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Good practice for virtual board and committee meetings

Guidance note

Good practice for virtual board and committee meetings

This guidance note gives a brief overview of the legal and practical issues for virtual board and committee meetings. It does not constitute legal advice.

Key points are:

- **The choice of the right communication channel is vital** - if the technology does not work well the meeting will be harder to run, will likely last for longer than is optimal and will be less effective. An audio call or telephone conference will be less risky but a video conference is more engaging if you can get it to work well.

- **Virtual meetings need to be well structured and avoid unnecessary complexity** - It is entirely possible to hold an effective meeting by virtual means. However, it should be structured more simply than a face to face meeting and should recognise the constraints of technology. If necessary, the board has alternative ways to make decisions – see Section 6.

- **Preparation is key** - see Section 2.

- **The Chair will need additional techniques to run an orderly meeting**, allowing adequate debate and obtaining the sense of the meeting – see Appendix 1.

- **"Ground rules" for participants should be circulated to all those joining the meeting** in good time beforehand – see Appendix 4.

- **Clear instructions on accessing the meeting system or app are essential** - Not all participants will be familiar with the technology. Give everyone clear instructions in advance about how to access and use the meeting app and offer individual practice calls if necessary.

- **Good boardroom practices are even more necessary** for virtual meetings than for face to face.

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1. Initial considerations

1.1 Choice of platform

Most boards are used to holding meetings by telephone conference call, usually to deal with urgent items of business which arise between scheduled meetings. It is also possible to use a virtual meeting application or app (see Appendix 5). There are other ways to effect board decisions without holding a meeting and the pros and cons of these are covered in Section 6.

1.2 Validity

The Companies Act 2006 generally facilitates e-communications. You should also check the articles of association for any provisions on telephone or video conferencing.

2. Before the meeting

There are a number of practical matters to attend to before the meeting.

2.1 Setting up the meeting or call

The call or virtual meeting needs to be set up and invites sent out. Helpful tips are:

• **Schedule shorter meetings and include breaks** - People's attention span is shorter on the phone or an app than in person. If some people only join for specific items, try to arrange these straight after a break to minimise disruption.

• **Take account of different time zones** - If participants are in different time zones, ensure the correct time is shown on invitations and agendas. If necessary, make the start time in each location clear on the agenda - the iPhone clock app has a world clock function.

• **Circulate the link and dial in details for the meeting** - on the meeting invitation, on the agenda and by email. You could also circulate them again an hour before the meeting, so they are easily to hand.

• **The Company Secretary (or their designate) should act as host** - They should also have all of the access codes/PINs to hand and should open the call 10-15 minutes before the start time to allow a prompt start and deal with any issues with the technology.

• **Issue clear joining and conduct instructions** - Ensure everyone has clear instructions about how to join the meeting and use the key features of the app (such as muting and

unmuting their microphone) and offer them a practice run. The platform you are using may allow you to mute individual lines and you should know how to do this if needed.

• **Offer dial-in numbers with freephone and local call rate numbers** - Make clear which number to use from mobile phones to avoid heavy network charges. If using an app, explain that the dial in numbers should be used as a backup if there are issues with the technology.

• **Review start times** - Recent experience has shown that there may be issues with starting calls at peak times, due to bandwidth limitations. Consider scheduling meetings just before or just after the hour or half hour – for example have a start time of 9:50 or 10:10 rather than 10:00.

• **Use audio-only calls for large meetings** - Video links may impair connectivity, and for large meetings it may be impractical to have everyone present by video.

• **Have IT support on standby** - so they are immediately available if there is a problem.

2.2   Supporting the Chair

• **Communication** - Agree with the Chair beforehand how you will communicate with each other during the meeting if you need to. Text messaging will probably be the quickest and most reliable means.

• **Attenders** - Make sure you and the Chair have a list of all those due to attend the meeting so that either or both of you can check who is on the call.

• **Use a timed agenda** - and give presenters an approximate time when they will be asked to join the meeting. They should not join early and it is best to message them when you are ready for them to join. To ensure confidentiality, if the technology permits, ask them to wait in the "virtual lobby" until needed.

• **Outcomes** - Make sure it is clear what the board is being asked to do for each agenda item.

3.   During the meeting

3.1   Absence

Any apologies for absence should be recorded. If anyone is unable to attend the Chair should speak to them before the meeting to get their views, answer any questions and to pass on any comments they may have at the meeting. The Chair or Company Secretary should also contact them after the meeting to advise them of the outcome. If they are too unwell to provide any input beforehand, the meeting can still go ahead validly, provided it

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is quorate. Follow-up can then be done once they have sufficiently recovered.

