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# Virtual Planning

Meyric Lewis  
Annabel Graham Paul

Francis Taylor Building

T: 020 7353 8415 | E: clerks@ftbchambers.co.uk | www.ftbchambers.co.uk



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## Virtual Events – The Future

- Potential to continue in some form post-Covid
- Fully remote / partially remote / live streamed physical events
- Difficulties for enforcement and PROW inquiries
- Advantage of flexibility and greater public participation
- Disadvantage of lack of contact with the site and area – lack of physical public presence
- Challenges with quality of virtual platform (particular challenges e.g. simultaneous translation in Wales)
- Challenges with presentation of case

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### Preparation for Virtual Events

- Making the most of the Inspector's Case Management Conference – agreeing the main issues – can inform structure of proofs and Statements of Common Ground
- Narrowing the issues – Statements of Common Ground
- Agreeing Core Documents well in advance – do not expect Inspector to look at anything else e.g. other web links
- Core Documents to be hosted electronically
- Potential for hyperlinking to Core Documents with proofs
- Proofs to be set out with Figures and images easily shared during virtual events
- Summary documents of figures and tables
- Pre-inquiry virtual test event
- Be realistic about time estimates



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### Conduct during Virtual Hearings

- PINS have indicated 3x 1.5 hour sessions per day but practice varies hugely
- Potential for sitting on Mondays and evening sessions (e.g. for local residents)
- More major inquiries live streamed on YouTube (see e.g. Meyric cross-examining Eric Pickles at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pytwYOnJhJc> (at 6:14) and Annabel at Cherwell and Merton inquiries)
- Cameras on or off when not speaking – some varied practice
- Act *as if* you are not muted all the time
- Avoid distracting backgrounds or self-promotion
- Domestic incidents – how to deal with it if something happens



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### Advocacy and Witnesses

- Importance of prior preparation and 'route maps' with witnesses
- List of documents to be referred to provided in advance to Inspector
- Inspectors do not favour reading out large sections of written evidence
- Answering questions directly – difficulties with interrupting and internet 'lag'
- Waiting for others to access documents
- Screen sharing
- Remember Inspector needs to take notes
- Usefulness of electronic functions e.g. ability to search large documents electronically and double check previous evidence from YouTube recording
- Cont on next slides

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- Other parties – use of yellow raised hand
- Ask for breaks if needed
- Propriety – ensuring witnesses in purdah
- Round table sessions and hearings – ensuring your points heard



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### Communication with the Team

- All in one room or not?
- Email / whatsapp communication
- Separate Teams meetings during breaks
- Importance of good relationship with PINS case officer
- Late / new documents



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### Site Visits

- Beware Inspector may not have visited the site at all before or during giving of evidence
- Potential for significant time between virtual event and site visit
- Attendance and agreed route
- Taking photographs





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## Post-Inquiry

- S. 106 agreements
- Updating Inspector on changes in planning policy
- Potential to use virtual hearing to re-open inquiry / hearing on limited matters



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**Meyric Lewis**  
**Annabel Graham Paul**  
**Any questions?**



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