**LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

**SUPPLEMENTARY STANDING ORDERS**

**Regulating the Proceedings of the Council in relation to Remote Meetings.**

**Purpose**

These Supplementary Standing Orders allow for Remote Meetings of Longford County Council and its Committees. These Standing Orders are prepared following the designation of the Local Authority in the Civil Law and Criminal Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 (Section 29) Local Authorities (Designation) Order 2020 (S.I. No. 445 of 2020).

These Supplementary Standing Orders were prepared in accordance with Circular Letter

LG 07/2020 dated 30th October 2020.

These Supplementary Standing Orders should be read in conjunction with the Council’s Standing Orders previously adopted on 9th September 2019 – updated in October 2020.

**Remote Meetings**

1. Given the designation of local authorities, the meetings of Longford County Council may now be held at -

* the Council Chamber
* an external venue used to accommodate meetings of the Council
* one or more Council buildings or rooms, linked remotely.
* an electronic, digital or virtual location, web address or a conference call telephone number
* a combination of the above to provide for physical and/or remote attendance by elected members.

**Management of Remote Meetings**

1. Members should notify their Meetings Administrator in advance if they intend to attend the meeting remotely.

1. Any member participating in a meeting remotely must, when they are speaking, be able to be heard (and seen, where practicable) by all other members in attendance, and the remote participant must, in turn, be able to hear (and see, where practicable) those other members participating.

4. The Cathaoirleach will at the outset, and at any reconvening of a meeting, call a roll call of participating members and ensure that they can hear and, where practicable, see those in attendance. Any member participating remotely should also confirm at the outset and at any reconvening of the meeting that they can hear and, where practicable, see the proceedings. Members should inform the meeting if they lose connection in accordance with provisions on connectivity within the agreed Standing Orders.

1. The attendance of those members at the meeting will be recorded by the Meetings Administrator.

1. The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council’s Standing Orders will also apply to a remote meeting. Members attending physically and remotely will together constitute a quorum.

1. Each member participating remotely has personal responsibility to ensure and confirm to the Meetings Administrator that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be either hearing or seeing consideration of such items, and/or recording the proceedings, in accordance with Standing Orders that apply.

1. Subject to compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the Meeting Administrator may facilitate the recording of the meeting for the purposes of taking minutes. However, this recording shall only be used for this purpose and will be deleted once the minutes are agreed.

**Meeting Procedures.**

1. The Meetings Administrator will coordinate the facilitation of the meeting. An appropriate official will assume responsibility for controlling the conferencing technology employed for remote access and attendance, and to administer the member interaction, engagement and connections on the instruction of the Cathaoirleach.
2. The Cathaoirleach, at the beginning of the meeting, will explain the protocol for members’ participation.
3. Members who wish to speak should use the notification process as directed by the Cathaoirleach, and then speak when invited.

1. The rules of debate as set out in existing Standing Orders will apply.

**Connectivity**

13. Members should allow sufficient time to establish a connection prior to the commencement of the start of the meeting to allow themselves and the Meetings Administrator the opportunity to test the connection.

14. In the event of any apparent failure of the video, telephone or conferencing connection, the Cathaoirleach should immediately determine if the meeting is still quorate. If there is no quorum, then the meeting shall adjourn for a short period specified by the Cathaoirleach, to allow the connection to be re-established.

1. Should a Member’s remote connection fail, the Cathaoirleach may call a short adjournment to determine whether the connection can quickly be re-established.
2. If the connection cannot be restored or an alternative method of communication established within the time specified by the Cathaoirleach, the meeting should continue, provided the meeting remains quorate.
3. If the connection is successfully re-established, then the remote member(s) will be deemed to have returned at the point of re-establishment.

**Protocol for Members Participation at Remote Meetings.**

18. Members should comply with Etiquette for Online Microsoft Teams Meetings –

 appendix 1.

1. Members should be careful to ensure that confidential papers are not seen in the video-feed.
2. Members must mute their microphones unless they are recognised by the Chair and invited to speak.
3. Members will only speak when invited to by the Cathaoirleach.
4. Only one person may speak at any one time.
5. Members will unmute their microphone and, where practicable, turn their cameras on (as practicable) when the Cathaoirleach invites them to speak. The meetings platform chat facility must not be used for private conversations between Councillors.
6. When referring to a specific report, page or slide, members should mention the report, page, or slide so that all members have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.
7. When satisfied that there has been sufficient debate, the Cathaoirleach will ask for a proposer and seconder for the item being discussed and progress to making a decision.

**Voting**

1. A vote taken remotely in accordance with the Standing Orders of the local authority constitutes a valid vote towards the decision of the Council.