If the Chair is indisposed, someone else will need to take on this role – see 3.5 below.

3.2 Attendance

The virtual meeting app may allow the person hosting the meeting (and other participants) to see who is present at the meeting, when they leave and others join, and who is speaking. It may also be possible to message other participants within the app and to mute lines if needed.

If such a facility is not available to everyone the Chair or the Company Secretary should to do a roll call at the start, to ensure everyone is present. They should also request that participants advise if they have to leave the call (this could be by messaging the Company Secretary to avoid disrupting the meeting).

Everyone should attend the meeting from a quiet place, to avoid distraction, and should be on mute unless speaking.

At the end of the meeting (under "Any Other Business") the Chair should ask participants by name if they have any other matters to raise. This also allows the Company Secretary to check if everyone is still on the call.

3.3 Quorum

If the above process is followed, it should be possible to ensure a quorum is present on the call at all times. If the meeting is not quorate it should be adjourned and reconvened when everyone can be present.

3.4 Papers

• **Portals, PDFs and security** - If everyone is having to work from home it may not be possible to send out paper packs. Many boards already use electronic board portals or email board packs in pdf form to directors. Board portals are relatively secure but if papers are circulated by email, there are risks with using (usually non-executive) directors' personal email addresses if they are not linked to secure domains. Alternatives could be to allocate the directors a company email address - but make sure that they can access this easily – offer assistance if required. If possible, papers emailed to directors should be password-protected and the password notified separately.

• **Agenda** - suggest to participants (and particularly the Chair) that they print off the agenda for the meeting so that they can follow it easily. If the board pack is in pdf format, the agenda should include page numbers for each item for quick reference.

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- **Screen sharing** - Some of the virtual meeting apps allow documents to be shared on screen during the call to ensure that everyone is on the same page (or slide). If this facility is not used, the presenter should indicate which slide or page number they are on as they move through their presentation.

3.5 Communication

- **Communication between participants during a meeting** – some virtual meeting apps have a messaging facility which participants can use to indicate to the Chair that they wish to speak on an item and with which the Chair can acknowledge this wish. This messaging may not be private, it may be visible to all on the call. Everyone should be given instructions about how to use this facility and told who can view their messages.

- **Private communication during a meeting** – private messaging may be available within the app but if not, then text messaging is probably the quickest and most reliable system. Whichever option you choose, make sure you agree with the Chair beforehand how you will communicate with each other during the meeting.

3.6 Chairing

- **Alternate Chair** - If the Chair is unable to attend the meeting due to illness or other reason, the articles will normally provide that the directors choose one of their number to chair. You may wish to arrange this in advance of the meeting. The Company Secretary should provide advice and guidance as needed to the alternate chair, particularly if they are less experienced in the role.

- **The role of the Chair** - This is to run the meeting, ensure a good debate, obtain the view of the meeting and reach a decision (if one is required). Allowing everyone to have their say and facilitating an effective debate can be challenging when the meeting is being held over the phone or internet.

- **Ground rules** - You should circulate ground rules for participants (see Appendix 4). There is a risk of people talking over one another and/or accidentally interrupting and people not speaking at all. It is of primary importance during board calls and virtual meetings for participants to defer to the Chair and for the Chair to be proactive in leading and managing the meeting, assisted by the Company Secretary.

- **Meeting management**

  - The Chair needs to be exceptionally clear about leading the meeting through the agenda and handing over to each presenter. Even if there is a video link there will not be the normal lines of sight and for a telephone conference call it can be even harder for participants to keep track of what is going on.

- Words may have to replace what would normally be obvious when the meeting is held face to face.

- Presenters should be clear about when they have completed their slot.

- The Chair should invite questions at the end, rather than during the presentation.

- For each item, the Chair may wish to ask that directors indicate if they would like to speak on the item. They can then be invited to speak in turn to allow orderly debate.

- Before moving on to the decision making, the Chair should ensure everyone has had the chance to comment or ask their question, by checking if there are any further questions, maybe inviting individual participants to comment if they have not already done so.

- **Clarity of decision making** - Board papers should indicate whether a decision is required or if the item is for noting/information only. The Chair should determine the sense of the meeting by asking everyone to indicate their support or if the matter is not thought to be contentious, they could ask for any indications of dissent. The usual nods or show of hands will need to be replaced by spoken assent (or dissent). Some virtual meeting apps may have a facility for an electronic voting process if a formal vote is needed.

  At the end of the item, the Chair should state clearly what the board has just decided/noted. If the Chair does not do so and the minute taker is unsure of what has been agreed, they must ask at that point before the meeting moves to the next item.

