

Remote committee meetings – tips and etiquette

Before the meeting

- You will need a camera (optional), a microphone and speakers/earphones, or a headset with a microphone. Laptops will usually have a microphone, speakers and a camera built in. You can also install the Microsoft Teams app on your mobile phone to participate in calls via your phone.
- Please check your equipment before the meeting to ensure it is working.
- Using the camera function can help with engagement but uses more bandwidth – you may need to turn off the camera to improve sound quality if you have a slow connection.
- If using the camera, remember to turn on your PC camera and microphone and position your camera so that you can be seen properly and not silhouetted against a bright light. Striped clothing and large jewellery can interfere with the picture quality. Consider what could be seen in the background – you may wish to use the 'Blur my background' function.
- Mute other devices and close/mute any applications that might be a distraction (e.g. sounds from incoming texts and emails).

Starting the meeting

- Join the call at least 5 minutes before the scheduled meeting time to ensure connectivity and a prompt start.
- To join the meeting, select the Microsoft Teams meeting link. This is provided in the calendar invitation for the meeting and may also be sent by email. If you are not already using Teams, clicking the link will lead to a prompt to either download the Microsoft Teams app or access the meeting via your web browser. Then:
 - Connect your headset/earphones (if applicable)
 - Turn on the microphone and camera and position your camera so the image is clear.
 - Select 'Join Now' to join the meeting.
 - Click the three dots in the middle of the screen and 'Blur my background' if you want to blur the background.
 - The meeting will not start until the Chair has joined and the meeting is quorate (if necessary).
 - To see who else has joined the meeting, select the icon in the centre of the screen that looks like two people with the caption 'Show participants'.

During the meeting

- The role of the chair is critical to maintain order, to make sure everyone is involved and has a chance to speak -

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be patient as we 'get to grips' with this new meeting arrangement and the technology.

- It is advisable to mute your microphone when not speaking to avoid background noise which can be distracting, particularly in large meetings.
- It is advisable to allow regular breaks during longer meetings – virtual meetings tend to be more tiring for participants.
- Those speaking to papers should ensure that it is clear what agenda item and/or page is under discussion and to be succinct. Remember that members will be moving between Teams and Boardpacks so may need more time.
- Please speak a little more slowly and clearly than usual and keep your remarks concise and to the point.
- Please do not interrupt or speak over people. If you wish to 'come in' on discussion, please use the 'Chat' function (icon in the centre of the screen that looks like a text box, with the caption 'Show conversation') to indicate to the Chair that you'd like to speak. Bear in mind that everyone participating will be able to see any comments you write in the Meeting Chat.
- The chair will address someone by name if they wish to invite them to speak or respond.
- The chair will provide regular checks so that all members know where we are on the agenda and to check whether there are any other comments before moving to the next item.

Ending the meeting

- The chair will formally end the meeting and you should hang up – remember that until you do so, others may still be able to see and hear you.