

C25-170 REMOTE MEETINGS

New legislation is expected to allow parish councils to hold remote and hybrid meetings. This gives councils more flexibility but requires some preparation to ensure meetings remain lawful, accessible, and effective

Remote meetings must follow the same principles as in-person meetings:

- Meetings must be **open to the public**
- Councillors must be able to **hear and be heard** (and ideally seen)
- A **quorum** must be maintained
- Voting must be **clear and recorded** (e.g. by roll call)

The council will need to:

- Update **Standing Orders**
- Adopt a **Remote Meetings Policy**
- Agree how:
 - Members indicate they wish to speak
 - Votes are taken
 - The public can participate

Councils may choose:

- **Fully remote** (all online)
- **Hybrid** (some in the room, some online)

Hybrid meetings offer flexibility but require more equipment and careful setup.

Rolls during meetings

- **Chair:** manages debate more actively than usual
- **Clerk:** runs the technology (admitting attendees, muting microphones, recording votes)

Benefits of remote meetings

- Easier attendance for councillors and the public
- Greater inclusion (mobility, work, caring responsibilities)
- Reduced travel and venue costs
- Ability to meet during emergencies or bad weather

Challenges to be aware of

- Internet or technical problems
- Managing discussion can be harder online
- Hybrid meetings can suffer from poor sound quality if not set up well

Good meeting practice

- Join 10–15 minutes early for a tech check
- Mute microphone when not speaking
- Speak clearly and wait to be invited by the Chair
- Keep meetings structured and orderly
- Always have a backup option (e.g. phone dial-in)

Suggested Kit List

For individual councillors (home use)

Keep it simple and consistent:

- Laptop or tablet (preferred over phone)
- Built-in or external webcam
- Headset or earbuds (reduces echo and improves clarity)
- Reliable broadband connection

For a small hybrid meeting setup (village hall or meeting room)

Essential

- Laptop (used by Clerk/host)
- External HD webcam (wide-angle)
- USB conference speakerphone (360° microphone and speaker)
- Large screen or TV (to display remote participants)

Matters for considerations

Do the council want to move to remote meetings?

If yes, should all meetings be held remotely?

Would the council consider a better location for meetings with better Wi-Fi connection for hybrid meetings?