**Lytchett Matravers Parish Council**

**Response to Covid-19 crisis, 2020 : councils held using remote attendance in line with the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020[[1]](#endnote-1)**

1. **Background**

Following research by Cllrs Barker and Bush and suggestions from Dorset Council and DAPTC the Zoom online conferencing package was investigated and an account set up for the Zoom pro option (the basic free of charge package is limited to 40 minutes per meeting only).

1. **Details of Zoom offering**

**2.1 location** https://zoom.us

**2.2 Description** This is a video conferencing platform, which can be used for meetings. Collaborations and participants can also use the chat option. It also supports audio conferencing, allowing people to join by telephone as well.

**2.3 Pricing:** see <https://zoom.us/pricing>. Zoom pro is £199.90 + VAT for 12 months licence.

**2.4 Advantages:**

1. Participants can share screens with each other (e.g. share a PowerPoint presentation).
2. Meetings can be made securely. This includes having passwords and meeting IDs for participants to join meetings.
3. Meeting invitations can be added to Outlook Calendar, Google Calendar or Yahoo Calendar.
4. You can save the chat conversations.
5. Meetings can also be recorded for future reference.

**2.5 Disadvantages:**

1. The level of support you can receive from Zoom is dependent on the Zoom package being used.
2. The free Zoom package limits group meetings to 40 minutes.
3. There have been some media reports of hacking.

**Conclusion**

Since disadvantages 2.5 i and ii above can be eliminated by purchasing the Zoom Pro option. Concerning disadvantage 2.5 iii the level of actual incidents and the types of event / meetings most likely to attract such activity is as yet unknown. In addition, since Parish & Town council meetings are intended to be completely open to the public this is unlikely to present the degree of risk it might do to an organisation using this medium for private or commercial meetings. In addition, item 2.4ii (the password facility) mitigates this risk to some extent.

Consequently it was decided to trial this at the meeting scheduled on 25th March 2020.

T Watton, Parish Clerk

1. Cornonavirus Act 2020 s78 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)