

Organising and Running a Hybrid Meeting

First, let us define a Hybrid meeting. This is a traditional AA meeting in a room with members present and a secretary running the meeting - all very familiar. Now, if the meeting room has a **strong WiFi connected to a good Internet Connection**¹ then on the secretaries' desk we can have two laptops or one laptop and one tablet both with good cameras and microphones² and an external large monitor or video projector for laptop 2 so that room can see and hear the Zoom. Beside the secretary is a supporting member who starts and manages a Zoom³ video meeting which many will now be familiar with, on laptop 2⁴. Before the meeting starts the Secretary now joins the Zoom Meeting with his/her tablet or laptop. The person running the Zoom mutes their mic and points the camera at the meeting room and members assembled adding the room to the zoom. All mics are muted except for the secretary. The secretary starts the meeting in the traditional way and welcomes the room and the zoom. If the meeting is a share meeting, then the secretary will introduce the share:

1. If the share is in the room then the secretary turns his/her camera on the room and moves to the sharer with the Tablet/Laptop mic enabled. The sharer then is sharing to the zoom and the room.
2. If the sharer is in the Zoom, then the sharer unmutes and shares.

At the conclusion of the share the secretary turns the camera back to his/herself and opens the meeting for sharing. But the secretary will choose the sharers in turn between the room and the zoom. If the sharer is in the room the secretary will approach and provide the camera and mic as before, so the share is again speaking to both to zoom and room. If the sharer is from the zoom they unmute and share. The meeting hears and sees this share on the Zoom Laptop, speaker and monitor.

The secretary will continue in this way choosing sharers from both the members present and online.

At the conclusion, the secretary returns the camera to his/herself and concludes the meeting. The second person closes the Zoom.

For the meeting to work well the Zoomers must be on mute unless speaking and the room laptop or tablet has to be on mute when not speaking. The Secretary and supporting member need to manage this.

Using Mobile Networks

What if the room has no or a weak internet connection? Then it is possible to run the meeting using a mobile data connection from any available operator such as EE, Vodafone, O2 etc. These companies and places like Amazon will sell a small mobile router/wifi device which will take a pre-paid sim card. Many people own these and use them for holidays or when away from home on business. You can also use a hotspot from most mobiles to give the equipment internet access. So, if the meeting has a member with knowledge of these items the mobile network can offer a solution. Just remember that we have all seen folk join a meeting on their phones. The 4G mobile networks all offer high data rates but you will need 3 bars and the 4G signal for it to work well.

¹ The internet connection should be at least 8mbps down and 2mbps up

² It may be necessary to add a good quality external mic and room camera to the second laptop and if the room is large a good external monitor or projector as well.

³ Beyond Zoom you can use as GoToMeeting, Skype, Google Meet and other applications

⁴ Laptop 2 will ideally have an external speaker and screen (so the room can see and hear the zoom)