  If there is no consensus, then as with a physical meeting it is up to the Chair to determine the best course of action, which might be for the executive to return to the next meeting with more information or an updated proposal or for the item to be deferred for a longer period of time, or dropped entirely.

4. Technical considerations

- **Audio is more reliable than video** - A fast and stable internet connection is required for virtual meeting apps, or the meeting could be disrupted. If there are issues with internet connectivity or if the directors are not familiar with the technology, an audio call may be better than a video conference. However, video conferences are more engaging.

- **Participants may need two screens for video** - For video calls, participants may require more than one screen or device - one for reading their papers and another for any video input from the call/messaging functions and so on. If this is not easy to achieve, then an audio call/telephone conference may be a better option.

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- **Running the technology** - The Company Secretary should run the technical aspects of the call, rather than the Chair. If the meeting has a lot of participants, it may be better for the Company Secretary to appoint a designate to deal with any technical issues or to communicate with the directors and the Chair during the meeting.

- **Minute the meeting as usual** – don't record it - Recording board and committee meetings is not generally recommended. Refer to the Chartered Governance Institute guidance on minute taking for more information.

- **Have IT support on standby throughout the meeting** – so that you can get prompt assistance with any technical issues.

5. After the meeting

Ask for feedback and see what can be improved next time. Make sure you address any issues in good time before the next meeting. Update your ground rules if necessary.

6. Alternatives to meetings

6.1 Written resolutions

If face to face meetings are not possible, the technology fails or is not practicable, most articles of association allow board decisions to be made by written resolution. This might be unanimous or by a particular majority of the board. The exact wording of the resolution can be circulated by email and agreement given by email under the e-communications provisions of the Companies Act 2006. It is not necessary for each director to print out the resolution, sign it and scan it back.

Any written resolution should still be recorded and if consent is by email then a copy of the email agreement from each director should be put in the minute book.

6.2 Email "meetings"

This is not the same process as circulating a written resolution by email, described above. This would be where a proposal is circulated by email and people communicate their views over the email with an indication as to whether or not they support the proposal. This is not ideal since those participating cannot communicate to everyone else at the same time and there may be delays between the messages – in effect it is not a meeting. People may change their views as the "conversation" progresses and the end/decision point may not be clear.

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If a matter requires discussion it should be discussed with the board all together at the same time. If the matter is more straightforward then the written resolution procedure can follow on from any proposal which is communicated by email.

6.3   Delegation to a committee

If it is impossible for the board to have a call or virtual meeting, then the matter could be delegated to a committee of any two or three directors. This delegation can be effected by the written resolution procedure outlined above.

It is better not to specify only named individuals as members of the committee, in case they are unable to participate. A safer option is to say (for example) "any two directors" and add in any preferences such as "at least one of whom must be a Non-Executive Director".

6.4   Subsequent ratification

This is where a decision is taken informally, with the intention that it is ratified at a future board meeting. This is not ideal as circumstances may change and some directors may change their mind about ratifying the original "decision". It is better to follow up any informal communication by following the written resolution procedure outlined above.

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Appendices

1. Notes for the Chair

2. Notes for the Company Secretary

3. Notes for presenters

4. Suggested "ground rules" for participants

5. Comparison of virtual meeting providers

Appendix 1 – Notes for the Chair

Your role in leading a virtual meeting is ultimately the same as your role during a face to face meeting. However, the techniques needed to keep everyone engaged, allow a good debate and determine the view of the meeting on each item of business may be different to those which you use for a face to face meeting. The points below can assist with the smooth running of the meeting:

Access arrangements

- Make sure you have been given the correct dial in details and start time for your time zone, and any access codes or PINs.

- Check if you are the leader or host for the call and if you require any additional log in details in that capacity.

Know the technology

- Make sure you know how to use the technology and ask for assistance before the meeting if you are not familiar with the app being used.

- Make sure you have enough devices/screens to run the meeting and read the papers.

- Make the best use of the technology – for example you may be able to see who is speaking, who is not on mute and so on. There may be a messaging facility so that participants can alert you to the fact that they wish to speak, or that you can use to ask someone to mute their microphone. Be aware that these messages may be visible to all participants in the meeting. If you need to message someone privately, then a text message is probably the quickest way.

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Meeting management

- You may prefer that someone else hosts and controls the call so that you don't have to deal with that aspect of the technology as well. This could be done by the Company Secretary. You will both need to be clear before the meeting who is going to have that responsibility and for a larger or more complex meeting the Company Secretary may prefer to designate another person to do this, so that they can concentrate on providing advice and taking the minutes.

- Make sure you have a list of all those due to attend the meeting and when they will arrive and leave.

- Have a paper copy of the agenda to hand, particularly if you are having to host/control the call and refer to the rest of the board pack online.

