**BALTONSBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL**

**VIRTUAL MEETING PROTOCOL**

**DATE ADOPTED: 1ST October 2020**

**REVIEW DATE: Every 3 years**

**1.0 Introduction**

* + 1. On 4th April 2020 the government introduced The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 to allow local councils to meet remotely. This protocol sets out how Barton St David will continue to operate during the pandemic.

1.2 Baltonsborough Parish Council is operating on the Zoom platform.

1.3 The Parish Clerk has access to a Zoom subscription and has obtained permission to use this on the councils behalf, all councillors have been informed how to access the platform. Councillors have been asked to contact the Clerk if they have any technical issues in relation to access, whether that be hardware or the need for headphones.

**2.0 Planning and Preparation**

2.1 The meeting will be advertised in the normal manner and an agenda will be issued within the normal time frames.

2.2 Minutes will be taken from the meetings and displayed on the website in the normal manner. Minutes will be circulated after the meeting and signed when the council finally meets face to face.

2.3 Apologies need to be given in the normal manner.

2.4 The public are invited to observe the meeting. If they have a question to raise they have been asked to submit it in advance of the meeting.

2.5 The normal required standards of behaviour and discussion must be applied in the same manner of a face to face meeting. Please also be patient with those who are less experienced in this platform. Please also respect confidentiality and do not breach the code of conduct, and do not make enquiries about private matter, health, home etc.

2.6 If a councillor is deemed to have an interest in a matter and would normally leave a physical meeting, then they will be invited ‘ to wait in the virtual waiting room’, they can then be invited back into the meeting.

2.7 There might be technical issues during the meeting and the Parish Clerk might have to ask for clarification, for dialogue to be repeated in order to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard.

**3.0 Process to host meetings for Councillors**

3.1 The Clerk will host the meeting and set up the meeting perimeters. An email invitation will be sent to councillors from the Clerk. They need to click on the link and enter the meeting ID number.

3.2 Before entering the meeting please ensure that you are in a private place where there is little background interference/noise/people. It is difficult to hear on occasions and some might wish to use a headset with a microphone.

3.3 On entering the meeting, you will be placed in a waiting room, the Clerk allows access and you will join with their microphone muted. When the Clerk has seen you and can verify you, you will be unmuted.

3.4 A check will be done to establish that you can be heard. Please do not interrupt others. If you wish to speak during the meeting, please raise your hand for the attention of the Clerk. If anyone in attendance is on audio only, when you speak please state your name.

3.5 The meeting will still be chaired in the normal manner. The Clerk might have a greater input to guide the meeting to the next item, as some will not have access to an agenda for the duration of the meeting (if they do not have a printer).

3.6 If there is to be a vote, please raise your hand. The Clerk will verbally confirm the decision.

3.7 If you struggle with hearing during the meeting, please ask for clarification.

**4.0 Public Participation**

4.1 When the agenda is produced it will invite the public to contact the Clerk by email if they wish to be invited to the meeting. They will be sent an agenda and on the day of the meeting will be sent a link to the meeting, with the meeting ID number.

4.2 They will be asked to check this link works in advance of the meeting. On arrival at the meeting they will be held in a waiting room and let in against a list of names held by the Clerk. This is to avoid the entry of unknowns, as experienced in recent weeks at other public meeting where meetings have been disrupted with inappropriate displays of behaviour.

4.3 If the public wish to ask any specific questions they will need to have informed the Clerk of this 24 hours before the start of the meeting, by phone or email.

**Adopted on 1st October 2020**