

DOWNTON
PARISH COUNCIL



Return to Face to Face Meetings Protocol

Adopted May 2021

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The legislation¹ permitting remote/virtual meetings of Downton Parish Council came to an end at midnight on 6th May 2021. All council meetings held on, or after 7th May, must therefore return to a face-to-face format.
- 1.2 This document details the format and processes required to enable meetings of the Council to take place in a face-to-face format, in order to enable the business of the Council to be transacted, whilst also ensuring strict adherence to Covid-19 guidance and keeping the risk of transmission of the virus to a minimum.
- 1.3 A Covid-19 risk assessment has been undertaken which has informed this protocol.

2.0 Venue

- 2.1 All meetings of the Council will take place in the Bonvalot Room at the Downton Memorial Centre, The Borough, Downton SP5 3NB.
- 2.2 The Downton Memorial Centre is designated as a Covid-19 Secure venue. As such, larger groups are permitted to meet subject to adherence to Covid-19 Secure guidelines which are detailed in this protocol.

3.0 Layout

- 3.1 The Bonvalot Room will be laid out in a U-shape, as usual. As it is not possible for councillor seats to be at 2 metres distance, Covid-19 Secure venues are permitted to enable seating at 1 metre, provided mitigating measures are in place. **All persons** (except those with an exemption) are required to wear a face covering in a community building; therefore, 1 meter spacing is acceptable in these circumstances.
- 3.2 The detailed layout may be adapted for the size of individual committees, but the principals above will remain the same.

4.0 Before the meeting

- 4.1 Upon entering the building, Councillors, officers and members of the public should use the automatic hand sanitising dispenser available in the foyer leading to the Bonvalot Room.

¹ The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations

- 4.2 Councillors, officers and members of the public are asked to be mindful of other people when either ascending or descending the stairs. Please wait for people already on the stairs to either ascend or descend so that no crossing occurs.
- 4.3 Councillors, officers and members of the public are asked to use the Downton Parish Council QR Code to register their attendance at the venue for NHS Track and Trace purposes. Those persons unable to use this facility should make their name and address known to the officer in attendance, who will keep the details on file for 21 days in line with Track and Trace guidelines, after which the details will be securely destroyed.
- 4.4 Councillors are asked to arrive in a staggered way to minimise congestion within the building. Each councillor will be asked to take their seat, which will be named, in a methodical order.
- 4.5 Members of the public wishing to attend will be admitted to the Bonvalot Room by the officer. If the meeting reaches attendance capacity, no further entry will be permitted. The meeting will be accessible remotely through Zoom, the link for which will be included on the Agenda for the meeting. Members of the public attending remotely will not be able to ask questions of the Council. However, they are able to submit written questions or statements in advance of the meeting to the Clerk provided they are received by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.
- 5.0 During the meeting**
- 5.1 All persons attending the meeting must remain seated (unless using toilet facilities or members of the public using the microphone) and must not move any of the furniture.
- 5.2 **Face coverings** must be always worn (except with an exemption).
- 5.3 Agenda and report documents should be accessed electronically to reduce the need to handle paper. Members **should not share** their documentation with others, to reduce risk of transmission of the virus.
- 5.4 Members of the public should use the static microphone in place near the public section of the meeting room when speaking to the Council.
- 5.5 The use of microphones by Councillors will be shared one microphone to every two councillors. The microphone will be placed on the table between 2 seats. Should microphones need to be handled, hand sanitiser should be used before and after handling.

6.0 After the meeting

- 6.1 Members of the public will be asked to leave first, maintaining social distancing requirements. Members of the public should immediately disperse once outside the building.
- 6.2 When members of the public have left the building, Councillors will be asked to leave and should immediately disperse once outside the building.
- 6.3 Members must take any meeting documentation home with them and leave nothing on site.
- 6.4 All attendees should sanitise their hands using the units available upon exit.

7.0 General Guidance

- 7.1 There will be no tea or coffee making facilities – any person wishing to have refreshments, should bring them for their sole use. All containers must be taken away at the end of the meeting.
- 7.2 Those attendees wishing to use toilet facilities will exit the Bonvalot Room to the foyer and return to their seat via the same route.
- 7.3 All persons must use the sanitising stations before re-entering the Bonvalot Room.
- 7.4 Attendees must not mingle or congregate – if a queue does form whilst awaiting entry to the Memorial Centre and Bonvalot Room, members must stand at 2 metres socially distanced whilst others enter the Centre or room.
- 7.5 All attendees should dress appropriately for the weather conditions of the evening – windows and doors will be open to ensure adequate ventilation of the room and building.