

Virtual Meeting Policy for Governance

Last amended by: Hayley Upton 03.04.2020

Reviewed by: Doug Croucher, April 2020

Reviewed and ratified by Trustees: 22.04.2020

Next review date: April 2021

The Board of Trustees expects all Trustees to be present at all meetings. Where this is not possible, members of Board are able to participate and vote virtually at full Trustee meetings and committee meetings. Virtual participation includes, but is not limited to, telephone, Skype and video conference.

1. *The Memorandum and Articles of Association (126) stipulate the following;*

Any Trustee shall be able to participate in meetings of the Trustees by telephone or video conference provided that:

- a. he has given notice of his intention to do so detailing the telephone number on which he can be reached and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which he shall be taking part at the time of the meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting; and,*
- b. the Trustees have access to the appropriate equipment if after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for the person to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.*

2 Meeting Arrangements

2.1 These arrangements apply to meetings of the Full Board of Trustees and to committee meetings.

- a. Notice of virtual participation must be given to the Clerk by the Trustee who wishes to participate, no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting, and the reason for non-attendance in person. (exception to this is when the entire meeting is to be held virtually.)
- b. Virtual participation must only be requested through absolute necessity. It must not be utilised for convenience. Agendas should be short and precise and deal with urgent matters only.
- c. It is the responsibility of individual Trustees, wishing to participate virtually, to ensure they are able to do so through a secure method in an environment conducive to confidential and private communication. Anyone participating in a meeting using technology must declare that they are in an environment which is a secure and which protects confidentiality, with no one else present in the room to overhear.
- d. Virtual participation must be for the entire meeting and not just for specific agenda items or solely for voting purposes.
- e. It is the responsibility of those participating virtually to ensure they have a reliable connection.
- f. If the communication connection fails and reasonable attempts to reconnect are unsuccessful virtual participation will no longer be possible and the agenda will not be delayed. The Clerk will note the time that the connection was lost. If connection is lost, then that person will no longer count towards the quorum.
- g. Ensuring quorate meetings is the responsibility of the Clerk who will monitor this throughout any meeting involving virtual participation and advise the Board if a meeting becomes inquorate.
- h. If there is to be a vote, Trustees should have relevant documents seven days prior to the meeting.

- i. Trustees attending the meeting either by telephone or video conference will be entitled to vote on any issue providing they have been 'present' for the whole agenda item which the vote relates to. Where a secret ballot is required this will be facilitated where possible (e.g. by taking a telephone call off speaker phone and the Trustee sharing their vote verbally with the Clerk). Where this is not possible the Trustee will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
 - j. Where there is no visual connection all meeting participants will always start their comments by stating their name.
 - k. If using video conferencing, then Trustees should raise their hand if they wish to make a comment or ask a question.
 - l. Speakers and microphones should be muted if Trustees are not speaking.
- 2.2 Trustees attending the meeting virtually will contribute to the quorum for the meeting. If the technological link is lost, they will cease to contribute to the quorum, but this will not prevent the meeting continuing in their absence unless for decision making purposes and the quorum was not met; in this case, discussions could continue without decision making/voting taking place; it would be rescheduled on a future agenda.
- 2.3 If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a Trustee to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

3. Virtual Meetings

- 3.1 Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all Trustees to access the meeting.
- 3.2 Where a meeting is taking place virtually the usual statutory notice arrangements will apply and all papers to be considered will be circulated at least seven days in advance of the meeting, except where the Chair has exercised his/her right to waive the usual notice in an emergency situation.
- 3.3 Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as other meetings, by the Clerk, and these will be presented to the next meeting of the full Board of Trustees. Minutes can note that they were virtual.
- 3.4 Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any Trustee and only by the Clerk with the approval of the Board of Trustees and for a specified purpose.

4. Review of this Policy

- 4.1 The policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy applies to Members/Trustees/Local Advisory Boards. Please replace "Trustee" above with the relevant governance title.

Equality Impact Assessment – Initial Screening Record

1. What policy is being reviewed?

Virtual Meeting for Governance Policy

2. Upon whom will this impact?

Members/Trustees/Local Advisory Boards

3. How would the work impact upon groups; are they included and considered?

| The Equality Strands | Negative impact | Positive impact | No impact |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Minority ethnic groups | | | √ |
| Gender | | | √ |
| Disability | | | √ |
| Religion, faith or belief | | | √ |
| Sexual orientation | | | √ |
| Transgender | | | √ |
| Age <small>(N/A to pre-school and school children)</small> | | | √ |
| Rurality | | | √ |

4. Does data inform this work, research and/or consultation, and has it been broken down by the equality strands?

| | NO | YES | Uncertain |
|---------------------------|----|-----|-----------|
| Minority ethnic groups | √ | | |
| Gender | √ | | |
| Disability | √ | | |
| Religion, Faith or belief | √ | | |
| Sexual Orientation | √ | | |
| Transgender | √ | | |
| Age | √ | | |
| Rurality | √ | | |

Does the initial screening highlight potential issues that may be illegal? NO

Further comments:-

Do you consider that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required? NO

Initial screening carried out by Trustee Board 22.04.20

Comment by CEO: