



## PROTOCOL FOR REMOTE MEETINGS

This protocol was adopted by the Council at the Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The protocols defined within this document will be implemented in addition to and in accordance with Woore Parish Council's current adopted Standing Orders. These are supplementary designed specifically to support the Parish Council's requirement to hold meeting via a 'remote' format during the Coronavirus pandemic only. They do not replace existing Standing Orders. This document will be published on the website for clarity and information purposes.

### 1. Calling of Meetings, Agenda, and Participation

- i. The calling of a Remote Meeting, and the circulation of the agenda shall be at timings as defined in current Standing Orders and issued electronically to all Councillors.
- ii. The Chairman, in conjunction with the Clerk, shall confer to prepare a shortened Agenda. Motion proposals shall be proposed by Councillors in accordance with existing Standing Orders. The Meetings shall run for no longer than 90 minutes. This time allocation may be reviewed for future Meetings.
- iii. This shortened Agenda shall in normal circumstances omit issues relating to those duties for which the Clerk has designated responsibility during the pandemic (as outlined in the Coronavirus Protocol).
- iv. The Agenda will be displayed on the PC website and the public notice board (where possible) as usual.
- v. Details of how the public may access the remote meeting if they wish to participate will be displayed, together with the contact details of the Clerk. Each member of the public wishing to participate in the meeting shall specifically register with the Clerk giving their device id details and shall confirm in advance with the Clerk any matters they wish to raise at the meeting.

### 2. Access to Remote meetings

- i. The method the Clerk uses to create the Remote meeting, and provide access to the Councillors and the Public shall be as required by the specific system chosen, and may be changed from time to time by the Clerk with agreement from the Chairman. Details of how to access the meeting shall be circulated to Councillors. The Public will be given the details at the time of registering.

### 3. Opening the Meeting and Participation

- i. The format of the Meeting will follow current Standing Orders: The Chairman shall open the meeting and shall confirm Members present. Any members of the public joining the Meeting will be noted.
- ii. In the interests of minimizing disruption to the Meeting, Members of the public shall not be able to join the Remote Meeting once the Meeting has been declared open. Members of the public who have not registered prior to the Meeting will not be able to join the Meeting. A



waiting room system will be in operation to monitor those who have registered. This method should prohibit undesirable disruptions to the Meeting.

- iii. It is recommended that all participants use the 'mute' facility unless they are required to speak to reduce background noise interrupting the Meeting

#### **4. Public Participation**

- i. In accordance with current Standing Orders time will be allocated for a public session during the Remote Meeting. The duration shall not exceed 15 minutes. The Chairman will announce the subject previously registered for discussion by a Member of the Public and shall invite them to speak on that subject for a maximum of 3 minutes only.
- ii. As per current Standing Orders, matters raised will not open a debate. An answer to the query raised will be given immediately where possible, or it will be given at a later date in writing. Matters raised may be taken forward to a future Meeting as an Agenda item if deemed necessary. The Chairman will confirm the method by which an answer will be given.
- iii. If a Councillor wishes to contribute any information, he/she should raise a visible palm as an indication. The Chairman will then invite the Councillor to speak for no longer than 3 minutes.
- iv. The Chairman shall have the discretion to finish discussion on any subject that he judges will unduly dominate the time available for a meeting and the completion of the Agenda.
- v. The Chairman will announce the close of the Public Participation section of the meeting and shall remind the Public that they may not contribute to the discussions held in the remaining part of the meeting. If the format of the Meeting permits it, the members of the public will be 'muted' for the duration of the Meeting.

#### **5. Main body of the Meeting**

- i. In accordance with current Standing Orders, the Chairman shall announce each agenda item and shall then invite each Cllr to comment on the subject for a maximum of 3 minutes.
- ii. After each person wishing to comment has had a chance to speak, the Chairman may ask for further contributions and Councillors wishing to speak must visibly, or audibly, indicate to the Chairman that they wish to do so by displaying an open palm.
- iii. The Chairman will then invite an individual Cllr to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes.
- iv. The Chairman shall have the discretion to finish discussion on any subject that he judges will dominate the time available for a meeting and the completion of the Agenda.

#### **6. Voting Procedure for Remote Meetings**

- i. The procedure will follow current Standing Orders. The Chairman shall advise the meeting when a vote is needed and will confirm the Motion for being proposed.
- ii. Councillors proposing and seconding a motion for approval shall do so by raising an open palm. Those joining the Meeting by audible means only will be asked individually for their vote. The remaining Councillors will be asked then to raise an open palm to indicate agreement.



## 7. Authorisation of Payments

- i. As per usual practice the list of payments requiring authorisation will be listed in the Agenda, and the Chairman shall ask each Councillor in turn if any of the (total) payments listed should be queried and debated prior to settlement. If there is a query raised, the Chairman shall then invite each Councillor querying a payment to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes.
- ii. After each person has had a chance to speak, the Chairman may ask for further contributions and Councillors wishing to speak must visibly indicate to the Chairman that they wish to do so by displaying an open palm, those joining by audible means only will be asked if they wish to make comment.
- iii. If disagreement remains on whether a payment is to be made or not, then the Chairman shall call for a Vote as defined in Standing Orders.

## 8. Information or Clarification on any matters raised

- i. At any time, a Councillor may visibly indicate to the Chairman that they require information or clarification from the Chairman or the Clerk by visibly indicating they wish to do so by displaying two open palms. The Chairman will then take steps to allow this request at an appropriate time and deal with it before returning to the normal meeting procedure.

## 9. Disruption of a Meeting

- i. Members of the Public and Councillors shall not interrupt one another with exception of the Chairman who may interrupt as he sees fit in order to maintain time limits as set out above, or to maintain control of the Meeting.
- ii. The Clerk may interrupt the meeting at any time in the performance of their duties and hold up two open palms to denote that this is being actioned. All persons shall immediately cease discussion. Following an intervention by the Clerk, the Chairman will restart the discussion as they see fit.
- iii. At any time, the Chairman may stop the meeting and reconfirm the Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and provide guidance for participants.
- iv. At any time, the Chairman may instruct the Clerk to disconnect a person from the Remote Meeting if they fail to observe the Standing Orders of the meeting or who behave in a disruptive manner.

## 10. Closure of the Meeting

- i. When appropriate the Chairman shall declare the meeting closed and record the time.

Policy Reviewed: May 2021  
Policy Reviewed: May 2022  
Policy Reviewed: May 2023  
Policy Reviewed: May 2024  
Policy Reviewed: June 2025

By: Full Council  
By: Full Council  
By: Full Council  
By: Full Council  
By: Full Council

Minute Item: 21015  
Minute Item: 22013  
Minute Item: 23015  
Minute Item: 24012  
Minute Item: 24018