



Remote Meetings Policy and Procedure 2025

1. Introduction

Haydon Wick Parish Council recognises the importance of maintaining transparency, accessibility, and continuity in Council operations, including through remote and hybrid meetings. This policy outlines the principles, procedures, and protocols to guide such meetings in alignment with current legislation and best practices.

2. Background

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) Regulations 2020 enabled local councils to meet remotely until 7th May 2021. Although this regulation has expired, hybrid meeting formats have proven effective for community engagement and inclusivity.

In October 2023 Government rejected the Lord's amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which would have enabled local councils to choose to hold hybrid/online Council meetings. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and other bodies continue to campaign for the change.

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 set out the statutory provisions that permit the recording of proceedings by any person attending a meeting. The legislation is designed to increase citizens' rights to attend and report on meetings, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders (Ref:3I).

The taking of photographs and audio / visual recording of any meetings that are held in public is generally permitted, preferably with a prior request to the Chief Officer or Chair of the Council or relevant Committee. and in accordance with this protocol. Broadcast meetings will only include footage of agenda items that are deemed public and not closed or 'exempt' agenda items.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Full Council, Committees & Sub Committee meetings (decision-making)
- Working Parties (non-decision-making)
- Public participation during remote or hybrid meetings

4. Legal and Operational Framework

4.1 Quorum and Voting

- Only those physically present at decision-making meetings count towards quorum
- Remote participation by Councillors is permitted for 'observer only' arrangement and those not physically in the meeting room have no right to speak, without the Chair of the meeting's consent, and they have no voting rights
- A Councillor attending remotely cannot Chair a meeting.

4.2 Remote Attendance Conditions

Participants attending remotely must be able:

- To hear and, where practicable, see and be seen by others present.
- To be heard and, if practicable, seen by members of the public and other Councillors.

5. Technology and Setup

- Platform: Meetings will be hosted via MS Teams.
- Access: Links and access instructions will be published in meeting agendas and the Council's website.

6. Meeting Procedure

6.1 Preparation

- Meeting agendas and supporting documents will be issued in advance via email and the Council's website.
- All non-confidential materials will be publicly accessible.
- Technical checks will be conducted before meetings.

6.2 Conduct

- Members are to observe the Council's Code of Conduct.
- Attendees should mute microphones when not speaking to minimise disruptions.
- Raise hands (physically or virtually) to indicate a desire to speak.
- Public participants may speak during designated times, subject to the Chair's discretion.

6.3 Confidentiality and GDPR

- Members are responsible for ensuring confidentiality in their surroundings and ensure they do not breach the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- GDPR compliance is mandatory; the Council's Privacy Notice and Risk Assessments will be updated accordingly, to incorporate remote meetings

6.4 Public Participation

- Public access and participation details will be provided in the meeting agenda.
- Questions not on the agenda should, where possible, be submitted outside of meetings.

7. Recordings and Minutes

- Meetings may be recorded to aid accurate minute-taking.
- Minutes will be prepared in the usual manner and approved at subsequent face-to-face meetings.

8. Disruptions and Security

- The meeting host (Clerk of Meeting / or an appointed staff member) has the authority to mute or remove participants who are disruptive or breach meeting protocol.

- Technical issues should be communicated via chat or notified to the meeting host discreetly.

9. Working Parties and Panels

- These bodies are non-decision-making and may meet remotely or in hybrid format.
- Councillors may be able to freely participate and speak as directed by the Chair.
- The Chair must be physically present for hybrid sessions.

10. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to legal or procedural changes.

11. Version Control

Remote Meetings Policy and Procedure 2025	Georgina Morgan-Denn Chief Officer/Clerk & RFO	May 2025 Adopted by Full Council FC Ref 015	Annually, or as required
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