

RUSHMERE ST. ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Council Policy on Protocols for Face to Face Council Meetings During COVID-19

From May 2021 face-to-face council meetings resume. This document aims to clarify the situation and sets down the protocol for those attending a meeting to adhere to in order to minimise their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

The following practices will apply for face-to-face meeting until such time that the risk of COVID-19 is declared over by the Government.

Please note that prior to the meeting, the room will have been set up by the Parish Halls staff/ Clerk/ Assistant Clerk. All equipment will have been sanitised for use. All staff are encouraged to regularly take lateral flow tests to help minimise the risk of spreading the disease to their colleagues. Similarly, Councillors and members of the public who are attending meetings in person are also encouraged to undertake a test before doing so. A rapid lateral flow test can be obtained easily in the following ways:

- By ordering a set of tests online at [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests). The tests usually arrive the next day and you receive seven in a pack.
- Going to your local library or one of 130 pharmacies in Suffolk that have tests available – more information is available at [Regular rapid COVID-19 testing in Suffolk if you don't have symptoms | Suffolk County Council](#)
- Going to a test centre; for further information including opening hours please go to the map of community testing centres on the Suffolk County Council website at [Regular rapid COVID-19 testing in Suffolk if you don't have symptoms | Suffolk County Council](#)

General

- Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself
- Managed arrival and exit times for staff, councillors and members of the public
- Placing seating at least 2-metres apart
- Ensuring all members of the public wears face masks and councillors/staff wears face masks when not seated at the meeting.
- Holding where possible paperless meetings
- If papers are provided, people will be discouraged from sharing with others and asked to take the papers with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle the papers
- Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly

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- Ensure the venue is well ventilated by opening windows and doors where possible
- Choosing a large enough venue to allow distancing – this may mean choosing a different venue to what the council used before.
- The council will obtain a copy of the venue owner's risk assessment and identify the venue's maximum capacity taking into account the need for social distancing.
- To ensure the capacity is not exceeded where more people wish to attend than capacity allows the meeting will, where possible, be live streamed and members of the public asked to submit questions via email beforehand.
- If the venue has an NHS QR code to support test and trace then all attendees should register using that app, for those without access to the app they should register attendance in line with the venue's test and trace procedure.
- Venues must conform with the government guidance for **multi-purpose community facilities** and for **council buildings**. The parish council will ask the venue to provide confirmation that they do conform to this guidance
- The council must understand and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest government **safer workplaces guidance**

Arriving at the meeting

- Participants in the meeting should seek to arrive in the meeting room 10-15 minutes before the start of the meeting, but not earlier. Please wait outside the building (in cars if arriving by car) if you are earlier.
- Please wear a facemask upon entry to the building and follow all instructions such as sanitising and following the any one-way system. These are clearly indicated on signs in the halls.
- Participants in the meeting will be expected to wait outside the meeting room, socially distanced (2 metres apart), and will be called forward by the Clerk/ Assistant Clerk.
- Please take hand sanitiser from the station, or use your own.
- Before entering the room, please scan the QR code poster on the door with the NHS Track and Trace App; if you are unable to do so please inform the Clerk/ Assistant Clerk that they can record your details on a manual Track and Trace system.
- Participants will then be asked to take a seat at a desk in turn – filling up the room from the furthest point from the entrance. Please do not wander around to obtain a seat near a specific person.
- Once you are seated at your table, you may remove your facemask.

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In the meeting

- To reduce handling, we will not be using dedicated name plates.
- The sharing of pens, papers etc should be avoided.
- Facemasks can be removed once you are seated - for noting, any members of the public in attendance must wear face masks throughout the meeting.
- Participants are discouraged from wandering about the room immediately before or during the meeting.
- In accordance with normal practice, if you wish to speak or vote please raise your hand. It is important you do so as clearly as possible to assist the Chairman of the meeting.
- You are welcome to use the facilities but please be aware of the signage on the doors restricting numbers.
- The meeting room should be well ventilated where possible – as such, any windows will be opened.

After the meeting

- Please put your mask back on before you leave your table.
- Please take all belongings and any rubbish with you.
- Please leave the meeting promptly in accordance with the instructions from the Clerk/ Assistant Clerk and do not congregate with other participants inside the venue.