



## Yatton Parish Council

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*OUR MISSION: To ensure the provision of high quality services in our communities of Yatton and Claverham*

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## Supplementary to the Yatton Parish Council Standing Orders

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 allow local councils to hold remote meetings. The regulations give automatic authority to hold remote meetings and amend standing orders as required.

These regulations remain in force until May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 or earlier if repealed and require a number of temporary changes to Standing Orders.

### **General**

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Yatton Parish Council's standing orders.

**The Regulations made under s78 of Coronavirus Act 2020 apply and where there is a conflict between these and any other adopted standing orders or legislation, these Remote Meetings Procedures take precedence in relation to any remote meeting.**

### **1) Annual Meeting**

The requirement to hold an Annual Meeting of the Council is to be disregarded and prior to May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 may only take place

- a) where called by the Chairman or
- b) following a resolution calling for an annual meeting being passed at a meeting of the Council.

### **2) Access to Information**

"Published on the website of the council" will also apply in relation to where:

- a) a document is required to be 'open to inspection'.
- b) a document is required to be published and made available at the council's offices.

- c) there is a requirement to publish information including public notices, agendas, minutes, background papers and written reports.

### **3) Remote Access to Meetings**

The definition of "meeting" within the Council's Standing Orders is amended so that:

- a) 'place' includes where a meeting is held, or to be held in more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.
- b) 'open to the public' includes access to the meeting by remote means including video conferencing, live webcasting and interactive streaming.
- c) where a meeting is accessible to the public through remote means, the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person.
- d) if the Council becomes aware that its technology has failed, and the meeting is no longer accessible to the public, the meeting shall be adjourned.
- e) if public access cannot be restored within a reasonable period, the remaining business shall be deferred to a future meeting.

### **4) Councillors in remote attendance**

A councillor is present and counted for the purposes of the quorum when they can:

- a) hear and where practicable see other members of the council.
- b) hear and where practicable see members of the public wishing to participate during the public session of the meeting or as invited by the Chairman.

A councillor be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance are not met. In these circumstances the Chairman may if appropriate:

- c) adjourn the meeting to permit conditions for remote attendance to be re-established.
- d) count the number of councillors in attendance for the purpose of the quorum.

### **5) Remote attendance by members of the public**

A member of the public is in attendance when they can:

- a) hear (and where practicable see) the members of the council at the meeting and also be heard (and where practicable be seen).
- b) hear (and where practicable see) the members of public attending the meeting and also be heard (and where practicable be seen), including those wishing to speak during the public session or as invited by the Chairman.

A member of the public in will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance at 5 a) are not met.

- c) Subject to 5 b) the Chairman may
- d) adjourn the meeting to permit conditions for remote attendance to be re-established.
- e) vary the order of the agenda or complete the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the member of the public in remote attendance.

## **6) Remote Voting**

Unless a recorded vote is demanded, the Chairman will take the vote by :

- a) clear visual confirmation at the meeting that there is agreement or
- b) a roll call and the number of votes for or against the motion or amendment or abstaining will be recorded.

