

## Virtual meeting etiquette guide

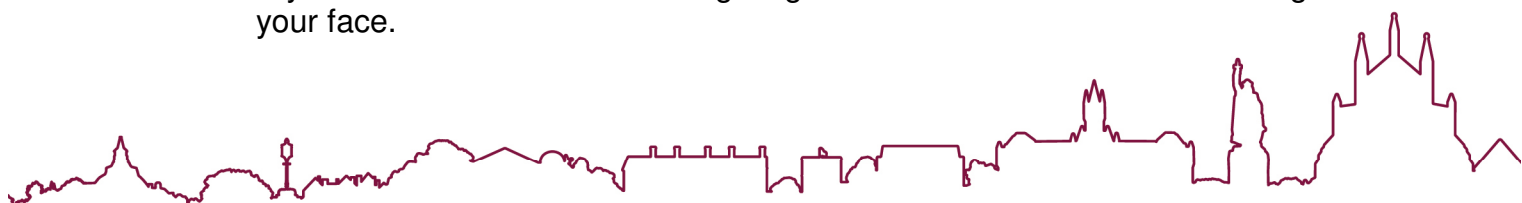


This meeting etiquette guide has been prepared for anyone attending a Winchester City Council virtual meeting on Microsoft Teams (MS Teams). Please take a few minutes to read it to help ensure our virtual meetings are successful, with positive contributions from everyone involved.

The Chair is responsible for managing the meeting, but it is everyone's responsibility to make the Chair's job as smooth as possible for the good of all. The Chair will aim to ensure that meeting times and agenda items are managed well so that everything can run to time. They also need to manage contributions, keep contributors from repeating themselves, and ensure a few individuals do not monopolise the time. This will ensure that equality and courtesy are maintained.

### Before the Meeting

- Ensure you have accessed and read any documents in readiness for the meeting. Agendas are published 5 working days in advance on the City Council's website.
- Members of the public need to register to speak 3 working days before the meeting and will then be sent an invitation to join the meeting on MS Teams. Invitations will only be sent to email addresses that contain no offensive language or profanity. You will only be admitted to the meeting if your display name in MS Teams is equally inoffensive (it should be your name) and matches the name given when registering to speak. This is not something that the City Council is in control of for members of the public.
- If you cannot attend the meeting please let Democratic Services know by replying to the MS Teams invitation or emailing [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk).
- If you have a smart speaker such as Amazon Echo (Alexa) or Google Home which could disrupt or record the meeting, please turn them off or move them out of that room.
- Please dress appropriately for a meeting that will be viewed by councillors, officers and members of the public. Have refreshments available but be considerate of what you are drinking and how that might be viewed or perceived in a public meeting.
- Minimise interruptions, for example from from pets, children, relatives, people shouting up the stairs, by:
  - closing the door;
  - muting your microphone when you are not addressing the meeting; and
  - switching off your camera when you are not addressing the meeting
- Maximise the quality of your audio and video by ensuring you:
  - Try to have windows and room lighting behind the camera and illuminating your face.

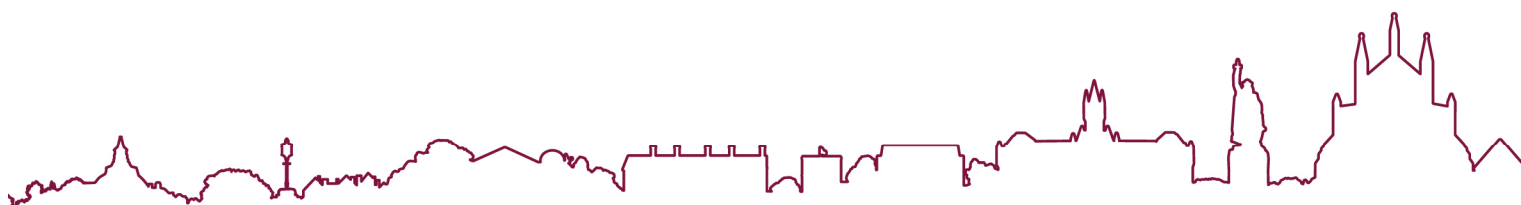


- Do not have a distracting background - make it as plain and inoffensive as possible. Ensure that you are not inadvertently displaying documents, including exempt or confidential papers or personal information or photographs you would not want others to openly be able to see.
- Look directly into the camera but don't get too close to it. Put your webcam, laptop or tablet on top on a stand if necessary so that you can look into the camera face on. It is preferable to not be looking up any nostrils!
- Speak slowly and clearly - there is no need to speak loudly.

### **At the virtual meeting**

Meetings are for the benefit of all and no one person has the right to dominate or be disruptive. People should be addressed courteously and should feel comfortable enough to make their contributions.

- Join the meeting promptly (and at least 15 minutes prior to the start time).
- Mute your microphone and turn off your camera when you are not addressing the meeting. Remember, if you do not turn off your camera you may still be visible to others in the virtual meeting even if you are not speaking.
- Before speaking, you should construct the points to be made and stick to them, speaking for as short a time as possible without repetition whilst using clear, acceptable non-defamatory language. It is advisable to make a quick note of bullet points to be made.
- When speaking please:
  - Firstly state your name so participants and listeners on the live audio broadcast are aware of who is speaking.
  - Only speak when indicated to do so by the Chairperson.
  - Speak slowly, clearly and be explicit and clear about the points you wish to raise.
  - Pause often to allow others the chance to ask questions or voice their opinion.
  - Do not speak while others are talking and avoid interrupting speakers.
- Avoid multitasking as this is often obvious to others in the meeting.
  - Mute your microphone particularly if typing on the chat function on MS Teams (sounds are amplified so all noises – however quiet you think they are – can be heard).
  - Mute your mobile phone and avoid reading text or other messages.
- If you need to make reference to a report on the agenda please state the page number, or slide reference.
- Virtual attendees cannot see body language, so speakers need to be mindful of how attitudes come across without visual cues. Facial expressions are also enhanced by the camera on your device and it is safest to assume at all times that you are being watched and act accordingly!



## **Exempt sessions**

- During exempt sessions members of the press or public will be asked to leave the meeting. If you do not leave when asked, the Chair has the ability to remove you from the meeting.
- Members in remote attendance must ensure, and verbally declare, that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be (either hearing or seeing) during consideration of exempt items.

## **Technical support and problem solving**

- In the event of any technical interruption or other failure of provision, the meeting Chair will endeavour to get the meeting back online within a few minutes.
- Please refer to the technical how-to guides on our website for help getting connected to an MS Teams meeting or Guidance on your home Wi-Fi.
- Please make sure you are familiar with using MS Teams. Microsoft have produced some tutorial videos [here](#) that you may find helpful.
- If you experience any issues with accessing / using Teams outside of the meeting day please contact us on [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk).

