

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 7 May 2020

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Prepared by Elaine Anstee
2 May 2020

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

For Information

- **Meetings**

[The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\)\(Flexibility of Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) came into force on 4th April 2020.

The Regulations now allow virtual rather than physical meetings to be held. The expectation is that the emergency situation where powers were delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman (and such others as stipulated) should cease and virtual meetings should replace physical ones.

There are a number of apps and websites which can be used to host conference calls or virtual meetings.

NALC has produced a document [Holding remote meetings](#) which sets out the advantages/disadvantages of a number of possible platforms – **Google Hangouts; GoToMeeting; Microsoft Teams; Skype; Slack and Zoom**. We would not recommend any one method over another. But at present Zoom and Microsoft Teams appear to be the most popular. Each has pro's and con's and each council needs to investigate and familiarise themselves to identify what the best solution would be.

The Regulations require that elected members must be able “*to hear, and where practicable see....*”. So while seeing is extremely helpful to a well ordered meeting, if broadband speeds are too slow or technological capability is limited, then a telephone conference might be the fall back scenario.

The relevant Regulations are currently time limited to 7th May 2021. Parish council life has to continue in spite of Corona Virus, bills have to be paid and planning applications will need to be commented on. Virtual meetings may concentrate minds and keep meeting times shorter. Large projects, particularly if they are likely to be controversial or very expensive should be parked if possible. Concentrate on the immediate and important matters for the moment.

There will be a great emphasis on the clerk and Chairman to ensure that resolutions and decisions are clear and documented.

- **Actual meetings**

Please look at the example of a hypothetical parish council meeting done by Northamptonshire ALC on Zoom here on YouTube - <https://youtu.be/AN56Xe2Nt8I>

It talks and walks you through with screen shots of various aspects which could be potentially challenging – members of the public being disruptive, councillors with interests to declare, voting, councillors that can only access the meeting by phone, when the public have to leave for sensitive items etc.

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Another real example is a recent meeting of Henley Town Council -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rs0e4Fpi0wY&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2X_1galJI7Be4gqGv1vPoN6t173mu_GBVXCgVEFZtEWdpv1pE8miZcQHI

Tips for Zoom meetings:

- Upon joining a meeting, you should mute your microphone and ensure your video is enabled.
- The Chair will confirm if there are any members of the public present, having been let in from the waiting room, and ask them if they want to speak during the public session.
- The Chair will remind everyone on the meeting to ensure that their microphone is on mute and that their video is enabled (this includes members of the public).
- The Chair may inform all present that the meeting will be recorded by the Council. The public session need not be recorded if anybody wishes to object.
- The Chair will then work through the Agenda supported by the Clerk as required. **The Agenda will be as concise as possible and focus on what is important, where practicable it will avoid items that may require lengthy debate.**
- Papers for the meeting will be posted on the parish council website and emailed to all Councillors with an email address.
- If a Councillor has declared an interest in an item to be discussed they will be asked to leave the meeting at that point and rejoin (goes to the Waiting Room in Zoom)
- In order for a Councillor to make a point regarding an item under discussion they should raise their hand and wait for the Chair to invite them to speak, at which time they should un-mute the microphone and mute it again after they have made their point. If any member has joined by telephone only the Chair will invite them to speak before moving to a proposal.
- When a proposal is required the Chair will ask the meeting and look for a Councillor who has raised their arm, the Chair will invite that Councillor to state their name and the proposal.
- The Chair will then ask for a Councillor to second the proposal and look for a Councillor who has raised their arm. The Chair will state the name of the Councillor who has seconded the proposal.
- The Chair will then ask all Councillors in favour to raise their hand and to keep it raised until he asks them to place it back down. The Chair will ask telephone participants to give their vote audibly. The Chair will confirm the number of Councillors voting in favour.
- The Chair will then repeat for any Councillor not in favour or who wants to abstain.
- Standing Orders will continue to be used to assist with the good management of a meeting.

Zoom Tutorials done by Warwickshire Association of Local Councils

- [A step by step guide to using Zoom and joining a meeting](#)
- [Setting up a zoom meeting](#)

Zoom Tutorial Videos

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- [Getting Started with Zoom Meetings](#) 38 minutes (skip to 18 minutes in to jump straight to the hosting meetings section)
What is a Zoom Meeting? The basics with Zoom expert. We will cover scheduling, inviting others, host controls.
- [Zoom Meetings](#) 1 hour

Zoom Discount for Members

Christine

County Officer

OALC

Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils

Town Hall, Market Place, Wallingford, OX10 0EG

Email – info@oalc.org.uk

Your query may be answered by looking at our website www.oalc.org.uk

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 7

DRAFT Virtual Meeting Procedure

Version 1

From 4 April 2020 until May 2021, Parish Councils have been given provision under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") to hold legal virtual meeting in order that Parish Council business can be maintained. A variety of different platforms including Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts or Zoom are available.

