



WHITEHILL TOWN COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETINGS PROTOCOL

Guidance notes on how to have an effective teleconference call:

Conference call etiquette is different than "regular phone" etiquette. In order for the teleconference to run smoothly, there are some do's and don'ts of a teleconference call which participants must follow whilst on the call.

To a large extent, teleconferencing etiquette is simply politeness, waiting your turn and treating everyone respectfully with patience and tact.

However the technology and format of teleconferencing create the need for etiquette rules that go beyond what's expected in a conversation between two or three people in the same room.

For a successful meeting, teleconference call etiquette must be observed.

Before the meeting:

- You will be sent an agenda from the host, with joining/dialling in instructions.
- Please follow <https://zoom.us/test> - to test meeting beforehand
- Prepare ahead of meeting; ask the host any questions you may have about the meeting.
- Sorting out any technical issues so it can be avoided during the meeting.
- Choose a place without background noise
- Try to join the videoconference 10 minutes beforehand for a prompt start
- Introduce yourself every time you would like to speak
- Mute yourself when you are not talking
- Avoid interrupting participants when they are speaking
- There will be a chat function available if you would like to add comments or have questions.
- Stay focussed during the call
- Avoid multitasking
- Keep a professional atmosphere
- Be patient, we're all learning this together!

During the meeting:

- The Chairman will host all meetings and as per a standard meetings, the Vice Chair will chair in absence of Chairman.
- Meeting Participants will be held in the virtual meeting room prior to the start of the meeting.
- The Chairman or Vice Chairman will 'collect' participants to join the meeting.
- The Chairman or Vice Chairman will announce if residents have joined the meeting.
- If required the Chairman or Vice Chairman will manage muting participants, including the option to permanently mute attendees.
- Councillors are asked not to speak over one another. Councillors can indicate by show a show of a hand if they wish to speak and wait for the Chair to give permission to speak.
- The office administrator will take the minutes and the meeting will be recorded.
- Apologies for absence must be sent by email to the Clerk prior to the meeting.
- In general you should try and keep to your usual approach to meetings and stick to your standing orders as much as you can.

Minutes of the previous meeting will be printed and signed by the Chairman. Signed copies will be retained by the Chairman until they can be filed in the minute file in the Parish Office

Agenda, Minutes & Papers:

- a) Agendas and reports will be circulated to Members by email prior to each meeting.
- b) Agenda and reports will be made available for each meeting on the Parish Council's website.
- c) If feasible, agendas will be posted onto the Town noticeboards.
- d) Minutes of the meeting will be circulated to Members and will be made available on the Council's website.

Declaration of Interests:

Where a Councillor declares a pecuniary interest in an item of business, the Chairman will place the Cllr in the virtual waiting room until the item has concluded and this will be noted in the minutes.

Voting:

The Chairman will co-ordinate items that require a vote.

Votes will be cast using the following options:

- Verbally, one Cllr at a time.
- By show of the virtual hand (thumbs up)
- Visual show of hands
- The Chairman and Clerk will record the vote and confirm verbally the result for the benefit of the minute taker.

Members of the public participation:

Details how members of the public can join Council Zoom meetings will be detailed on the Council's website that will include links and passcodes and this information will be made available on the agenda that is posted onto the Town noticeboards.

Members of the public can speak during the open session at the beginning of the meeting. If Members of the public interject during the formal meeting, they should be advised not to. The Chairman can mute persistent interruptions and/or ask the member of the public to leave the virtual meeting. They can also be assigned to the virtual waiting room by the meeting host.

Exclusion of the Press & Public:

The Chair will ask the public observers to leave and a new meeting will commence using a new ID log that has not been shared with the public to discuss the confidential matters.

After the meeting:

The minute taking will be completed and any clarity of details can be obtained.

Reflect on how your meeting went and what you might wish to change to improve for next time.