

Keeping Sunart a great place to live, work and visit.

Procedures for Virtual Meetings of the Sunart Community Council

Zoom is the virtual meeting application preferred by Sunart Community Council (SCC) for hosting remote / virtual meetings. It has functionality for whiteboarding, screen sharing, recording, HD video and audio, and remote screen control features and members of the public do not need to have an account to join a Zoom meeting.

Users will find most functionality if using a laptop or desktop (e.g. if the Secretary or Chair shares a document on the screen), although tablets or phones enable participation.

1. Setting up the Meeting

- 1.1. Meetings will be set up by the Chair and Secretary of the meeting. They will send a meeting request to Councillors and invited guests via Zoom which can also appear in digital calendar if enabled.
- 1.2. The SCC will “host” the meeting which gives them more functionality than other participants, including the ability to exclude, mute and remove participants from meetings.

2. Role of the Chair and Meeting Host

- 2.1. Meeting online is different to meeting in person. There is the potential for inappropriate material to be shared online or for anonymous attendees to disrupt a meeting in a way not possible in a face-to-face meeting.
- 2.2. To maintain its duty of care towards volunteer community councillors and all other attendees, the Sunart Community Council will utilise the digital security measures available.
- 2.3. As the Sunart Community Council nor the Highland Council cannot guarantee that third parties may be recording the digital meeting by remote device, all participants are considered to have given their consent to the meeting being recorded and possibly shared on other digital platforms. If the Chair consider that the meeting should be recorded by the community council participants will be clearly notified within the meeting.
- 2.4. The role of the **Chair** is to chair the meeting in line with the Standing Orders of the Community Council as published by the Highland Council.
- 2.5. In addition, to ensure the smooth running of the Zoom meeting, the Community Council will appoint one of the community councillors to be the digital Zoom **Meeting Host (MH)**. (This may be filled by the secretary, Minutes Secretary or any other paid or unpaid assistant to the community council.)
- 2.6. The role of the Meeting Host will be to:
 - 2.6.1. to monitor the waiting room, and liaise with attendees to confirm their identity, and ensure that all those wishing to join the meeting have the correct on-screen name and where available, their video camera is enabled when joining the meeting but can be switched off once admitted.

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- 2.6.2. admit councillors and members of the public into the room, and to request permission to admit from the Chair, where non-listed attendees arrive in the Waiting Room.
- 2.6.3. to assist the Chair in monitoring attendees to make sure that anyone raising a hand to speak (digitally or physically) has the attention of the Chair.
- 2.6.4. to monitor the Chatbox (where enabled) and bring to the attention of the Chair any matters of note.
- 2.6.5. to assist with screen sharing if invited guests or community councillors require it. (Guests with slide presentations are encouraged to send this in advance to the Secretary for uploading and compatibility testing.)
- 2.6.6. to monitor attendees microphones and cameras and Mute/Switch Off in the event of background noise or inappropriate behaviour.
- 2.6.7. to remove attendees from the meeting if requested to do so by the Chair.
- 2.6.8. to record the meeting or any parts of the meeting if required to do so by the Chair.

3. Access to Agendas and Supporting Documents

- 3.1. The Secretary will publish the standing agenda on the Council's website in the usual manner, and the Meeting will be promoted on local noticeboards and Facebook as usual.
- 3.2. Agendas will not feature the link to the virtual meeting. Any member of the public who wishes to join the meeting should email the Secretary who will share papers and a link to the Zoom Meeting which will include a password or 'pin'.

4. Participants and Members of the Public

- 4.1. Invited guests (e.g. Police, Highland Councillors, presenters) will receive a link and password automatically.
- 4.2. Members of the Public / Media etc must email the Secretary with their intention to join the meeting, and will then be sent a link and password. By participating in the meeting, members of the public will confirm that they will comply with the Code of Conduct for Zoom Meetings.
- 4.3. Their name will be added to the List of attendees. This enables the Secretary to monitor the likely number of attendees, as any more than 20 (the maximum number of faces on the screen) will require the "Participants" function to be monitored separately to ensure those who wish to speak are brought to the attention of the Chair.
- 4.4. The "Waiting Room" function will be enabled for all Meetings, and the "Host" (normally the Secretary or allocated Zoom Meeting Host) will 'Admit' attendees to the meeting as matched with the Attendees List.
- 4.5. Members of the Public who have not previously registered their wish to join, but who enter the Waiting Room will be admitted at the discretion of the Zoom Host and/or the Community Councillors present.

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4.6. For the safety and security of all attendees, members of the public in the Waiting Room who cannot be identified by their on-screen name, will be asked to confirm their identity on admission to the meeting by the Host. On arrival the attendee will be asked to switch on their video and change their screen name to their own name. (Host can rename people if they are unable to do so.) Attendees who remain 'anonymous' will be asked to leave or be removed.

5. Joining the Meeting

5.1. Councillors are encouraged to join the meeting promptly at least three minutes before the scheduled start time in order to avoid disrupting the meeting.

5.2. Any other attendees are invited to use the link emailed to them which will say 'Join Zoom Meeting'. This will open the Zoom app on the device automatically or take the attendee to an online screen, both options work in the same way.

