

Remote Virtual Meeting Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Board of Trustees of The Two Counties Trust, a Multi Academy Trust, takes its responsibilities seriously and has formulated this procedure in order to develop and maintain the very highest standards of management and governance in regard to virtual meetings across the Trust.
- 1.2 This policy applies to:
- Trust Board meetings, Annual General Meeting and any committee meeting, inclusive of Local Governing Body meetings.
- 1.3 Article 126 of The Two Counties Trust Articles of Associations state that:
Any Trustee shall be able to participate in meetings of the Trustees by telephone or video conference provided that:
- a.** he has given notice of his intention to do so detailing the telephone number on which he can be reached and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which he shall be taking part at the time of the meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting; and
- b.** the Trustees have access to the appropriate equipment if after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for the person to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.
- This also applies to any committee of the Trust Board, i.e. Finance Committee, LGB.
- 1.4 The expectation is that virtual meetings are used for emergency or to follow any rules and regulations enforced, i.e. social distancing due to Coronavirus.
- 1.5 Participants attending the meeting virtually count towards the quorum whilst they are connected and will be entitled to vote on any issue providing, they have been 'present' for the whole agenda item to which the vote relates.
- 1.6 Should there be a requirement for a vote by secret ballot, this will be facilitated where possible (e.g. by taking a telephone call off speaker phone and the individual sharing their vote verbally with the clerk, individual emailing the clerk). Where this is not possible the individual will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
- 1.7 Participants attending the meeting virtually will abide by the normal rules, procedures, and code of conduct, the duty to maintain confidentiality. They will call in from a quiet location where their conversation cannot be overheard, giving their full attention to the meeting.
- 1.8 If there is no video contact, all attendees (virtual and presenting person) will start their comments by stating their name. This will also aide the clerk in taking the minutes.
- 1.9 If the connection to a virtual attendee is lost and cannot be regained within a reasonable time, that person will cease to count towards the quorum. This will not prevent the meeting continuing in their absence unless it has become inquorate.

2. Additional points

- 2.1 Where the whole meeting is conducted virtually, every effort will be made to enable everyone to access the meeting, e.g. by choosing a video conferencing platform all can use, providing clear instructions on how to join the meeting, offering a practice session to those unfamiliar with the platform. It is best practice to join the meeting 10 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to start.

- 2.2 The usual statutory notice arrangements will apply, except where the Chair has exercised their right to waive the usual notice in an emergency situation.
- 2.3 All participants will note and follow any instructions and ground rules on how to manage their input in the meeting, e.g. confirming attendance, indicating their wish to speak, voting, declaring any interests in agenda items, muting their microphone when not talking, if required to do so.
- 2.4 If a participant declares an interest in an agenda item, the Chair may decide to leave the item until the end of the meeting at which point the participant with the interest would leave the meeting and the remainder of the participants would continue.
- 2.5 If a guest speaker has been asked to attend the meeting, they will only be present for the initial first part of the meeting and only their item and will leave the meeting once their agenda item has concluded to allow the meeting to continue and confidentiality to remain.
- 2.6 From time to time, internet access can be patchy, if participants are unable to access the meeting, or if they find that the quality of the meeting is poor, it may help to turn off their camera and switch to audio only.
- 2.7 Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as other meetings, either by the clerk being present virtually, or with the approval of the Trust Board/Committee, by an attendee (other than the CEO). It can be more challenging to minute a virtual meeting and the clerk may ask permission to record the meeting, you will be notified of this before recording takes place.
- 2.8 The minutes will record the fact that the meeting was held via telephone or video conferencing.
- 2.9 Following the meeting, the clerk will provide the agreed minutes of the previous meeting for the Chair to sign. This may be in person, by post or via email, or due to social distancing and restrictions linked to Coronavirus the minutes will be signed electronically.

Document management

Review cycle:	
Next review due:	
Policy owner	Sam Hollingsworth
Approving body:	The Board of Trustees
Equality Analysis completed:	