

WHITLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Communication Policy



The primary objective of this protocol is to ensure that meetings can continue as safely as possible while protecting the rights of Members and the Public. This applies even when meetings are held through a combination of online and in-person participation. The Chairman will maintain control and discretion over the meeting's conduct, and the Zoom host (usually the Clerk) will provide administrative support to facilitate the meeting.

(a) Members (Councillors) Entitled to Vote

All Members entitled to vote in a meeting must be present in order to be considered 'present' (counting toward the quorum) and eligible to cast a vote. Members attending via Zoom are considered present and therefore entitled to vote.

(b) Other Members, Officers, and the Public

The Council will use Zoom to allow all other Members, Officers, and the Public to attend and participate in meetings safely. Zoom will be enabled for all public meetings. Attendees in the meeting room will be able to see and hear Zoom participants through the existing large TV/monitor screen in the meeting room.

Those attending via Zoom will be able to hear and see Members in the room. However, it will be a wide-angle view of the room, with no zooming in on individual members. It is essential that Members in the room be invited to speak by the Chair or identify themselves before speaking. Zoom will be the platform used for remote participation in hybrid meetings. It provides audio, video, and screen-sharing functionality, and no Zoom account is required to join a meeting. Members of the Council will receive an email invitation/link to join. Members of the public wishing to attend may request the Zoom link by emailing the Clerk at:

clerk@whitlandtowncouncil.gov.uk.

Public participation will follow the Council's current arrangements, and members of the public will be invited to speak at the appropriate time.

The Meeting

Starting the Meeting:

The Chair will remind all Members, Officers, and the Public attending via Zoom that microphones must be muted unless they are speaking. This ensures that background noise, coughing, and other disruptions are minimized. The Clerk will enforce this rule and will be able to mute participant mics when they are not in use.

The Chair will also remind all Members, Officers, and the Public attending via Zoom that cameras should be on.



For Members and Officers Physically Present:

Each member should raise their hand to indicate a desire to speak. When called upon by the Chair, they must identify themselves for the benefit of those attending via Zoom.

For Participants Attending via Zoom:

WTC– Hybrid Meeting Protocol

The Council will not use the Chat function. The Chairman will call on speakers when they raise their Zoom hand to speak.

No decision or outcome will be invalidated due to the Chair inadvertently missing a request to speak; it is reasonable to expect that some requests may be missed from time to time. When referring to reports or making specific comments, Members and Officers should refer to the relevant report or agenda whenever possible. This will help all attendees have a clear understanding of what is being discussed.

Voting:

Voting in meetings is typically done through a show of hands. The Clerk will announce the numerical result of the vote for the benefit of those attending via Zoom.

Meeting Etiquette Reminder for Zoom Attendees:

Mute your microphone – you will still be able to hear what is being said.

Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.

Speak clearly and state your name each time you speak.

Disorderly Conduct:

Disorderly or disruptive behaviour by attendees will be addressed with a warning from the Chairman. Continued disruptive

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Minute Reference: _____

Review: _____