5.3. They will be admitted to a 'Waiting Room' prior to joining the meeting. Video function must be enabled where the users identity cannot be verified.

6. Starting the Meeting

6.1. At the start of the meeting, the Secretary will check that all required attendees are present by viewing the participant list. The Chair will ask all Councillors, members of the public, media and any other meeting attendants to turn off all microphones unless they are speaking. This prevents background noise, coughing etc which is disruptive during the meeting.

6.2. Video cameras should be on to enable all present to see who is speaking. Where an attendee does not have a video function the Meeting Host will ensure their on-screen name is properly displayed.

6.3. Councillors and attendees will need to turn their microphones on before speaking and to turn it back off after participating.

7. Public Participation

7.1. Participation by members of the public will continue in line with the Community Council's Standing Orders. This can include speaking, asking questions and/or making representations as invited by the Chair.

7.2. When a member of the public is addressing a meeting, the Chair will invite them to speak at the appropriate time. The Meeting Host will need to ensure their microphone is enabled so the meeting can hear them when they 'unmute'. If they have video capability on their device, then they should turn this on so the Council can see them. The member of public must be directed to switch off their microphone again after they have made their statement or asked any question(s).

7.3. The Chair and Meeting Host have the ability to mute or to remove a disruptive member of public if necessary and this will be made apparent in the Code of Conduct shared with attendees when sent the joining details.

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- 7.4. If a Participant leaves by mistake or due to signal failure, they must log back in using the original link and password and wait in the Waiting Room to be re-admitted by the Meeting Host. Sometimes if a broadband signal is weak Participants may appear to have left but Zoom may automatically bring them back into the room if the connection is still intact.
- 7.5. Occasionally a participant's screen may become pixelated or fellow attendees may complain about sound quality. It may help if the Participant turns their screen off for a few minutes until the signal stabilises. Turning the "Video Off" allows the participant to remain in the meeting and speak when asked, but they will have to raise their hand digitally to attract the attention of the Chair or Host.

8. The Meeting and Debate

- 8.1. For attendees who wish to speak in the debate, they should raise their hand to the camera or (particularly in the event of more than 20 attendees) click on the "Participants icon" or "Reactions" icon and then the "Raise Hand" facility at the bottom of the participants list and await to be asked to unmute and speak by the Chair. Once attendees have spoken, they must mute themselves again to prevent unnecessary background noise.

9. Meeting Etiquette Reminder

- 9.1. Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- 9.2. Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- 9.3. Raise your hand to the camera or digitally if you wish to speak
- 9.4. If you are not using video then please state your name and change it on your icon. If you do not know how to do this the Meeting Host will do it for you.
- 9.5. The only person to keep on their microphone throughout the meeting is the Chair.

10. Voting Within the Zoom facility,

- 10.1. Normally the Community Council agrees action by consensus without recourse to a vote.
- 10.2. Where this is required there is a straightforward mechanism to deal with voting. When the Chair asks the Council to vote, those Community Councillors entitled to vote on the motion, who are in favour of the proposal should use the "thumbs up" icon, those against should use the "thumbs down" icon. No response will represent an abstention.
- 10.3. If a Chair does not wish to use this mechanism, they may choose to ask each councillor to vote in turn. If this is the case, councillors should express their vote verbally and the Secretary will record the outcome of the vote and announce it to the meeting.

11. Confidential Items

- 11.1. In accordance with sections 1.1 and 9.1 of the Standing Orders, the community council may suspend Standing Orders and discuss items of business in private. (Procedures are defined in the 2019 Scheme Constitution Para 11 (h).
- 11.2. It is important to ensure that there are no members of the public at remote locations able to hear or see the proceedings during such meetings. Any councillor in remote

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attendance could be in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct who fails to disclose that there are other persons present who may be able to see and/or hear the meeting if they are not entitled to do that. It is good practice to turn off smart speakers such as Amazon Echo (Alexa), Google Home or smart music devices. These could inadvertently record phone or video conversations, which would not be appropriate during the consideration of confidential items.

12. Interpretation of Standing Orders

- 12.1. Where the Chair is required to interpret the Council's existing Standing Orders in light of the requirements of remote participation, they shall take advice from the Secretary or other community councillors prior to making a ruling. However, the Chair's decision shall be final.

13. Disturbance from Community Councillors or Members of the Public

- 13.1. If any participant repeatedly interrupts a meeting the Chair will warn them accordingly. If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chair will mute them and provide a warning that should the disruptive behaviour continue they will be removed as a participant from the meeting. If the behaviour continues the Chair will instruct the Meeting Host to remove the participant, who will not be able to re-join.

14. After the Meeting

- 14.1. Participants should leave the meeting by clicking on the red "Leave Meeting" button on their screen. They may do so at any time. If a participant leaves by mistake they must log back in using the original link and password and wait in the waiting room to be re-admitted by the Meeting Host.
- 14.2. The Chair or Meeting Host can also end the meeting for all participants by clicking the red "End Meeting for All" button.
- 14.3. Meeting minutes will be published on the Council's website and in the De tha Dol? in the usual manner.