



Kessingland Parish Council Video Meeting Protocol

1. Introduction

This protocol is intended to guide councillors, officers and any other participants, who are using video meetings. This protocol has been developed during the COVID-19 2020 pandemic but is intended for use in all situations where formal meetings in-person are not possible. Council recognises that subject to appropriate consideration of data, information, safeguarding and other legal issues, video conferencing is a useful communication tool. With this in mind, Council will use a mainstream and reputable video meeting platform (such as Zoom or Skype) and will have due regard to data protection and other relevant laws.

Where this protocol is used it will first be ascertained that councillors and staff have access to video conferencing facilities and have a Kessingland Parish Council email address. Council will endeavour that no councillor or member of staff is disenfranchised due to lack of the video conferencing accessibility.

2. Current Legislation

2.1. On 17 March 2020, the government advised that all non-essential travel and contact with others should be avoided and social distancing measures were introduced. Prior to this, local authorities were required to hold meetings to make decisions and the Local Government Act 1972 requires members to be physically present in order for a meeting to take place.

2.2. On 4 April 2020 the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 were enacted. These provided flexibility for remote attendance at meetings in relation to voting, member access to meeting documents and the remote access of the public and press to meetings by electronic means including telephone conference, video conference and live streaming.

3. Governance

3.1 The council's Standing Orders govern video meetings as they do face-to-face meetings.

- 3.2 Councillors must comply with the Code of Conduct and declare disclosable pecuniary and local nonpecuniary interests as they do at face-to-face meetings
- 3.3 Video meetings abide by the same protocols as face-to-face council meetings. I.e. Apologies, items for the agenda, dispensations etc need to be presented as normal and no alcohol is allowed at a meeting.
- 3.4 The press and public retain the same rights as they do for a face-to-face council meeting.

4. Access

- 4.1 Video meetings will be set up for Full Council, Committees and Working Groups, where needed, and members will be sent a joining information along with the agenda for the meeting.
 - 4.1a Members should join meetings using their KPC email.
 - 4.1b Any other person interested in attending the meeting, be it a councillor who is not a member of the meeting or the press or member of the public should contact the Clerk or Assistant Clerk (hereafter referred to as officers) for joining information.
- 4.2 It is recognised that it will not always be possible to facilitate the participation of all intended participants at the meeting but all reasonable endeavours will be made, while prioritising the need to progress the business of the meeting.

5. Procedures for council video meetings

- 5.1 Joining information will be sent out with the Agenda following normal Council procedures
- 5.2 In line with the legislation noted in 2.2 notice of the meeting will be posted on the Council's website following normal Council procedures.
- 5.3 Officers will create and start video meetings normally at least 5 minutes before the meeting.
- 5.4 Officers will ensure all video meetings are audio and/or video recorded.
- 5.5 Officers will ensure there are minutes or notes, as relevant, of all relevant video meetings. These minutes will not be ratified and signed until the next face-to-face meeting of that meeting however any corrections can be addressed at the following video meeting.
- 5.6 To avoid background noise and enable orderly participation, all participants should mute their audio when not speaking, clearly indicate when they wish

to speak (by whatever means is indicated by the Chair) and await the Chair's indication that they can speak.

- 5.7 If a vote is required, members will cast their vote as directed by the Chair of the meeting. Should a 'recorded vote' be called for this will be done verbally.
- 5.8 When a meeting goes into closed session to deal with confidential items, a councillor or member of staff should only participate if there are no other persons either in their vicinity or within earshot. Confidential sessions will not start until it is determined that only members of the meeting are present. If this cannot be determined, then the meeting should cease and an officer convene a new video session to complete the meeting with new joining invites.
- 5.9 Video meeting attendees should ensure that any background and attire should be suitable for a business meeting.
- 5.10 Any councillor not abiding with the above protocol and causing disruption during the meeting may be removed from the relevant meeting subject to a warning being issued by the Chair and, in the event of continued problems, a two-thirds majority vote of the meeting.
- 5.11 Any guest or member of the press or public not abiding with the above protocol and causing disruption during the meeting may be removed from the relevant meeting subject to a warning being issued by the Chair and, in the event of continued problems, a simple majority vote of the meeting.

6. Procedures for other council business

- 6.1 Councillors and officers may use video conferencing for other aspects of their council activities e.g. meetings with stakeholders, partners and contractors as well as discussions with the public. All Council users need to be mindful of the ease of video and audio recording and that images are personal data.

7. Feedback

- 7.1 Any feedback, questions, concerns or issues regarding about video meetings should be raised with the Clerk or Assistant Clerk, however at this time, no officers will be able to meet in person with councillors to assist with operating issues.

8. Review

This policy will be review annually by council to take into account any changes in council procedures, technology or legislation.

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Adopted June 2020. Reviewed May 2021. Next review 2022/23