

Agenda Item 12 – Feb Meeting

Hybrid Meetings

I have researched the possibility of Hybrid Meetings (a mix of physical and remote attendance) in response to requests from Cllr Morris and Cllr Baker.

Cllr Baker missed the last meeting which occurred during storm Goretta because of water-sensitive tech on her wheelchair. Cllr Morris requested remote attendance whilst away.

Authorisation for remote meetings was withdrawn in 2021 (even though Covid was still rife!) and has not been re-instated. It is, however, in the pipeline and awaiting parliamentary approval. Until that happens, remote attendees will not be able to vote.

I have consulted Trevor Leggo of ESALC regarding potential arrangements, and he advised that remote attendees can contribute to the meeting at the discretion of the chair in the same way that a member of the public can be asked to give their opinion. Voting can only be by physical attendance until the law is changed.

As a remote access tool, I am more familiar with Zoom and find it easier to operate than its competitors. The free offering however, is (deliberately) clunky and restricted to 40-minute meetings. For the January meeting for instance, I would have had to renew the link 3 times.

A basic licence for Zoom costs £10.83 (current offer price £9.20) pcm for up to 30-hour meetings for up to 100 participants (well in excess of our needs) with unlimited document screen sharing.

There is no free trial period for the subscription model as they offer a free (but very limited) alternative.

Proposals:

1. Consider remote access to meetings (without voting rights)
2. Consider purchase of a Zoom licence

Phil Burgess

Clerk to East Dean and Friston