 27.Where a member loses connectivity during a statutory vote, every effort will be made to

 re-establish a connection. If a connection cannot be restored within a reasonable

 timeframe, every effort should be made to allow the member to vote by an alternative

 means i.e. by phone contact with the Meetings Administrator, and the vote recorded

 accordingly.

**Leaving a Remote Meeting**

28. Members leaving the meeting should inform the Meetings Administrator

by the appropriate means i.e. through Chat on MS Teams that they are exiting the meeting to ensure there is a Quorum remaining and so that it is not presumed to be a loss in connectivity.

**Declaration of Interests**

1. Any Member participating in a remote meeting who declares a disclosable pecuniary or other beneficial interest, under Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001, in any item of business that would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the remote meeting, advising the Cathaoirleach and members at the time of departure and this shall be recorded in the minutes. Their departure will be confirmed by the Meetings Administrator, who will invite the relevant Member, by phone contact, to re-join the meeting at the appropriate time.

**Attendance of Public and Media at a Remote Meeting (Section 45(3) Local Government Act 2001 – 2014)**

1. Members of the public and media may be present at a remote meeting but must maintain silence and observe any directions given by the Chair or by any employee in attendance.

1. Members of the media and public should give prior notice of joining virtually in accordance with agreed local arrangements. To manage numbers and attendance, the meetings administrator may consider utilising electronic invitations compatible with the platform in use.

# MEETINGS IN COMMITTEE

1. In line with the provisions of Section 45 of the Local Government Act 2001, the Council may by resolution decide to meet in committee for the whole or part of the meeting concerned.

1. Should the Council elect to meet in Committee for some or all of the meeting the Meetings Administrator or designated person will ensure that there are no members of the public or media in remote attendance or remotely accessing the meeting or are able to hear or see the proceedings once the exclusion has been agreed by the meeting.

1. Where the Council has by resolution decided to meet in committee for the whole or part of the meeting concerned, each member participating remotely has personal responsibility to ensure and confirm to the Meetings Administrator that there are no other persons present and or recording the meeting who are not entitled to be present at the Committee Meeting.

**Any Member participating remotely will comply with the adopted Supplementary Standing Orders throughout the duration of the meeting.**

**Supplementary Standing Orders agreed and adopted by Members of Longford County under paragraph 16(1) of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2001 to come into effect on and from 11th November 2020**

**Appendix 1.**

**Etiquette for Online Microsoft Teams Meetings**

* Chair/Cathaoirleach to log on **15 minutes** prior to the meeting.
* Participants to log on **10 minutes** prior to the meeting start time to ensure that your system is working correctly.
* Participants should be located in a quiet area, where there will be no interruptions/distractions.
* Wear appropriate work/meeting clothing.
* All participants to switch their mobile phone to silent.
* Think about your background and lighting – for example, use a plain wall as background, avoid having a window in the background, lighting from the side is best.
* Blur your background, if appropriate, by selecting appropriate option on toolbar.
* Please do not leave the online meeting without informing the Cathaoirleach.
* Speak clearly, using normal level and tone.
* Use Chat to send a message indicating you wish to speak or raise a question on a matter.

**Microphone/Camera**

* Cathaoirleach/speakers will keep their camera/microphone on while speaking.
* When you are not speaking, please keep your microphone on mute - The microphones can be very sensitive and will pick up the sounds of pencil tapping and paper shuffling.
* Please keep your cameras off when not speaking.
* When your camera in on, frame the camera correctly so that you can be clearly seen.
* Position yourself directly in front of your camera/screen and look into the **camera**.
* Practice speaking to the camera and not the screen.

**Connection**

* Be as close as you can to the WIFI connection at your location.
* If there is a large number of people attending, it is possible that you may lose connection.  If your connection is interrupted, please try again by refreshing the page or clicking on the original meeting link.

**Remember** - Whatever you say or do can be heard and seen by someone.

**Appendix 2.**

**Attendance of Members of the Public at Online Meetings.**

1. Members of the public and media may be present at a remote meeting of Longford County Council.
2. Longford County Council will publish invitations to online meetings on the County Council’s Social Media channels and website.
3. Attendees must comply with Longford County Council Standing Orders and Supplementary Standing Orders to Regulate Remote Meetings.
4. Members of the media and public must give prior notice of a request to join an online meeting of Longford County Council.
5. Requests must be emailed to meetingsadministrator@longfordcoco.ie no later than

 12 noon on the day before the meeting.   A name and email address are required.

1. The link to the meeting is for the recipient only and cannot be forwarded on to any other person(s).
2. Attendees must observe any directions given by the Cathaoirleach or by an official of the Council.  Microphones of guests will be kept on mute at all times by the Meetings Administrator.
3. Recording of meetings is not permitted.
4. Cameras must be kept off at all times during the meeting.
5. Members of the public and the media do not have the right to speak.

 Any interruptions or endeavours to interrupt will result in the remote connection being terminated.