

COUNCIL – 24 FEBRUARY 2022

NOTICES OF MOTION

Submitted to Council in Accordance with the Council Procedural Rules

1 Car Free Days and Parklets

Proposed by Councillor S Akers Smith and Seconded by Councillor D Murphy

“The Council’s Corporate Plan Green Priority of a thriving and sustainable place supports economic growth in the high street and encourages more people to use their cars less and walk and cycle more especially for short journeys into and out of the town or village centre. Car Free Days and Parklets are a way of achieving this ambition as set out in the attached document (see links below).

Council therefore requests that a communications plan be developed, explaining how residents and communities across the towns and villages are able to host a car free day and to introduce parklets within the high street for businesses before World Car Free Day on the 22nd September 2022. “

<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/about-us/our-work-in-action/world-car-free-day>

[*Planting parklets is the next big thing \(transportxtra.com\)*](#)

2 Local Authority Remote/Hybrid Meetings

Proposed by Councillor S Corcoran and Seconded by Councillor C Browne

“This Council supports the petition launched by ADSO and LLG on 5 January with regard to remote and hybrid meetings. We agree to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities calling on the Government to change the law to allow councils the flexibility to hold such meetings when they deem appropriate within agreed rules and procedures.”

Wording of Petition

Currently, local councils in England cannot hold their meetings remotely. This was temporarily relaxed during the covid lockdown in 2020/21 but that ended in April 2021 when the temporary statutory regulations expired. The Government has argued that a permanent provision would require a change to primary legislation and there is not sufficient Parliamentary time to enable this to happen. The Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) made an application to the High Court (supported by the Government, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)) that existing legislation allowed for that permanent provision. The High Court disagreed, saying that it was for Parliament to change the law. Since then, LLG and ADSO, together with other similar organisations (plus individual councils and councillors) have been lobbying the Government without success. The LGA and NALC have also been supporting councils throughout this time.

OFFICIAL

We do not wish to impose remote meetings on councils. They should have the choice to decide how they run their meetings depending on local circumstances. They know best.

The period of lockdown showed that remote meetings bring so many benefits to local democracy and residents, apart from the obvious public health safeguards. It is no longer just a response to Covid.

Local democracy benefitted from:

- *Increased attendances at remote meetings by both councillors and the public*
Significant cost savings for some authorities arising from much less travel to meetings
The environmental benefits of less travel, particularly in the large county authorities
A better work/life balance for councillors
- *Improved equality of access to meetings for all and opening up opportunities for more people to stand for election as councillors*
- *More transparency and openness for the public to see council meetings*
An option to move meetings online when there are constraints, for example bad weather such as snow or flooding.

A recent post on social media received 100 responses of which 98 supported the option of remote meetings. Whilst this is a very small sample, we are confident it is representative of the general feeling across the country.

We therefore call on the government to create Parliamentary time to agree a change in the law to allow councils in England to meet remotely if they wish.

[Petition - For Councils in England to have the choice to meet remotely - Change.org](#)