



DYMCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Return to Face-to-Face Meetings

Risk Assessment

COVID-19 is an illness that can affect your lungs and airways and is caused by a virus called Coronavirus. The symptoms can be mild, moderate, severe, or fatal. Even if you have been vaccinated you can carry, catch, or spread the virus. The following risk assessment has been created to reduce the chance of spreading the virus, to give confidence to Council members when attending meetings and to seek to make attending meetings as safe as possible for members of the public who choose to attend-

A risk assessment will not eradicate all risk and personal responsibility consideration for others plays an important part in enabling the Council to carry out their business-

APPENDIX 1 – is a summary of the law which allows Council meetings to take place.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Controls Required	Additional Controls	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Spread of COVID-19. Coronavirus	Council staff Councillors Members of the public	Confirm Latest Government Guidelines	Ensure any new advice is implemented and circulated for information	Clerk Council Officers and Council Members	Prior to each meeting	
	As above	Lateral flow tests	As these tests are now freely available all meeting participants to have a test within 48 hours of a meeting. Dymchurch Pharmacy will supply these tests	Clerk Council Officers and Council Members	Prior to each meeting	
	As above	Lateral Flow tests /Wearing of Masks	As lateral flow tests are free to obtain (Dymchurch Pharmacy and online) Members of the public are encouraged to have a test before attending a meeting. In any case members of the public will be required to wear masks for the duration of the meeting. Attendees to be reminded that wearing of masks does not prevent people from contracting COVID but is a measure to reduce the risk.	Members of the public	During the meeting	

	As above	<p>Hand Washing-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitiser will be available at the entrance to the meeting room. • Stringent hand sanitising procedures will be in place 	<p>Attendees should be reminded on a regular basis to wash their hands for 20 seconds with water and soap and the importance of proper drying with disposable towels. Also reminded to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – follow ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands.</p> <p>Hand Tissues will be made available.</p> <p>Posters to remind attendees will be placed in the meeting venue.</p>	Clerk Council members	At time of meeting	
	As above	Reducing the numbers of people attending the meeting.	Meetings will be streamed via Facebook. The facility for members of the public to attend via zoom will be arranged if possible.	Clerk	Prior to each meeting	
	As above	Reduce the opportunity for the virus to spread due to length of meetings.	Meeting times to be kept to a minimum. Agendas to be reduced. Members to ensure they are aware of the details of the meeting to reduce the time spent on debate or clarifying matters	Clerk and Council members	Prior and during meetings	
	As above	Reduce the opportunity for the virus to spread through contact.	Copies of agendas and minutes (apart from the master copy to be signed) or supporting information will not be provided at the meeting.	Clerk	Prior to meeting	
	As above	<p><u>Social Distancing</u> Reducing the number of persons in any meeting room to comply with the current legislation.</p> <p>Adhering to the Government advice regarding the number of people allowed in the meeting room at any one time.</p>	<p>Attendees to be reminded of the importance of social distancing, both in the meeting room and outside of it.</p> <p>Use of signage to remind attendees to keep their distance from other attendees wherever possible. Floor, wall and table signs should be used.</p>	Clerk Council members and members of the public	Prior to and during meeting	

	As above	<p><u>Ventilation</u> When selecting appropriate meeting facilities, specific care should be given to ensuring that the facilities can be ventilated i.e., have plenty of windows rather than a basement room.</p>		Those present	Prior and during the meeting	
	As above	<p><u>Attendees</u> Meetings should only be attended by those who need to attend, and the length of the meeting should be restricted to ensure that the meeting is kept to a minimum time.</p>		All		
	As above	<p><u>Cleaning</u> Frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly - particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches and reception areas using appropriate cleaning products and methods.</p>	Wipes and disinfectant sprays will be made available	All those present	Prior/ during and after meeting	
	As above	<p><u>Symptoms of COVID-19</u> If anyone has COVID symptoms with a new continuous cough or a high temperature, then they should be advised not to attend any meetings until after a safe quarantine period has elapsed.</p> <p>If advised that an attendee of a past meeting has developed COVID-19 and were recently on your premises, then all other attendees should be informed of the situation and advised to self-isolate.</p>		All attendees		

APPENDIX 1

WHY THE COUNCIL CAN HOLD FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

- A Council meeting (Councillors, staff and any others who are there as part of the formal business of the meeting) is an exception to the gathering's restrictions (because it is a gathering for work, community or voluntary purposes) and so is not bound by the rules of six or thirty.

The specific legal citation should you need it is s3 (4(a)), Part 1, Schedule 3 of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021 [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ uksi/2021/364/schedule/3](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/364/schedule/3);

- Members of the public may attend the Council meeting indoors in any number **limited only by your venue's COVID capacity**. This is because the gathering of the public to observe your meeting is a 'permitted organised gathering' as defined by the regulations thus: 'A gathering is a permitted organised gathering...if it takes place on or at premises, other than a private dwelling, which are (a)operated by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body, or (b)part of premises used for the operation of a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body.'

The specific legal citation should you need it is s5(2), Part 1, of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021 <https:// www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/364/regulation/5>

- This means that Councillors and staff can meet indoors with no restrictions on numbers other than your COVID risk-assessment of your venue, as a Council meeting is explicitly exempt from the current COVID gatherings restrictions.