## **7) Code of Conduct – councillors excluded from the meeting**

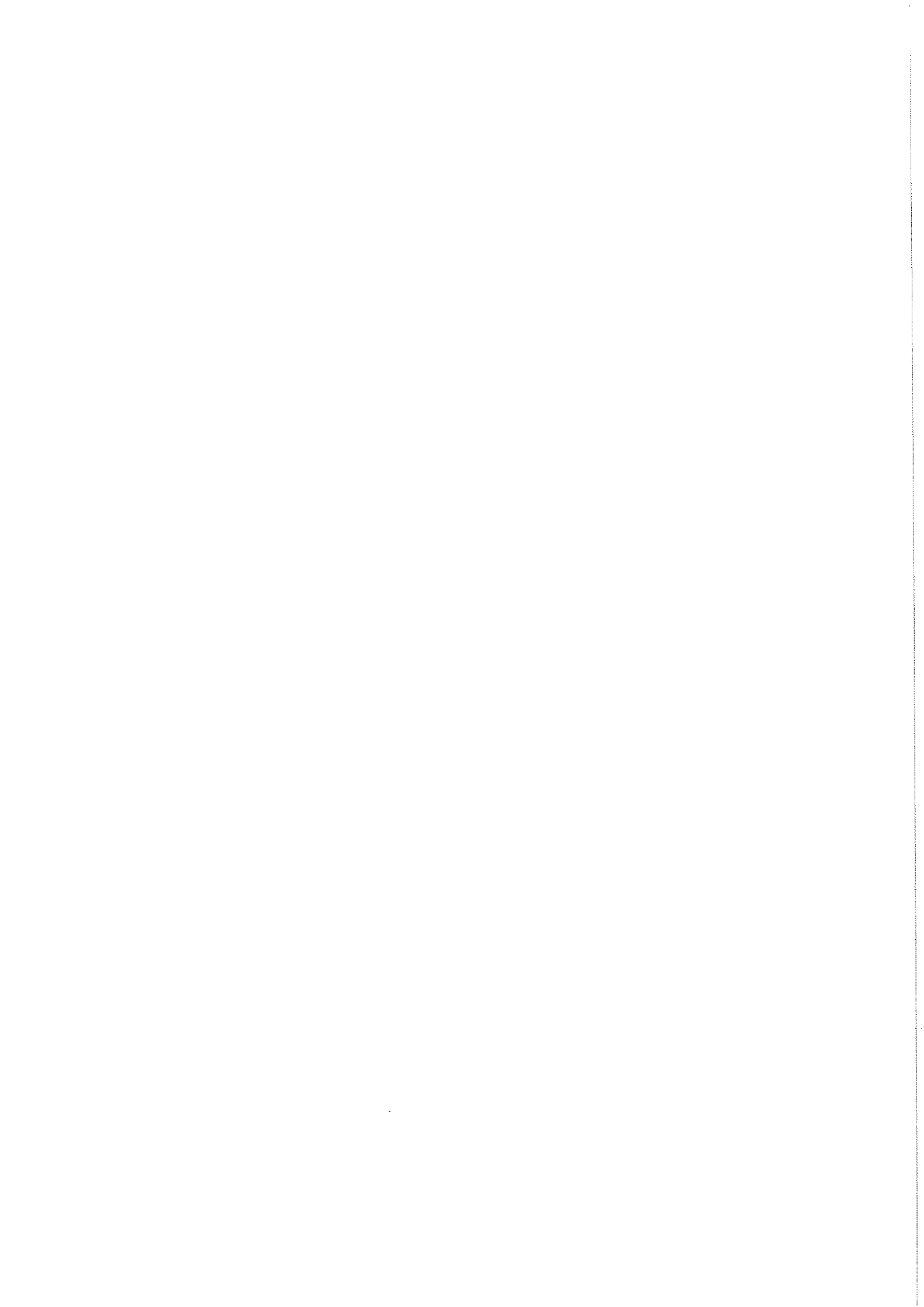
Where a councillor is required to leave the room as a requirement of the Council's code of conduct, the means of remote attendance and access will be severed whilst any discussion or vote take place.

## **8) Exclusion of the press and public**

Where the council has resolved to exclude the press and public from any part of the meeting, due to the confidentiality of the business to be discussed then:

- a) The means of remote attendance and access to the meeting by members of the press and public will be severed
- b) Each councillor present shall declare that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be (hearing or seeing), and/or recording the meeting.

Adopted by resolution – date.....  
Expires May 7<sup>th</sup> 2021





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## Yatton Parish Council Protocol for Remote Meetings May 2020

### 1.0. Introduction

1.1. On 4th April 2020, the Government introduced The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 which allows local councils to meet remotely. These regulations apply to meetings held before 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

In order to meet the regulations, the following conditions must be satisfied.

