

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AMEND THE STANDING ORDERS Remote and Hybrid Attendance at Board Meetings

Proposed by:	Adrian Essex, Chair
Seconded by:	[name]
Date of notice:	7 March 2026
To be considered at:	Ordinary Board Meeting, April 2026
Procedural authority:	Standing Orders 9.1–9.3 (14 days notice; simple majority)

1. Purpose

This motion proposes amendments to the Standing Orders of the Woodberry Down Community Organisation to permit Board Members to attend meetings by electronic means and to vote at such meetings while attending remotely. It does not amend the Constitution.

The Standing Orders are changed by simple majority vote at any Ordinary Meeting of the Board, subject to 14 days notice having been given (Standing Order 9.3). This notice was submitted on 7 March 2026. The motion may therefore be considered at the April 2026 Ordinary Board Meeting.

2. Background and reasons

Three considerations support this change.

Attendance. Board attendance has declined since the AGM. Work commitments, travel and other constraints mean that some Members are unable to attend monthly meetings in person on a consistent basis. The ability to join by video will reduce the number of occasions on which Members are simply absent.

Democratic participation. The Organisation represents all residents of Woodberry Down. Extending the means by which Board Members can participate in decisions strengthens rather than weakens democratic accountability.

Practical readiness. The Redmond Community Centre now has a camera, speaker and microphone suitable for hybrid meetings. The technology to support this change is in place.

The Executive Committee considered this matter at its meeting in February 2026 and agreed in principle to run the March 2026 Board meeting as a first hybrid test, with a formal amendment to follow if that went well.

3. What is not changing

This motion amends the Standing Orders only. The Constitution is unchanged. In particular:

- the quorum requirement in D48 is unchanged;
- the requirement to give seven days notice of meetings (D40) is unchanged;
- the requirement for the agenda to be sent to Members' home addresses (D40) is unchanged;
- the annual timetable of Ordinary Meetings agreed at the AGM (D38) is unchanged.

Attending by electronic means is a facility, not a requirement. Members who wish to attend in person will continue to do so.

4. Proposed amendments to the Standing Orders

Three amendments are proposed. For each, the existing text and the proposed replacement are set out below.

Amendment 1 — Standing Order 2.2 (Mobile phones)

This amendment is consequential. The existing Standing Order requires everyone to turn their phone off or to leave the meeting to take a call. That instruction would inadvertently prohibit the device a Member attending remotely needs to use throughout the meeting.

EXISTING TEXT — SO 2.2

2.2 Any person present at a Meeting of the Board who carries a mobile phone is requested to turn it off at the beginning of the Meeting. If this is not practical for operational reasons, anyone who needs to take a call is requested to withdraw from the Meeting until the call is terminated.

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT — SO 2.2

2.2 Any person present at a Meeting of the Board who carries a mobile phone or other device is requested to silence it at the beginning of the Meeting. Any person who needs to take a call during the Meeting is requested to withdraw until the call is terminated. This Standing Order does not apply to equipment being used by a Board Member to attend the Meeting by electronic means under Standing Order 6.9.

Amendment 2 — Standing Order 6.1 (Voting rights)

This is the substantive amendment. The existing Standing Order restricts voting to Members who are physically present. The proposed replacement extends that right to Members attending by electronic means, while preserving all other aspects of the voting rule.

EXISTING TEXT — SO 6.1

6.1 At any Meeting of the Board each Board Member present shall have one vote which can only be exercised in person. Under no circumstances shall any Board Member exercise more than one vote.

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT — SO 6.1

6.1 At any Meeting of the Board each Board Member present shall have one vote. A Board Member attending by electronic means in accordance with Standing Order 6.9 shall be treated as present for this purpose. Under no circumstances shall any Board Member exercise more than one vote.

Amendment 3 — New Standing Orders 6.9, 6.10 and 6.11

Three new Standing Orders are proposed, to be inserted after SO 6.8. They set out the conditions for remote attendance, the procedure when a technical failure occurs, and a minimum requirement for in-person meetings.

EXISTING TEXT — SO 6.8 TO END OF SECTION 6

6.8 The demand for a secret ballot may be withdrawn, before the ballot is taken, but only with the consent of the chair.

[End of section 6]

PROPOSED ADDITION — NEW SO 6.9, 6.10 AND 6.11

6.8 The demand for a secret ballot may be withdrawn, before the ballot is taken, but only with the consent of the chair.

Remote and hybrid attendance

6.9 The Board may hold any of its meetings on a hybrid basis, with some Board Members attending in person and others attending by electronic means, provided that:

- (a) the notice convening the meeting states that remote attendance is available and specifies the means by which Board Members may join electronically;
- (b) each person attending remotely is able to hear, and to be heard by, all other participants throughout the meeting;
- (c) the chair is satisfied at the commencement of the meeting, and may verify at any point during the meeting, that each person attending remotely is able to participate effectively.

6.10 If a technical failure during the meeting prevents a Board Member attending remotely from participating effectively, the chair shall allow a reasonable interval for the connection to be restored. If it cannot be restored within a reasonable time, that Member shall be treated as absent from that point. If as a result the meeting becomes inquorate, the chair shall adjourn the meeting.

6.11 The Board shall hold at least one fully in-person Ordinary Meeting in each calendar year.

5. Voting at hybrid meetings

Where a meeting is held on a hybrid basis, the chair shall ensure that Members attending remotely are able to participate in any vote. Where a show of hands is used, the chair shall ask remote Members to signal their vote by the agreed electronic means and shall announce the result including remote votes before any declaration. Where a secret ballot is demanded, the chair shall direct the method of voting, provided that the secrecy of each Member's vote is maintained.

This is a matter of procedure for the chair to manage. It does not require a further amendment to the Standing Orders, but is noted here so that the Board is aware of the practical implications of Amendments 2 and 3.

6. Procedural note

Standing Orders may be amended at any Ordinary Meeting of the Board by a simple majority of Members present and voting, subject to 14 days notice (SO 9.1 to 9.3). This notice was issued on 7 March 2026. The April 2026 Ordinary Board Meeting falls more than 14 days after that date and the motion may therefore be considered at that meeting.

For the avoidance of doubt, this motion does not amend the Constitution. A constitutional amendment requires a two-thirds majority at the AGM or a Special Meeting called for the purpose (Constitution H2). That higher threshold is not required here.

7. Recommendation

The Board is asked to resolve as follows:

RESOLVED that the Standing Orders of the Woodberry Down Community Organisation be amended as set out in this paper, with effect from the date of this resolution.