



Horsmonden Parish Council

Virtual Meeting Policy and Guidelines

Following the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 coming into force on 4 April 2020, Parish Councils have been given the authority to hold Council meetings virtually (Regulation 5).

Horsmonden Parish Council has therefore agreed that for the foreseeable future it will hold remote Council meetings, (as adopted at the Full Council Meeting held on 04 May 2020), by using the Zoom app. This protocol will automatically cease on 31 May 2021, at which date its use will be reconsidered for continuation if necessary.

Meetings

- Only items that require immediate decisions (i.e. planning applications, urgent decision-making on Parish Council work) will be placed on the Agenda and discussed.
- Meetings will be held as close to scheduled meeting dates as possible, commencing at 7.30pm.
- Agendas will be published on the Horsmonden Parish Council website, www.horsmonden-pc.gov.uk and noticeboards and emailed/posted to Parish Councillors, Borough Councillors and County Councillor, giving the statutory required notice.
- A list of proposed meeting dates will be placed on the Parish noticeboards located on the Green and in Back Lane outside the Village Hall, as well as on the website/Facebook.
- All Parish Councillors will be provided with details of how to join the meeting by the Clerk or, in her absence, by the Assistant Clerk, at least one hour prior to the start of the meeting.
- Any apologies, and reasons, should still be sent to the Clerk prior to the meeting commencing.
- Any member of the public who wishes to take part in the meeting is required to contact the Clerk at least one hour prior to the start of the meeting and will be sent an invitation on how to join the meeting.

Protocol During the Meeting

- When logging on Councillors should check that their microphone and speaker are working.
- Councillors taking part in the meeting will make themselves known to the Clerk and Chair at the start.
- It may be necessary to only use the microphone and not the video once logged on, depending on bandwidth availability at the time.
- Some Councillors may use telephone dial-in only if they are unable to access Zoom.
- All of those present will put their microphones/telephones on mute throughout the meeting when they are not speaking.

- The Chair will chair the meeting as normal and any Councillor (or Clerk) wishing to speak will use the hand icon if possible, or if using audio/telephone only they will make it clear that they wish to speak by taking their microphone off mute or requesting to speak. The Chair will then say the Councillor's name before they should speak. Once the Councillor has finished speaking, they should indicate that they have nothing else to add.
- **No other Councillor must speak whilst another is addressing the meeting.**
- Once all Councillors have had the chance to speak on an item the Chair will summarise for a further show of hands (hands icon) or vote to confirm in agreement.
- The Clerk will take notes of how the voting went along with minuting the meeting.
- The Clerk can record the meeting at any time should Councillors wish.

Members of the Public

- When the member of the public contacts the Clerk prior to the meeting they should indicate on which item on the Agenda they wish to speak, if any.
- Once the member of the public has been accepted into the meeting they must be muted until such time they are permitted to speak – at this time the Chair will indicate that they have three minutes to address the meeting.
- Following this time, they should be muted for the remainder of the meeting (unless further questions are needing to be answered).

End of Meeting

- The Chair will declare the meeting closed and state the time.
- The Clerk will then end the meeting on Zoom.