

PEASEDOWN ST. JOHN PARISH COUNCIL PROTOCOL FOR REMOTE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Written: April 2020
Adopted: Full Council Min. C325 - 21/04/2020
Last Reviewed:

Introduction

Due to Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic and the measures the Government has implemented in response to this, the requirement for Parish Councils to hold public meetings in person with all members present in one place cannot be met.

As a consequence, the Coronavirus Act 2020 provided the powers to the Secretary of State to make the following regulation:

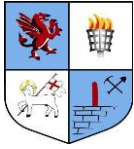
The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

This Regulation came in to force on 4 April 2020 and enables local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) until 7th May 2021 (or sooner if the Government rules are relaxed).

During this period, Peasedown St John Parish Council meetings will be conducted remotely via an online platform. Access to the meeting for councillors must be via a Parish Council email address.

Meetings Generally

1. The Council's Code of Conduct still applies.
2. Everyone logged into the meeting should be respectful towards one another.
3. Chairman to still Chair the meeting.
4. Councillors should still submit their apologies to the Clerk if they cannot make a meeting.
5. Declaration of Interests still apply [any declarations to be reported at the meeting as part of the attendance roll call].
 - a. If you believe you have a declaration of interest for something on the agenda, it would be helpful if you could raise it with the Clerk prior to the meeting. If it is a pecuniary interest, you will need to log out of the meeting during the discussion and re-join for the next agenda item (the Clerk will message you when it is appropriate to re-join the meeting).
6. Everyone, including members of the public, must mute their microphone when not speaking. This may be controlled by the Clerk.
7. For each relevant agenda item, the Chair to read from a list of Councillors names and ask them in turn if there is anything they wish to say or ask in relation to each topic being discussed.



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8. Resolutions will be typed within the 'Chat' function of the meeting. They may be typed by the Clerk or the proposer of the resolution. The content of the resolution will therefore be available to all and the Chair can read out the resolution prior to voting.
9. Individuals to state their name before speaking.
10. Pre-reading will be made available to councillors and hopefully the public (unless confidential). Please ensure the documents are read prior to the meeting and raise any questions to the Clerk before the meeting.
11. Drinking of alcohol during meetings should not take place in respect of Standing Order 3.a (*Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost*).

Voting

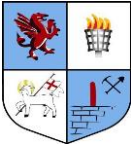
1. It should be noted that it was resolved for Standing Order 3.1 to be supplemented with the bold text shown below:

3.1 - Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

For remote meetings voting on a question shall be undertaken by the affirmation of the meeting if there is no dissent or by roll call. Also, requests for a recorded vote must be made before the vote commences.
2. Following discussion, voting will be undertaken by:
 - a. the affirmation of the meeting if there is no dissent [by assent]; or
 - b. roll call. The Chair will call your name, you will verbally confirm, if you are 'for', 'against' or 'abstain' the resolution. At the point a majority has been reached, the voting will cease, unless a recorded vote is called. In which case all councillors must indicate which way they vote. The roll call will be done alphabetically, by surname, and will be called continuously. For example, if a majority has been reached before all councillors are asked for their vote, the next councillor on the list will be called first on the subsequent vote.
 - c. or an alternative method adopted by the Council for that meeting.
3. Requests for a recorded vote must be made before the vote commences.

Public

1. Council meetings must still be advertised. Remote meetings will be advertised on:
 - a. PSJPC website;
 - b. PSJPC notice boards (at least one depending on staff availability).



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2. The public still have a right to observe the meeting and speak during the public session. There will be 10 minutes allocated at the beginning of the meeting.
 - a. The relevant link for public to access the meeting will be included on the agenda.
 - b. Once logged in the public will be held in the online meeting 'lobby'; they will be approved access to the meeting by the Clerk.
 - c. The Chair will explain how the meeting will progress and will ask them if they wish to speak under the public session.

Minutes

1. The Clerk will write the minutes and they will be published in line with usual practice.
2. A paper copy of the minutes will be provided to the relevant Chair for them to sign at the meeting (in accordance with Standing Order 12f).

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The foregoing ***Protocol for Remote Parish Council Meetings*** has been revised and amended to reflect the changes in the Council's working practices and the latest Government legislation. They were adopted by Peasedown St John Parish Council at a meeting held on 21st April 2020.

Signed:

Chair: Cllr Kathleen Thomas

Date: 22nd April 2020

Signed:

Clerk & RFO: Tanya West

Date: 22nd April 2020