

LINBY PARISH COUNCIL

REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURES AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS (JAN 2021)

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 allow local councils to hold remote meetings. The regulations give automatic authority to hold remote meetings and amend standing orders as required. These regulations remain in force until May 7th, 2021 or earlier if repealed, and require a number of temporary changes to Standing Orders.

General

This Protocol and Procedures should be read in conjunction with the Council's standing orders. The Regulations made under s78 of Coronavirus Act 2020 apply and where there is a conflict between these and any other adopted standing orders or legislation, these Remote Meetings Procedures take precedence in relation to any remote meeting.

1) Annual Meeting

a) The requirement to hold an Annual Meeting of the Council is to be disregarded and prior to May 7th, 2021 may only take place:

- i) where called by the Chair or
- ii) following a resolution calling for an annual meeting being passed at an ordinary or extra ordinary meeting of the Council.

2) Access to Information

a) Where a document is required to be 'open to inspection' this shall be published on the website of the council.

b) Where there is a requirement to publish information including public notices, agendas, minutes, background papers and written reports, this shall be published on the website of the council.

3) Remote Access to Meetings

a) The definition of meeting within the Council's standing orders is amended so that:

- i) 'place' includes where a meeting is held, or to be held in more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers
- ii) 'open to the public' includes access to the meeting by remote means including video conferencing, live webcasting and interactive streaming
- iii) where a meeting is accessible to the public through remote means, the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person.

b) If the Council becomes aware that the technology has failed, and the meeting is no longer accessible to the public, the meeting shall be adjourned.

c) If public access cannot be restored within a reasonable period, the remaining business shall be deferred to a future meeting.

4) Councillors in Remote Attendance

a) A councillor in remote attendance is present and counted for the purposes of the quorum when they can:

- i) hear and where practicable see other members of the council
- ii) hear and where practicable see members of the public wishing to participate during the public session of the meeting or as invited by the Chairman

b) A councillor in remote attendance will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance at 4 a) are not met.

c) Subject to 4 b) the Chairman may if appropriate

- i) adjourn the meeting to permit conditions for remote attendance to be re-established
- ii) count the number of councillors in attendance for the purpose of the quorum

5) Remote attendance by members of the public

a) A member of the public is in remote attendance when they can:

- i) hear and where practicable see and so be heard and where practicable seen by members of the council at the meeting
- ii) hear and where practicable see and so be heard and where practicable seen by other members of the public attending the meeting including those wishing to speak during Open Forum or as invited by the Chairman

b) A member of the public in remote attendance will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance at 5 a) are not met.

c) Subject to 5 b) the Chairman may if appropriate

- i) adjourn the meeting to permit conditions for remote attendance to be re-established
- ii) vary the order of the agenda or complete the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the member of the public in remote attendance.

6) Public Participation

Council meetings must still be advertised and the public have a right to observe. Details of how to join the meetings will be included on the agenda. Open Forum should still be included on the agenda giving members of the public the opportunity to participate as they would in a face-to-face meeting.

7) Remote Voting

Unless a recorded vote is demanded, the Chair will take the vote by:

- a) confirmation of the meeting that there is agreement or
- b) a roll call and the number of votes for or against the motion or amendment or abstaining will be recorded.

8) Declaring Interests

The Council will need to consider how they will manage councillors 'leaving' a meeting if they have an interest and do not wish to be part of the meeting. It may be that the councillor with an interest, leave the meeting but agree, with the chairman a time to return to the meeting. Should the council need further time on a matter, another agreed time frame can be given.

9) Exclusion of the press and public

Where the council has resolved to exclude the press and public from any part of the meeting, due to the confidentiality of the business to be discussed then:

- a) The means of remote attendance and access to the meeting by members of the press and public will be severed
- b) Each councillor present shall declare that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be (hearing or seeing), and/or recording the meeting.

10) Behaviours and Conduct

The required standards of behaviour and discussion are the same whether in remote or face-to-face meetings. Everyone in the meeting will need to be respectful and adhere to the Council's code of conduct.

**This Amendment was adopted by the Parish Council at a meeting on
11th January 2021**