The Parish Council has chosen to use the Zoom platform in order that the meeting is publicly available. The Clerk will Host the meeting using the Parish Council-(paid?) account. The meeting will be a formal Parish Council meeting and will be held using the agenda and summons which the Clerk has published. It will be governed by the usual Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and associated policies. A code and link to the virtual meeting will be published on the agenda (which will also go on the noticeboard) and on the website in order that the public are able to attend, just as they would be able to attend a meeting in the Parish Hall.

Attendees will also have the ability to dial in to the meeting via telephone. Attendees will collect in the Zoom 'waiting room' prior to the meeting. As the 'Host', the Clerk will have the ability to mute or remove anyone deemed a nuisance at the Chairman's request. All attendees will be set to 'mute' on entry to the meeting and only the Chairman of the meeting will remain unmuted. All other participants, if they wish to speak will be invited to unmute. The Clerk will have the ability to mute anyone who forgets.

All Councillor attendees will display their name in order for the public to be able to identify them, just as they would at an in-person meeting. If a Councillor has declared an interest in an item on the agenda, they will be placed in the waiting room for the duration of the agenda item. Once the item has been concluded, they will be re-admitted. In order to protect participants from malware, the 'chat', file sharing and screen sharing function will be disabled during the meeting. If necessary, the Clerk will display any documents required using the 'share screen' function.

As with meetings in the Parish Hall, members of the public will be given the opportunity to speak during public participation, but will not be permitted, unless invited to do so by the Chairman, to speak at other times. Anyone wanting to speak should raise their hand using 'raise hand' in the options within the Participants section [or by waving if they're using a camera so that the Chairman can see]. The Councillor participants will introduce themselves. Members of the public may introduce themselves if they should wish. Meeting participants may wish to protect their personal environment by choosing a virtual background in the Zoom Settings 'Virtual Background' or alternatively should consider what can be seen behind them while on camera. This procedure was considered at a meeting on 7th May 2020 and will be reviewed in one year.

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Agenda Item 10

- **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

The Regulations mean there is now no requirement (reg.6) for a parish council to hold its annual meeting although it may do so (virtually) if it so chooses.

The expectation is that the Chairman of the Council will stay in post until they resign or a meeting can be held (possibly remotely/virtually).

- **Standing Orders**

The Regulations permit the council to hold their meetings in a remote way. The fact that the existing NALC Model Standing Orders do not refer to 'remote meetings' is not relevant as it will still be a meeting of the council. At the first remote meeting the council may wish to approve a protocol for the remote meetings. NALC Legal say that Councils can override "normal" meeting Standing Orders to facilitate remote meetings and approving a protocol may be sensible.

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Agenda Item 13c

Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) Amendment Regulations 2020

Max Soule, Deputy Director, Local Authority Accountability and Oversight at MHCLG has [emailed a letter to all local authority chief executives](#) in England, confirming the extended audit deadlines for 2019/20.

Moore (Stephens) have been having some tech issues in sending out communications. What they will be sending out is -

Dear Clerk

*Following on from our previous communication, clarification has now been provided and approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in relation to how smaller authorities should conduct meetings in the present climate and to extend deadlines in place for the submission of the annual accounts to 31 March 2020. **Please note Smaller Authorities are Category 2 Authorities in the regulation changes below.***

As a result, a two month extension to key deadlines has been confirmed to allow authorities additional time to complete their preparation and organise review and approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for this period.

*Furthermore, meetings can now be held virtually using online software rather than being required to be held in person as well as updates having been made to how the public and journalists attend these meetings. **Please note the provisions for remote meetings apply to all authorities EXCEPT Parish Meetings who must hold a public meeting and approve the AGAR before 31 August 2020.***

These updates have been widely circulated through NALC and SAAA, please review their correspondence, websites or contact your local authority for the full detail in relation this. Links to specific public pages dedicated to the latest news on coronavirus can be seen below:

www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus

www.slcc.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/

The following detail is provided in relation to deadlines for completing your AGAR, the Public Rights periods and submitting the information to us.

Finally, we have revised our initial documentation for the change in dates and uploaded updated versions for reference on our website which can be seen attached in the following links, we have also updated our [FAQs](#) on our website:

- [Notice of Public Rights \(AGAR Part 3 Authorities\)](#) and [Notice of Public Rights \(Exempt Authorities\)](#)
- [Step-by-Step Guide \(Other Authorities\)](#) and [Step-by-Step Guide \(Parish Meetings\)](#)
- [Flowchart \(Other Authorities\)](#) and [Flowchart \(Parish Meetings\)](#)

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- [Additional information required with submission](#)
- [Updated copy of our previous email](#)
- [Annual Return Addendum](#)

There are no further changes to the guidance other than in relation to the dates.

Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHLCG) has confirmed that a statutory instrument (SI) amending the Accounts and Audit Regulations has now been laid.

The new effects of the amendments to the regulations are to change the dates that local authorities are required to publish draft and final accounts, and to remove the 'common' period during which local electors can inspect and object to local authority accounts.

A copy of the SI, which comes into force on 30 April 2020, can be accessed at the following website: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/ukSI/2020/404>. The amended requirements are expected to apply to audits of 2019-20 accounts only.

The key changes for publication of draft and final accounts are as follows:

For Category 1 authorities:

- *The deadline for authorities to publish draft financial statements moves from 31 May to 31 August 2020.*
- *The deadline for publication of final (audited) financial statements moves from 31 July to 30 November 2020.*

For Category 2 authorities (smaller authorities):

- *The deadline for authorities to publish draft Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) moves from 31 May to 31 August 2020.*
- *The deadline for publication of final (audited) AGAR moves from 30 September to 30 November 2020.*

*For both Category 1 and Category 2 authorities, the requirement for a 'common' inspection period has been removed. The requirement to hold a 30-working-day inspection period remains, but for 2019-20 both Category 1 and Category 2 authorities can commence the inspection period at any time, **except it must commence no later than 1 September 2020**. This will allow authorities to produce their draft accounts and commence their inspection periods as soon as they are able.*

For AGAR Part 3 Authorities, once the accounts are formally approved by the Council, we would remind you that all documents are still required to be physically signed by the relevant parties even where the meeting is held 'virtually'.

As soon as this is achieved, you can send/scan the AGAR together with all of the supporting documents necessary and the dates intended for the Notice of Public Rights Period to us. There is no need to defer this until the Public Rights Period has either commenced or elapsed.

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We can then commence our review of the accounts and once the Public Rights Period ends, subject to our review being completed and no objection(s) having been made, we will be able to sign off the audit. This will assist our efforts to make the process run efficiently during these difficult times.

Finally, please note that for exempt authorities who have already submitted a certificate of exemption to us, we do not require this to be resubmitted or changed as a result of the revised deadlines.

Kind regards,

Carolyn Rossiter/ Rich Dixon

Audit Manager

Moore East Midlands, Rutland House, Minerva Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, PE2 6PZ

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www.moore.co.uk

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**Agenda Item 11a****Financial Matters****1. Cash Balances**

£

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT

Balance at 31 March 2020

10,326.13

March payments

(529.46)

April Receipts – Precept (1st Tranch)

14712.00

Balance at 30 April 2020**£24,508.67***CCLA INVESTMENT ACCOUNT*Balance at 31st March 2020**48,597.88**

Transactions in month of April – Not received as at 02/05/2020

Balance at 31st March 2020**48,597.88****TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 30 April 2020****£73,106.585**

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ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL			
BANK RECONCILIATIONS AT 31 March 2020			
	£	£	£
	Receipts	Payments	
<u>Unity Trust Current Account</u>			
Balance per Cash Book:			
Balance b/f at 1/4/19			52,018.27
Total receipts in year	32,148.58		
Total expenditure in year		73,840.72	
	32,148.58	73,840.72	-41,692.14
Closing balance per Cash Book			<u>10,326.13</u>
RECONCILIATION			
Balance per Bank Statement			10326.13
Reconciling Items			
NONE			
	0.00	0.00	0.00
Balance per Cash Book			<u>10,326.13</u>
<u>Santander Current Account</u>			
Balance per Cash Book:			
Balance b/f at 1/4/18			0.00
Total receipts in year	0.00		
Expenditure in year		0.00	
	0.00	0.00	0.00
Closing balance per Cash Book			<u>0.00</u>
RECONCILIATION			
Balance per Bank Statement			0.00
Reconciling Items - None			
Balance per Cash Book			<u>0.00</u>
<u>Santander Deposit Account</u>			
Balance per Bank Statement			537.46
Less: uncleared transactions			-537.70
Receipts - interest			0.24
Balance per Cash Book			<u>0.00</u>
<u>CCLA</u>			
Balance per Bank Statement (no new statement)			48,597.88
Less: uncleared transactions			
NONE			0.00
Balance per Cash Book			<u>48,597.88</u>
TOTAL CASH BALANCES			<u>58,924.01</u>
Prepared by:	E Anstee	Date:	31-Mar-20
Reviewed by:		Date:	