

ZOOM guidance for meeting participants

ZOOM meetings are *weird*.

At in-the-flesh meetings you can get up and stretch your legs, move from table to table, with different conversations happening all over the place.

At a ZOOM you can't. It's one person at a time, you have to wait to speak, and when you do everyone is staring at you (and your messy house).

It's very different, and can be exhausting as well as great fun.

So we all need to learn a few new skills and habits to make sure that the meetings go as well as possible.

Setting up your equipment before the meeting

- Ideally your camera should be at head height. This means we don't spend the meeting looking up your nose. Lovely though it is. On most laptops, phones and tablets the camera is at the top of the screen in the centre. Focusing your gaze at the camera when you are speaking means that you are looking directly at those watching. If you look at yourself or others on the screen while you are speaking, it's the equivalent of not having eye-contact. This might mean putting your tablet or laptop on a pile of books to bring it up to the right height.
- Lighting is important. Too much can be glaring. Too little and we can't see you. Experiment with the best position and use a table lamp if you need to bring in extra light. Try to avoid sitting in front of a light or a window.

As you join the meeting

- If you are prompted, turn on your camera and audio so that everyone can see and hear you when you join.
- Make sure that the name that appears in your little part of the screen is the right one - this can be an issue if you share a ZOOM account with someone else. If it's not the right name you can change it.
- You can set up fancy backgrounds - this can help if you don't want people seeing your underpants hanging on the back of the door. If you do use one of these, don't keep changing it, as that can be really disorienting for others.

During the meeting

- The host will ask you to mute (turn off) your microphone once the meeting gets underway. This is to cut down on the background noise which can really build up and become intrusive for others.
- If your internet connection becomes unstable - try turning your camera OFF. This will reduce the load on your internet connection.
- If you want to speak, hold up your 'I want to speak' card or anything else that is bright and visible. One person sometimes uses a gnome! (you know who you are). The host will make a list of who is waiting to speak, and there will sometimes be a queue of people waiting.
- Sometimes you might need to ask to 'cut in' to have your say - and there are two reasons why:
 - 1.** You can't "hold that thought" and need to get it out before you forget it.
 - 2.** You want to respond directly to something the speaker is saying, and coming in NOW will help the flow of the conversation.
- The more people there are at a meeting, the more we need to try and make sure we don't hog the limelight. Have your say and then let someone else come in.
- It's fine to have strong opinions. It's fine to express them forcefully. It's not fine to be rude or disrespectful to others. If this happens then the host will ask you to stop. If it continues you will be asked to leave. Be kind.

- Use the CHAT function if you want to have a conversation with someone or make comments or ask questions of the group. Be careful though - it's easy to think you are commenting to someone individually and send it to the whole group.....
- Try not to walk around during the call. It can be really distracting for people. If you have to move around, then turn off your camera.