Members in remote attendance must be able:

- a. to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members in attendance,
- b. to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting, and
- c. to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

### 2.0. Technology

2.0. For the purposes of holding remote meetings, Yatton Parish Council will use Zoom to hold remote meetings.

2.1. Guidance on how to use the video-conferencing platform will be circulated to all members and officers and will be publicly available on the Council's website.

2.2. Members will advise the Clerk of any technical issues relating to access to these meetings.

### **3.0. Preparation for Meetings**

3.1. The meeting will be advertised on the Council's website and all members and officers due to attend will be issued with a notice and agenda by email or post. This will be within the usual timeframe for meeting notices.

3.2. All non-confidential meeting papers will be available on the Council's website.

3.3. Minutes will be taken in the usual way and displayed on the website. Minutes will be circulated after the meeting and signed at a future face-to-face meeting once restrictions have been lifted.

3.4. Where a member is unable to attend a meeting, apologies will be submitted and received in the usual way.

3.5. The meetings will be open to the public and ways of accessing the meeting will be explained on the agenda (or on the meeting notice).

3.6. The same standards of behavior are applied to remote meetings as to physical meetings. All members are bound by the Council's Code of Conduct.

Members, officers and members of the public are asked to be patient with those who are less experienced in such meetings.

3.7. Members and officers in attendance at the meeting are reminded to check the background of their video range in order to ensure confidentiality, data protection and Code of Conduct requirements are met.

3.8. It is possible that technical issues may arise. It may be necessary for the host to request clarification or ask for dialogue to be repeated to make sure everyone can be heard and that they have the correct information for the minutes.

3.9. Where a Councillor has an interest in a matter and would normally leave a physical meeting, they will exit the meeting. They will either wait in the virtual "waiting room" or leave completely and be advised by text message when they can return to the meeting.

### **4.0. The Meeting**

4.1. Councillors are asked to ensure they are in a place with as little background noise as possible. Once checks have been carried out to ensure that everyone in attendance can be heard, all those in attendance may be asked to "mute" their microphones until such a time as they are ready to speak. This eliminates background and feedback as well as ensures people are not talking over one another as there can sometimes be a time delay. Where this is not done, the host of the meeting may mute attendees.

4.2. The meeting will be chaired in the usual manner. Where members do not have access to a printer, it is possible that they will not be able to use the computer video function and look at the agenda and/or supporting papers at the same time. They may request a paper copy from the Clerk should this be the case.

4.3. It is possible that the meeting will be recorded (via the video conferencing platform itself). This is to aid the writing of minutes in a situation where the minute-taker is involved with technical aspects of the meeting as well as for openness and transparency.

4.4. If a vote is required, those attending by video will be asked to raise their hand until they have been advised that their vote has been recorded. Any members attending by telephone will be asked to express their vote vocally.

4.5. If you have difficulty hearing or being heard throughout the meeting, you are asked to advise the Chair verbally or via the text "chat" function. Please be aware that this can be seen by everyone in attendance.

## **5.0. Public Participation**

5.1. The agenda will invite the public to attend and will include information of how to access meetings.

5.2. The usual public participation session will take place. Members of the public are reminded that the Council cannot make any decisions on matters that do not appear on the agenda. If members of the public have questions about matters not on the agenda, they may be requested to contact the Council outside of the meeting.

5.4. The meeting host may remove anyone from the meeting who is being intentionally disruptive, using offensive language or incessantly interrupting the meeting proceedings.

## **6.0. Relation to other policies and procedures**

6.1. The Clerk will ensure that Data Protection requirements are followed when organising remote meetings.

6.2. Members of the Council and members of the public are asked to ensure that they do not breach the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and general confidentiality when they contribute to the meeting.

6.4. The Council's Risk Assessments will be amended to incorporate remote meetings.

6.5 Video Conferencing use is included within Yatton Parish Councils Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy May 2018.

