



Kenilworth Town Council

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VIRTUAL MEETING POLICY

Date of Approval – 7 September 2023

Date of Review – September 2026

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance for staff and Town Councillors in their use of virtual meeting platform technology and to provide relevant privacy information.

Who does it apply to?

The principles of the Policy apply to Town Councillors and all Council Staff.
It is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the Town Council.
The policy sits alongside relevant existing policies which need to be taken into consideration.

Preferred Platform

The Town Council's preferred platform for holding virtual meetings is via Microsoft Teams, however, the general principles of this policy and privacy statement can apply to all virtual meeting platforms.

The Policy

- (i) Virtual Meetings can be held by authorised Committees, Working Groups or Task and Finish Groups.
- (ii) The Town Council hold six licenses for Microsoft Teams provided via IT Services, Colbek. Three licenses are held by office staff and three are held by nominated Town Councillors, chosen for their availability and association with relevant Committees and Working Groups who may make use of a virtual platform. The nominated Councillors are:

Cllr Neil Eaton

- (iii) Any license holder can host a virtual meeting. License usernames and passwords are not to be shared with another individual. The license holder must create the meeting, invite all attendees and be an initial host. If the license holder wishes to transfer hosting duties during the meeting they are permitted to do so. This should be to either a member of Council staff, if present, or a Town Councillor.
- (iv) If a Town Councillor wishes to host a meeting and they do not hold a license, they will need to liaise with a Town Councillor who does hold a license to arrange this. Office staff are available during office hours to assist with the hosting of a virtual meeting where needed.

Guidelines and Best Practices

(i) Scheduling and Inviting Participants

- Meeting organisers should provide sufficient notice when scheduling virtual meetings, allowing participants ample time to prepare and arrange their schedules.
- Include only relevant participants in meeting invitations to avoid unnecessary interruptions and distractions.
- Clearly state the purpose, agenda, and expected outcomes of the meeting in the invitation.

(ii) Security & Privacy

- Protect meeting links and access details by only sharing them with authorized participants.
- Enable meeting lobby or waiting room feature to control who can join the meeting.
- Avoid sharing sensitive or confidential information during virtual meetings unless participants are properly authenticated and authorized.

(iii) Meeting Conduct

- Start and end meetings on time to respect participants' schedules.
- Encourage participants to introduce themselves at the beginning of meetings to facilitate discussion and collaboration.
- Maintain a professional and respectful environment by adhering to company code of conduct and etiquette guidelines.

(iv) Meeting Recording and Sharing (Also see Privacy notice in next section)

- Obtain consent from all participants before recording a meeting.
- Clearly communicate the purpose and specific use of the recorded meeting to all participants.
- Store and share meeting recordings in a secure and authorised manner, adhering to the Town Council's data protection policies.

(v) Technical Considerations

- Conduct audio and video tests before the meeting to ensure a smooth experience.
- Use a stable internet connection to minimize disruptions during the meeting.
- Encourage participants to join the meeting from a quiet and well-lit area to enhance communication.

Privacy notice regarding Personal data when recording Microsoft Team's meetings.

Personal information recorded or transcribed during a Microsoft Teams meeting relates either to directly consenting participants in recorded meetings or to data where the council has an established legal basis for processing or explicit consent has been recorded for the processing.

The categories of personal information held in relation to recordings and transcriptions are for the most part personal information relating to participant identity, possibly including contact information, and their personal contributions to required processes.

The recording could contain:

- Video stream (including images of participants), if participants choose to enable the video device during the meeting. Anything or anyone else that may be in the background could be recorded; this could mean the participant may have their picture or video image on screen or might include whatever there is in the background if they are working from home. Participants can choose to put up a background in Microsoft Teams meetings to stop any additional pictures of their home being recorded.
- The participant audio stream, if they choose to enable their audio device during the meeting; this could include any opinions they contribute and anything they say about themselves.
- chat within the meeting could also be captured in the meeting recording.

Therefore, anyone attending the recorded meeting may have aspects of their personal information recorded if they actively participate or not.

Collecting Personal data

Where Microsoft Team's meeting are recorded and/or transcribed, this will be to provide a record of discussions and agreements held within the meeting. For example:

- to establish participant identities and further contact details if required.
- to have a record and potential transcript where agreed.
- to record meetings where requested by the meeting chair to support ongoing dissemination and to create records of discussions, decisions and progress, where agreed

Using Personal data

If a recording is going to take place, participants will be informed both in the invitation and on the day of recording the session (normally verbally), prior to any recording taking place. Participants will be told of the purpose of the recording and what other purposes it will be used for. If the meeting is not being recorded or transcribed, then the Chair will make that clear in the invite or joining instructions.

Sharing personal data

Personal information will only be shared with the prior agreement of meeting participants, usually at the meeting being recorded. Recordings and/or transcriptions may also be viewed by meeting invitees who were unable to attend where appropriate.

Sharing data under Data Protection legislation

The council may be required or permitted, under data protection legislation, to disclose personal data without participants explicit consent, for example if we have a legal obligation to do so, such as for:

- law enforcement
- fraud or tax investigations
- regulation and licensing
- criminal prosecutions
- court proceedings

This includes exchanging information with other government departments for legal reasons. We won't share personal information with any other organisations for marketing, market research or commercial purposes.

Retaining personal data

Meeting recordings and/or transcriptions will typically be deleted within 1 year, by the Chair, if there is no further need to retain them. However, if they are retained as evidence of an action or decision, they should be moved onto the Town Council secure network, in an appropriate folder.

Recordings and transcriptions stored on the council's secure network will be appropriately and securely deleted when no longer required.

Guidance to using Microsoft Teams

This policy does not provide guidance on how to open and manage a meeting using Microsoft Teams. If Councillors need any support, a Quick User Guide authored by Microsoft is available on request at kentc@kenilworth.org