

Hedon Town Council

J Macklin
Town Clerk
Town Hall, Hedon

16 April 2021

To: The Town Mayor and Members
of the Hedon Town Council

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are summoned to attend a Meeting of the **Hedon Town Council** to be held remotely via Zoom at the rising of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting on Thursday 22 April 2021 to transact the business specified below.



Yours faithfully
Town Clerk

1. Apologies for Absence
2. To extend Leave of Absence for Cllr Stockdale until the end of Coronavirus Restrictions
3. Declaration of Interests
 - 3.1 To record declarations of interest by any member of the council in respect of the agenda items listed below. Members declaring interests should identify the agenda item and type of interest being declared
 - 3.2 To note dispensations given to any member of the Council in respect of the agenda items listed below.
4. Update on the Minutes
5. Receiving the Minutes
 - To receive Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 25 March 2021
 - To receive Minutes of the Hedon Town Council Meeting held on 25 March 2021
 - To receive Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 8 April 2021
 - To receive Minutes of the Property Committee Meeting held on 8 April 2021
6. Confirmation of the Proceedings of Meetings
 - To confirm the proceedings of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 22 April 2021
7. To agree the way forward following the end of Coronavirus Regulations with regard to Council meetings whilst social distancing restrictions are in force

In normal circumstances, members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting. Whilst Hedon Town Council still supports the rights of people to do this, during the current crisis relating to COVID-19, for health and safety reasons, and to ensure physical social-isolation guidance can be followed, meetings will be held digitally via online video technology. Members of the public can attend via the link given below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86893315566?pwd=MXRWNFVoRFJMV2pWTC9ldWdoY3VBdz09>

FILE NOTE – TOWN COUNCIL MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 7)

THURSDAY 22 APRIL 2021

The aim of this file note is to try and set out the pros and cons of the various ways forward following the end of the Coronavirus Regulations in respect of holding Council meetings by remote access.

As it stands, at midnight on 6 May 2021 the Council will no longer be able to hold Council/Committee meetings by remote access. Working Groups can still be held this way in the future if the Council so wishes.

Using risk assessments used by other Councils as a guide to work out how many people the Council Chamber will hold – the answer is no more than 26. If you have a full complement of Councillors at a meeting plus the Town Clerk that leaves 13 spaces for members of the public.

As Councillors know it was rare for more than half a dozen members of the public to attend Council meetings before Covid; however there has regularly been 20 or so at the remote access meetings so going forward the number of attendees is an unknown quantity.

I have made some tentative enquiries about other venues as follows:

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|------------------------|--|
| St Augustine's Church: | Large space, unheated and will cost £45 per meeting. Can accommodate members of the public. Possible audio problems as it is a large echoey space but I am visiting the church on 22 April to look at the practicalities. |
| Methodist Church Hall: | Can only accommodate up to 30 people and would cost £40 per meeting. |
| Alexandra Hall: | Not available except for Friday evenings. Cost £14 per hour and all hirers are responsible for sanitising and cleaning premises after use |
| Haven Arms – Marquee: | Not sure of capacity but would be more than 30. According to ERNLLCA it would be acceptable legally so long as no alcohol is sold in the area used for the meeting. No indication of cost. I have not spoken to them directly so I don't know if they are prepared to allow the Council to use it until social distancing comes to an end as they may wish to use this area for bookings/outside space themselves. |

A remote disadvantage, but possible legal difficulty, raised by ERNLLCA was that if the Council decides to hold physical meetings and has to turn away a member of the public because of space restrictions; then that meeting lawfully cannot take place. I appreciate that it is an unlikely scenario but it must be taken into consideration when making the decision.

Some Councils are considering hybrid meetings either by:

- a) Having Councillors attend physically and having members of the public attending by remote access. I don't know how this would work practically as it would mean having a laptop strategically positioned so that they could hear the discussions but they wouldn't be able to see very well. Members of the public would still have the right to attend any Council meeting physically if they so wished.
- b) Having some Councillors attend physically (enough to be quorate) and having others attend by remote access along with members of the public as above. Main disadvantage of this is that members who attend by remote access would not be able to vote on the issues discussed.

I also refer to the e-mail from Matthew Buckley, Head of Legal and Democratic Services (attached) paragraph 4 which says that the Council could decide to delegate all matters to the Town Clerk and continue to hold remote access meetings as we do now. Recommendations on matters decided at the remote meetings would operate as recommendations to the Town Clerk who would carry out those recommendations under delegated authority.

Alan Barker of ERNLLCA is hopeful that a decision will be made to extend the regulations allowing remote access meetings to continue, but that decision won't be known until the end of April so the Council needs to decide on a way forward in case it doesn't happen.

JM/16.4.21

Subject: FW: Remote Meetings
From: "Nicola Crichton" <Nicola.Crichton@eastriding.gov.uk>
Sent: 26/03/2021 09:40:43
To:
Attachments: Letter to council leaders - remote meetings.pdf

Email sent at the request of Mathew Buckley, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Dear All

Further to previous communications on this issue please find attached a letter from the Minister. You can see from this that the Government do not intend to extend the provisions relating to remote meetings, at least not in the immediate future.

I know this will be a disappointment to many of you. There is still the possibility that the High Court will rule that remote meetings are lawful in any event but we need to wait and see.

As we have said before in the immediate future as we have suggested you could move your annual general meeting and your annual parish meeting back before the 7th May and so you can hold them remotely.

Following that you could delegate all matters to your clerk and continue to hold remote meetings as you do now. The recommendations on matters decided at the remote meeting would operate as recommendations to the clerk who would sign the decisions off.

Alternatively you could hold meetings with a bare quorum of members in attendance.

As I said this is extremely disappointing news but we have to deal with it.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kind regards

Mathew Buckley
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