.</b></p>	✓

	<p>These venues comply with normal council meeting requirements.</p> <p><i>Note: NALC members can access <a href="#">Legal Topic Note 5 – Parish and community council meetings</a>.</i></p> <p><b>Newington Village Hall is not currently available for hire.</b></p> <p><b>George’s Barn, operated by the Elham Valley Line Trust, has recently been used for Parish Council meetings and has been assessed as COVID secure in preparation for a possible return to operational use.</b></p>	
	<p>The venues allow the public to observe council meetings with social distancing without placing restrictions on the number attending.</p> <p><b>A Safe System of Work (SSOW) has been produced for use of Georges Barn for an in-person Parish Council meeting. This notes a limit of 10 members of the public, but this is greater than any recent attendance by members of the public to an NPC meeting, therefore it is unlikely to restrict numbers.</b></p>	
	<p>The venues conform with the government guidance for <u>multi-purpose community facilities</u> and for <u>council buildings</u>.</p> <p><b>The SSOW for an in-person meeting provides suitable levels of assurance that the venue conforms with the government guidance.</b></p> <p><b>The limitations on the number of members of the public that can attend ensures that the total number of people meeting is less than 30.</b></p>	
	<p>If the venue is not owned/managed by the council the owners have been asked for their risk assessment and what actions they are taking to reduce risk.</p> <p><b>NPC has seen and agreed a SSOW for an in-person meeting produced by the Elham Valley Line Trust.</b></p>	
3	<p><b>There is a potential venue the council can use in compliance with the above requirements.</b></p> <p><b>See above</b></p>	✓
4	<p><b>The council understands and is acting in compliance with <u>‘safer workplaces’</u> guidance.</b></p> <p><b>See above</b></p>	✓

5	<p><b>The council has checked if there are councillors or staff that will be unable to attend face-to-face meetings due to health, disability or other reasons.</b></p>	✓
	<p>The council has considered how it will make reasonable adjustments to allow individuals with disabilities or other needs to take part in the meeting.</p> <p><b>There are no restrictions preventing councillors, staff or members of the public from attending an in-person meeting at George’s Barn due to health, disability, or other reasons.</b></p>	
	<p>The council has considered a <u>hybrid approach</u> to meetings.</p> <p><b>NPC has considered this option, but as the SSOW identifies that an in-person meeting can be safely held whilst meeting all the government guidelines on Social Distancing, it is not considered necessary</b></p>	
6	<p><b>A <u>risk assessment</u> has been conducted.</b></p>	✓
	<p>Consideration has been taken towards what the council can do to reduce risk to councillors, staff and public including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself.</li> <li>• Staggering arrival times for staff, councillors and members of the public.</li> <li>• Ensuring seating is placed at least 2-metre apart.</li> <li>• Asking people to wear face masks.</li> <li>• Holding paperless meetings.</li> <li>• If papers are provided, people should be discouraged from sharing with others and asked to take the papers with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle the papers.</li> <li>• Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly.</li> <li>• Choosing a venue with good air flow, including opening windows and doors where possible</li> </ul> <p><b>The SSOW for an on-person Parish Council meeting considers all of the above.</b></p> <p><i>Note: The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2020 require that the person responsible for organising the gathering has carried out a risk assessment and the organiser has taken all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission taking into account the risk assessment.</i></p>	

7	The council has decided, based on the risk assessment and with risk management actions that it is safe and appropriate to meet.	✓
8	All risk mitigating actions identified by the risk assessment have taken place. <b>Provisions are in place for these to occur on the occasion of the meeting</b>	✓

This checklist has been conducted to the council's satisfaction and it has been agreed that the council will hold a face-to-face (or hybrid) meeting.

The council will re-evaluate this decision following the first council meeting held, and where necessary the risk assessment and risk management activities will be updated. Following this, the council will review this checklist [quarterly/after each council meeting/at times to be agreed by the council/delete as appropriate].

<b>Date</b>	12 August 2020
<b>Signature</b>	John Neale Chair of Newington Parish Council

This document was produced by NALC and SLCC and all due care has been taken that it is accurate and reflects current government guidance and legislation at the time of writing (July 2020). This document is designed as an aid to council decision-making, it does not constitute legal advice and neither organisation is responsible for the actions of councils who use this document.

The council is responsible for the health and safety of staff, councillors and others attending council meetings. The council must take care to check it is working to the most up-to-date government guidance and legislation.