##

## Virtual Meeting Protocol for Non-Parish Council Meetings

**1 Introduction**

1.1 In line with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 introduced on 4th April 2020 which allow virtual meetings to take place, Westbury-sub-Mendip Parish Council now operates under these regulations during the coronavirus pandemic.

1.2 The Council utilises the Zoom platform for its virtual meetings.

1.3 The Clerk is paying for a Zoom subscription (to be refunded from the Council’s emergency planning fund).

1.4 At the meeting of the Parish Council on 6th May 2020, the Parish Council agreed that other interested parties within the community could utilise the Zoom facility in liaison with the Clerk, but strictly for community related matters only and only if the free Zoom facility would give insufficient time for discussions. This document outlines the protocols and procedures for said parties to do so.

**2 Permissions and Behaviour**

2.1 The intended host for the meeting should contact the Clerk in good time and at least 48 hours prior to any meeting to obtain permission and access information, which must be kept securely and not passed on to any other person or groups.

2.2 Permission to utilise the Zoom facility must be sought for every meeting a group holds. It is inappropriate and insufficient to assume the facility will be available on an ad hoc basis when meetings by the Clerk and other groups may be booked and/or in progress.

2.2 The Clerk and the Parish Council take no responsibility for the content of the meetings, which will be held and conducted entirely at the host’s own risk.

2.3 It is expected that normal standards of behaviour and discussion will be applied in the same manner as a face to face meeting, although allowances should be made where technical difficulties arise. This is to ensure that the reputation of the Parish Council is not brought into disrepute by any actions of non-Council meetings.

2.4 Time limits should be strictly adhered to. Hosts and attendees are encouraged to follow to any agenda and be concise in their discussions.

**3 The Meeting**

3.1 The designated meeting host will arrange and host the meeting.

3.2 For the benefit of others, attendees are requested to ensure appropriate levels of privacy without excessive background noise/interference.

3.3 For the benefit of others, attendees should mute their microphones if they are not speaking to avoid background interference while a colleague is speaking. If attendees wish to speak they should raise their hand and wait to be invited by the host.

3.4 The meeting will be chaired in the usual manner.

3.5 Where there is to be a vote, attendees should raise their hands until asked to put them down.

3.6 For any technical issues during the meeting, attendees can use the chat box to type a message to the host.

3.7 At the end of the meeting, the host must fully close and log out completely from Zoom. Remaining logged in causes technical problems for the Clerk and other hosts setting up other meetings. If this is not done, future use of the facility may be withdrawn.

Chris Harris, Clerk

Approved by the Parish Council 5th August 2020