



EDLESBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

EDLESBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

Appendix 16.04.2020

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

The regulations regarding specific topics that affect parish council operations have changed as a result of the coronavirus crisis. EPC's published Standing Orders will not be changed but are temporarily amended as shown below. The revised meeting methodology using video conferencing will apply to all working party and any sub-committee meetings.

Revised regulations for Parish Council operations

1. Meetings

1.1 Physical meetings with the public in attendance are not permitted under government legislation for social distancing and public gatherings. EPC will use Zoom as the software of choice during the current crisis until the temporary regulations are rescinded. The expectation is that all participants will have the means of accessing the meeting using video imaging and speech. (Note that Zoom has withdrawn the phone-in only option.)

1.2 Frequency. The video conference meetings will take place as usual on the third Thursday of the month except August.

1.3 Timing. All meetings will commence as usual at 7.30 pm.

1.4 Attendance Councillors will be expected to attend as usual and extended absences must be approved by council. County representatives will have the option to attend. The public, mainly parishioners, will also have the option to attend via videoconference.

1.5 Meeting Agenda. This will follow the normal structure. The Open Forum will be available for parishioners and others to raise questions or issues to the council. As before the council is not required to debate or give an immediate answer. At the close of the Open Forum the formal council meeting will proceed as usual. Parishioners may then listen but will not be allowed to speak unless invited to by the Chairman.

1.6 Meeting Etiquette. A document will be produced in advance of the meetings explaining the process of engagement for both councillors and other attendees. As usual Non-EPC members may leave the meeting at any time without permission but will be requested to

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announce their departure so that councillors know it was deliberate and not a technical fault.

1.7 Minutes. The draft minutes will be treated as normal and minutes will be posted on the EPC website as usual. A formal approved set of minutes will be signed electronically for the records.

1.8 Annual Parish Meeting. Legally there is a requirement to hold the meeting between 1st March and 1st June. For Edlesborough this normally takes place in April. The legal requirement to hold such a meeting has not been removed, however government regulations prohibit gatherings. This meeting is for parishioners and includes a presentation by EPC to parishioners on the performance of the council. It is also the opportunity for parishioners to determine the agenda. Under the current circumstances EPC will assess the future timing of this when full mobility and physical meetings are re-established.

1.9 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. Normally held in May. The regulation provides that the current chairman (and presumably all other appointees) can remain in post until such a public physical meeting can take place. However, EPC has the opportunity to carry out the normal practise of going through all appointments. It is up to EPC as a council. At a minimum EPC will expect to ask all current appointees and councillors if they wish to continue in their current role and then take the appropriate action, if required.

1.10 Meeting Notices. The requirement for, three clear working days' notice of a meeting has not been removed. The notices will be issued digitally and posted on the EPC website and Facebook page.

Parishioners may apply to the Clerk (Penny) for the instructions to be able to access the meeting. In order to safeguard the Clerk and follow guidance to limit trips from the home, meeting notices will not appear on the parish notice boards.

1.11 Access to documents. Where appropriate, as in normal meetings, documents will be displayed on screen during our meetings for all attendees to see on their screens. Again, documents will be placed on the EPC website where appropriate.

2 Other subjects

2.1 Urgent issues

As currently, EPC can make decisions via email in between meetings as required. EPC can still use the rule that if the Clerk gets more than 50% of councillors responding to approve any proposed action then the action can be taken. Any such issues and decisions will be added to

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the next meeting minutes as part of the ratification process. If councillor numbers should drop through illness (hopefully not) this arrangement will be revisited

2.2 Personal safety. Council will not ask the Clerk nor any councillor to take any physical action related to EPC operations outside of their home except in an extreme emergency.

2.3 Finance. The publication date for final, audited accounts has been moved from 30th September to 30 November. Draft accounts must be approved by 31 August or earlier if possible. EPC will agree a new schedule locally for this.

The period during which public rights of inspection may be exercised is now a period of 30 days commencing no later than Tuesday 1 September 2020. The rule that the period must include the first ten working days in July is disapplied. EPC employs the services of an external auditor to inspect our submission and create the required documents. This in turn means that sections 1 and 2 of the unaudited AGAR must be approved and published on a freely accessible website, along with a notice advertising public rights, no later than Monday 31 August 2020. EPC can of course approve and publish, and advertise public rights, at an earlier date.

There is no change to the procedure for approval and signature of sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, so there must still be a Full Council meeting (which can be held remotely) if the council has procedures in place for this and the regulations permitting this are still in force.

Signed for and on behalf of Edlesborough Parish Council	
Name	Alan Williams
Signature	
Position	Chairman
Date	16/04/2020
Minute record	EPC Minutes 16/4/2020

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