



West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council

Virtual Meeting Procedure

From 4 April 2020 until May 2021, Parish Councils have been given provision under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”) to hold legal virtual meetings in order that Parish Council business can be maintained.

A variety of different platforms including Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts or Zoom are available.

The Parish Council has chosen to use the Zoom platform in order that the meeting is publicly available. The Clerk will arrange the meeting using the Parish Council-paid account.

The meeting will be a **formal Parish Council meeting** and will be held using the agenda and summons which the Clerk has published. It will be governed by the usual Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and associated policies.

A code and link to the virtual meeting will be published on the agenda which will also go on the website and notice boards (COVID-19 restrictions allowing) in order that the public are able to attend, just as they would be able to attend a meeting in the Parish Room

Attendees will also have the ability to dial in to the meeting via telephone.

Attendees will collect in the Zoom ‘waiting room’ prior to the meeting. As the ‘Host’, the Clerk will have the ability to allow them to enter the meeting, mute or remove anyone deemed a nuisance at the Chairman’s request.

There should be no eating although non-alcoholic drinks are permitted

All attendees should set their microphone to ‘mute’ on entry to the meeting and only the Chairman of the meeting will remain unmuted. All other participants, if they wish to speak should use the raise hand facility and they will be invited to unmute by the Chairman. The Clerk will have the ability to mute anyone who forgets.

All Councillor attendees should display their name in order for the public to be able to identify them, just as they would at an in-person meeting.

Councillors should make the Chairman aware of other people who have access to the meeting. For example, family members in the room. This is of the utmost importance in relation to confidential matters.

If a Councillor has declared a pecuniary interest in an item on the agenda, they will be placed in the waiting room for the duration of the agenda item. Once the item has been concluded, they will be re-admitted.

As with meetings in the Parish room, members of the public will be given the opportunity to speak during public participation, but will not be permitted, unless invited to do so by the Chairman, to speak at other times.

Anyone wanting to speak should raise their hand using 'raise hand' in the options within the Participants section or by waving if they're using a camera so that the Chairman or clerk can see. There will be no interrupting while others are speaking.

Meeting participants may wish to protect their personal environment by choosing a virtual background in the Zoom Settings 'Virtual Background' or alternatively should consider what can be seen behind them while on camera.

Notes for guidance:

Patience can only help towards a successful meeting.

Ensure you have a reliable Internet connection if possible.

Please be aware that often you can be heard or seen, even when you may not forget you are in the meeting.

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