

Information from central Government that may be relevant for parish councils

Regulations on public meetings

The Government has [published regulations allowing local authorities to hold public meetings remotely by video or telephone](#) were published. The regulations came into force on 4 April.

The change applies to all local authorities in England, including parish councils, and covers all different categories of public meetings including annual meetings, cabinet and committee meetings.

There is a requirement that meetings are made accessible to the public, but it will be up to each local authority to decide how they conduct meetings, how voting procedures work and how to ensure that the public has access.

Existing rules about the number of councillors or members of a group required to attend to make a meeting valid will remain, but virtual attendance will count.

The regulations are time limited and apply in relation to meetings taking place before 7 May 2021. The government is able to legislate to bring forward this date if social distancing rules are relaxed or removed on the basis of medical and scientific advice.

The government is also working to bring in new law so that by-elections, local polls and referendums cannot be held before 6 May 2021. The Coronavirus Act 2020 has already postponed local and Police and Crime Commissioner elections scheduled in the UK for Thursday 07 May 2020 until 06 May 2021.

VE day 75th anniversary celebrations

The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations are working on revised plans to ensure the nation can still thank the Second World War generation on the 75th anniversary of VE Day on 8th May in a manner consistent with the measures to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Given the circumstances, digital options are likely to provide the safest means to provide this fitting tribute. Colleagues from DCMS are leading the coordination of the Government's

programme, and an announcement will be made in due course. In the meantime, where your Local Authority has the capacity to do so, please do think about how communities can join in online to learn about VE Day and honour those who made so many sacrifices for our nation.

These are extraordinary circumstances for all those wishing to organise fitting commemorations for the Second World War generation. All Local Authorities, event organisers and individuals need to follow the latest Government guidelines on mass gatherings and social distancing which are based on the expert medical and scientific advice from Public Health England.

[Updates will continue to be posted on the gov.uk website.](#)