

VOLUNTEER CORNWALL HYBRID MEETING POLICY

Introduction

With the need for social distancing and remote working due to Covid restrictions, the working environment evolved quickly to react to the pandemic, and with the easing of the restrictions in recent months, people are now more interested in looking at more efficient methods of working, which includes remote working, as well as office-based working.

This approach helps with the work/life balance of the individuals and helps reduce journeys and thus transport pollution.

It has been stated by other of organisations over recent months, these changes need to be implemented in a way, which helps the Board members, but also stays compliant with our policies and procedures, and those detailed by the Charities Commission.

As an organisation, Volunteer Cornwall has been adopting a hybrid approach to meetings, but without the guidance to ensure compliance with our policies and those suggested by the Charities Commission. This document has been created to ensure that all Board members are aware of the processes and what should happen throughout a hybrid meeting.

Going forward, all Volunteer Cornwall meetings will be run as hybrid meetings, unless specifically advised by the organiser of the meeting at inception. It is hoped that at Volunteer Cornwall our Board may periodically meet face to face, but this will be decided by the Chair prior to the arrangement of any meeting.

General

All meetings will be recorded through TEAMS and available to all who were invited to the meeting for them to view for fourteen days after the meeting.

A Quorum is four persons entitled to vote upon the business in hand. Volunteer Cornwall will accept a quorum based on the number of attendees regardless of whether they are in person, or via a TEAMS link.

If a remote attendee drops out of the meeting due to technical issues, to a point where a quorum is no longer present, the meeting will be suspended until a quorum re-joins, at which point the meeting will reconvene. If, after thirty minutes a quorum has not returned to the meeting, the meeting will be stopped and rescheduled for completion at a later date. The rescheduling will take place within one week of the original meeting.

All meetings will be held at either Acorn House, Truro, or remotely via a TEAMS link. The link will be forwarded to all requested attendees with the agenda and board papers, a minimum of seven days prior to the meeting date.

Prior to the meeting, all attendees are required to confirm to the organiser whether they will be attending the meeting, in person at Acorn House, or remotely through the TEAMS link or if they will be absent from the meeting.

Those who wish to attend the meeting remotely are asked to consider their location during the meeting and ensure that it is private so that free discussion cannot be overheard by unrelated parties.

Consideration is also needed around what is going on around you, movement in the background can be distracting for others attending the meeting.

Prior to the meeting

Attendees are asked to consider whether their internet connection is stable and reliable, prior to agreeing to attend the meeting remotely.

Remote attendees will be granted entry to the meeting by either the HR Manager or Accounts and Administration Manager, through the TEAMS system.

All meetings will start promptly at the designated start time, at which time the recording of the meeting will commence.

Etiquette for the Meeting

To ensure that all attendees can be heard, and the discussion can flow, the guidance issued below is in place.

All attendees are asked to remain on mute throughout the meeting, unless being asked to speak by the chair.

To be recognised by the chair, attendees are asked to use the "Raise Hand" option which is in the upper right area of the screen, this will create a symbol on the screen, which all can see, to show that the attendee has a point to make.

The chair will name the person to speak, at which time the attendee will take themselves off mute and make their point. Once the discussion has been finalised, the attendee needs to return themselves to mute, and cancel the "Raise Hand" symbol.

To ensure that all members of the meeting are included in all conversations throughout the meeting, the "Chat" feature will be disabled, any points to be raised need go through the Chair.

If, during the meeting, an attendee's internet link drops out, it is requested that the attendee return to the meeting as soon as possible, should the absence be ten minutes or longer, this will be added to the minutes.

In the event, the attendee is unable to return to the meeting, an email to the Accounts and Administration Manager, is required, to allow this to be placed on the minutes with an explanation as to why the attendee left the meeting early.

To allow the reader of the minutes, to understand who was in physical attendance, and who attended remotely, this will be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

Should any attendee disrupt the meeting with continuous interruptions, or with unrelated points, the Chair, in the first instance will remind the attendee of the agreed protocol for attending a meeting remotely and ask that they adhere to this policy. On any subsequent disruption, the Chair will inform the attendee that they will be removing the attendee from the meeting, and they will be electronically "ejected" from the meeting at this point.

In Summary

Undertaking hybrid meetings can be extremely challenging, especially for the Chair.

The guidance in this policy, should help to mitigate some of the potential problems before they arise, and lead to a meeting which everyone who wishes to be heard is, and debate is able to continue as freely as possible.



Ian Jones
Chief Executive

Issued
Review

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