

Briefing Note: Remote and Hybrid Meetings – Update for Discussion

- **Government Announcement:** The government has confirmed plans to amend legislation to allow parish and town councils to hold *remote and hybrid meetings* once again. This follows the national consultation (5,844 responses, including 3,327 parish and town councils) which showed overwhelming support.
- **Background:**
 - Temporary COVID-19 regulations permitting remote meetings expired in May 2021.
 - Since then, councils have been required to meet in person, with limited flexibility.
 - NALC and local councils have campaigned strongly for a permanent change to modernise local democracy.
- **Benefits of Remote/Hybrid Options:**
 - Increased accessibility and inclusivity (e.g. for those with work, caring responsibilities, health or mobility issues).
 - Potential to attract a wider and more diverse pool of councillors.
 - Flexibility in responding to emergencies or bad weather.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Legislation is still to be amended, but councils are encouraged to consider how they might adopt remote/hybrid meetings once permitted.
 - Standing Orders will need to be updated to reflect the change.
 - Councils may also wish to prepare a short “Remote Meetings Policy” covering practical arrangements (e.g. platform, etiquette, public access).

For Discussion at the Meeting:

- How might Granborough Parish Council use remote or hybrid meetings?
- Should we prepare draft wording for Standing Orders in advance?
- Are there concerns around participation, voting, or technology that councillors wish to raise?