

# Virtual meeting etiquette

March 2020

# Sackers

Here are some hints and tips to ensure your virtual meetings go as smoothly as possible.

- 1 Start and end the meeting on time:** the moderator should open up the conference line a few minutes before the official start time, to allow participants to join and to sort out any technical difficulties
- 2 Be clear about who is leading/chairing the meeting:** whoever is speaking to an item should try not to restate what is in the papers, but instead draw out the key points
- 3 Take breaks:** it's harder to maintain concentration during a virtual meeting so the chair should suggest a break after an hour and a half
- 4 Mute your phone when not speaking;** find a quiet location if you can, especially if discussing confidential items
- 5 No rustling of papers:** use electronic versions of the papers if you possibly can; there is nothing worse than the sound of papers being moved about when you are dialling into a call
- 6 Prepare properly:** read the papers before the meeting starts and have questions ready
- 7 If minutes are required, be clear about who is taking them:** the chair should clarify this at the start of the meeting
- 8 Order, order:** if you want to make a comment or ask a question, start by identifying yourself
- 9 Avoid speaking over others:** the chair should try to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. If addressing all participants with a general question, the chair should consider asking each participant to answer in turn by name
- 10 Clarify next steps:** everyone should leave the meeting knowing what has been agreed and what the actions are. This may involve the chair summing up at the end in quite a formal way
- 11 Date of next meeting:** don't hold meetings unless there is a specific need to do so. The reality is that you may need to have more meetings than usual to get through the work
- 12 If experiencing bad signal or interference on the line,** hang up promptly and try to reconnect to the call again
- 13 If using Skype, only one person should add participants:** if several people attempt to do so, it can start two separate calls
- 14 Know your audience:** if humour seems like it might go down well, by all means lift the mood and start or end the meeting on a lighter note