



CHIRK TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF Y WAUN

Protocols for Mutli-location Meetings For Councillors, Staff and Members of the Public

Adapted from One Voice Wales - A Guide for Councillors and Clerks - Remote Attendance at Meetings

Date due to review: 1 year (2023)

Policy version: 2
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Policy type: Recommended



Introduction

This protocol is designed to support the Council to provide for multi-location attendance at Council meetings in accordance with Section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

This means that the Council can now hold official meetings virtually, or in person, with Members of the Council and members of the public participating from multi-locations via remote conferencing.

Remote conferencing

The Town Council will be using Zoom video/telephone conferencing software.

Remote meeting participants are required to:-

1. Know how to join the meeting (remember that numbers for landlines and mobiles may be different). Practice in advance to ensure that you are familiar with the software and iron out any technical issues – using this equipment and software will become more familiar and straightforward the more it is used.
2. Check that you can see/hear the Chair of the meeting. (Know how to adjust your settings such as microphone sensitivity and volume levels).
3. Remember to conduct yourself as you would in any public meeting.
4. Fully charge your equipment, meetings can use a lot of battery.
5. Call from a comfortable position, as the meeting may take some time, have some water handy.
6. Put electronic devices on silence and ensure there is no other background noise.
7. Prepare thoroughly for the meeting.
8. Call in a couple of minutes before the meeting starts so that the meeting can start on time.

For those accessing via video; participants are also required to:-

9. Make sure that you are in the centre of the screen by positioning your device or camera appropriately and look into the camera. Aim for a head and shoulders shot similar to a passport photo.
10. Keep your device still and on a flat surface.
11. Consider your personal appearance, you will be on show throughout the meeting.
12. Consider the background, aim for a plain wall backdrop if possible.
13. Is there enough light for people to see you? Is the sun or artificial lighting 'bleaching' out your face?
14. Ask family members to stay out of shot as people wandering about in the background can be distracting.
15. The Zoom 'chat' facilities will not be allowed during meetings.



Meeting Styles and Preparation

Meetings will be properly constituted, by way of formal notice, and the agenda will be published on the Councils website.

Members should prepare thoroughly and focus on the outcome/decision required.

Remote / virtual meetings require some patience and work much more effectively when members demonstrate respect for each other and the Chair.

Rules of Debate

Chairs with the Clerk should agree and advise members of the different 'rules of debate' before each meeting. These rules of debate are specific to video conferencing meetings and supplement the Town Councils Standing Orders which remain in force at all times.

The Chair will be in control of the meeting and will check at the beginning the meeting that all Councillors, Staff and Members of the public can hear/see the proceedings.

The legislation specifies that meetings may be held by means of any equipment or other facility which enables persons who are not in the same place to speak to and be heard by each other (whether or not the equipment or facility also enables those persons to see each other) therefore, the lack, or loss, of a video feed will not prevent the meeting from proceeding.

Members unable to connect due to technological or internet failures will be able to tender their apologies, and this would be accepted as a legitimate reasons for non-attendance.

The Chair will make it clear how people will participate and how you will be invited to contribute.

The Chair will be supported by the Town Clerk and Administration Officer who will handle meeting logistics.

To facilitate the meeting once you have been welcomed to the meeting by the Town Clerk, she will immediately mute your microphone and wait for the Chair to establish communications with all participants, prior to commencement of the meeting.



Once the meeting is formally opened by the Chair everybody must:-

- a) Ensure that their microphone is muted when not contributing if joining remotely
- b) Ensure that you remain quiet in the meeting room to avoid unnecessary noise being picked up by the microphones.
- c) Respect the Chair and wait in turn to be called.
- d) Show mutual respect of all participants by indicating that you wish to speak by raising a piece of paper, pen, or other object to clearly differentiate from simple hand gestures.
- e) Avoid repetition where possible.
- f) Do not speak over another person, as the microphones will not pick up the sound. Only one person to speak at a time.
- g) Council Members must ensure that they declare interests and do not take part in the discussion or voting on any relevant matter.

If there is no unanimous agreement and there is a need for a vote, on a specific resolution, then this would be achieved by the Chair calling each name alphabetically with a response of 'for' or 'against' from each Member which can be noted by the Town Clerk to ensure accurate representation and recording of decisions.

Public participation

Members of public are allowed access to meetings.

Members of public will only be able to speak in line with the Council Standing Orders.

Members of the public are requested to:-

- a) Respect the Chair and wait in turn to be called.
- b) Mute your microphone following their contribution.

Photographing, recording, broadcasting, or transmitting

Photographing, recording, broadcasting, or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior written consent.

The Town Council is not liable for the actions of any person making a recording at or of a Town Council meeting which identifies a member of the public or for any publication of that recording.

The printed and signed minutes of a Town Council meeting remain the statutory and legally binding formal record of Town Council decisions.