



## Salhouse Parish Council

### Virtual Meeting Policy

#### 1. Introduction

Salhouse Parish Council (SPC) recognises the opportunities offered by meeting virtually in times that a physical meeting is not appropriate and has developed this policy to assist Chairmen, Councillors and members of the public and press to understand how these meetings differ from a physical meeting and to assist people to engage in debate and decision making. The policy is to be delivered within 'The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020' and that are currently enacted for meeting on and up to 7 May 2021.

#### 2. Publishing the agenda and providing documents

Councillors are to be summoned as per regulation with the agenda and documents also being placed on the Council's website. Wherever possible, agendas will be displayed on a Noticeboard. Any person unable to access SPC's website must contact SPC via the clerk to the Council and request an electronic copy of the agenda and documents to be forwarded as appropriate. In cases that documents originate from a third-party electronic links will be provided where available.

#### 3. Virtual Meeting 'platform'

SPC will utilise Zoom to provide video communications. Zoom enables video and audio conferencing for persons using mobile devices, desktops, and fixed room systems. In preparation for the meeting the Clerk to the Council will publish via the summons:

- The zoom meeting link
- Meeting ID
- Meeting passcode if applicable

#### 4. Standing Orders

Standing Orders will be used to guide the meeting in a similar way as if persons were present in a place.

#### 5. Specific Virtual Meeting Arrangements

Discussions

- a. This section applies if members are experiencing good connectivity. In the case of poor connectivity see 7a.
- b. During the meeting all persons other than members will be muted. During the public participation period members of the public will be required to 'enable video' in order for them to be visible to the Chairman and will raise their hand to indicate that they

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- wish to speak. Their microphone will then be unmuted and they can address the meeting. Following the conclusion of their address the microphone will be muted.
- c. During the meeting members and officers will raise their hand to indicate to the Chairman that they wish to speak on an agenda item. Those members attending by telephone can use \*9 to indicate they wish to speak.
  - d. All members attending the meeting will monitor their own background noise and mute their own microphones, except when speaking, to negate interference with the meeting.

#### **6. Voting**

All voting will be undertaken by a show of hands and confirmed verbally if necessary for clarity.

#### **7. Poor connectivity**

- a. In the case of poor connectivity, the Chairman will decide whether to continue with the meeting or to reconvene.
- b. In the case of video not being available for some or all of members attending the Chairman can choose to continue but to operate on a roll call for Councillor views on individual agenda items.

#### **8. Attendance**

If a member is believed to have 'dropped out' this will be minuted. If 'drop-outs' result in the meeting becoming inquorate members will endeavour to rejoin for a period of 10 minutes. The Clerk will attempt to make telephone contact after 5 minutes. After 10 minutes if the meeting is still inquorate the Chairman will suspend the meeting and reconvene at a later time and date subject to the statutory days of notice. Members will be telephoned to advise of the suspension.

#### **9. Telephone attendance**

Persons wishing to attend by telephone are advised to contact the Clerk in advance in order that processes can be put in place to enable appropriate engagement. Telephone attendees can mute/unmute by keying \*6 and can "raise their hand" by keying \*9.

#### **10. Please ensure that you are in a quiet location for the meeting and that your attendance is your primary commitment for the duration of the meeting.**

#### **11. Behaviour that is contrary to the intended outcomes of the meeting will be dealt with at the discretion of the Chairman. For a member of the public or press this may result in them being dismissed from the Zoom meeting.**

#### **12. Virtual Meeting Etiquette**

Normal Standing Orders apply to Conduct at Meetings and all attendees are expected to be mindful of the difficulties people experience with regard to the operation of technology.

#### **13. Dress code**

A meeting by Zoom is a public meeting please present yourself as you would do for a meeting where the public may be present.

**14. Declaration of Interests**

A Councillor that has declared an interest that requires them to leave the meeting will be placed in the waiting room. On conclusion of the item for which the declaration is made the Councillor will be returned to the meeting

**15. Public Participation**

The Clerk will read any pre-submitted addresses from the press and public. At the Chairman's discretion, the press and public will be invited to address the meeting at the appropriate point on the meeting agenda.

**16. Confidential Matters**

Confidential matters will be dealt with at the end of the meeting and members of public and press will be removed from the meeting and anyone joining the meeting after the meeting goes into confidential session will enter the virtual waiting room and only members of the Council will be admitted to the meeting. Councillors will be expected to verbally confirm that no one else can hear or see the meeting, and that no unofficial recording is possible.

**17. Recording**

Zoom meetings may be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

**18. Information**

The chat view box on the Zoom meeting is available to address the Clerk/Chair if necessary.

For further information see The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/contents/made>