- If you are the host or leader for the call, open the call 10-15 minutes before the start time to allow everyone to join in an orderly way, in case there are any issues.

- At the start of the call, welcome everyone and run a roll call/introduction - or ask the Company Secretary to do this. This allows everyone to be aware of who is present.

- Be clear at the beginning about how long you expect the meeting to last and how you would like participants to communicate with you if they need to leave the meeting at any point before the end. For longer meetings it will be necessary to have an agreed break and it is suggested you should not run for more than 2 hours continually without one. This might be for 30 minutes (for example) or the meeting could be split into two parts.

- Be clear about which agenda item you are on at any one time.

- Invite questions at an appropriate time after any presentation. You may need to remind participants to mute and unmute their microphones. Ask participants to indicate to you if they wish to speak on the particular item and remind them of the need for clarity and brevity.

- Make sure everyone has had a chance to speak, by checking at the end of each item if anyone has any final points. If someone has not said anything you might ask them by name, to ensure they have not dropped off the call or assist them if they have not had a chance to speak.

- At the end of the item, sum up your understanding of the conclusion / decision reached and ensure this is the understanding of the board before you move on to the next item.

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- Remember to thank anyone who has presented to the meeting and indicate that they can leave the meeting. It can be easy to forget this if you can't see them.

- It will be particularly important to keep the discussion focussed and not to let people become distracted with unimportant peripheral points. You will need to control this firmly but diplomatically.

- It will be important to curtail the length of the meeting so that people remain engaged. Having a timed agenda can assist with this. If the business has not been finished within a reasonable timeframe and you feel participants are no longer concentrating it may be better to reconvene the meeting after a short break or at another time and date. For this reason, it will be key when planning the agenda to ensure the most urgent and important items are dealt with first, leaving those which are less so to the end of the meeting.

Technical problems

- If the call is disrupted by technical issues, such as poor audio or video quality due to a lack of good internet connectivity it may be necessary to call for a short adjournment of the meeting and change to a telephone conference instead. The virtual meeting app should provide suitable numbers for dialling in as well.

- If there is background noise, you may be able to privately message the person whose microphone is not on mute or you can make a general request for people to recheck that they are on mute. You may also be able to use the system to mute their line remotely. It is important for everyone to be able to hear each other.

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Appendix 2 – Notes for the Company Secretary

- Make sure everyone has the link to join the call or the login/dial in details as required plus any access codes and PINs.

- Agree with the Chair who will host and control the meeting. This may be you or someone you designate to do so, or it may be the Chair.

- Make sure everyone (including you) understands how to use the technology and offer practice sessions in advance if needed. In particular, ensure everyone knows how to mute and unmute their microphones and how to send a message if they need to.

- Have IT support on standby for the duration of the meeting to assist with any issues with the technology and make sure you have their mobile phone number.

- Check that each participant will have access to enough screens or devices to access the board pack and see any video input from the call if needed. It may be necessary to supply NEDs with devices/headsets and so on if they don't have their own. These could be on loan; it is not necessary for the company to gift them.

- Make sure presenters know how they will be told to dial in or join the meeting and message them at the appropriate time if it is your job to do so, or remind anyone else who should be doing that.

- Agree with the Chair beforehand how you will communicate with them during the meeting, if you need to. Text messaging may be the fastest and most reliable method.

- Agree the ground rules with the Chair and circulate them ahead of the meeting.

- Prepare a timed agenda. Agree with the Chair the optimum meeting length and bear in mind a virtual meeting may take longer than a face to face one run in the same way. Schedule in comfort breaks if appropriate.

- Make sure everyone has your mobile number so that they can text you if they need to during the meeting if there is no messaging system within the meeting app or if they have trouble using it.

- As well as taking notes during the meeting be aware of what is going on in the discussion and with the technology and offer support if required.

- Make sure presenters leave after their particular item, unless they have been invited by the Chair to remain.

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Appendix 3 – Notes for presenters

- Make sure you know how to use the technology and how to join the meeting. If you are not clear, ask beforehand.

- Be absolutely clear what the meeting participants need to know, what you want to say, and what you want from the meeting

- Provide any materials (such as slides) which you intend to present at the meeting to the Company Secretary beforehand so that they can be circulated by email or put onto the board portal. This will ensure everyone can see them, even if there is an unexpected glitch with the technology.

- You should have been given an indication of the approximate time when you will be required to join the meeting. You should also have been told how long you are expected to present and allow time for questions. If you haven't been, then ask beforehand.

- You should have been told about how you will know exactly when to join, usually by a call or message when the meeting has reached your item on the agenda.

- Don't join the meeting before you are invited to, meetings rarely run exactly to time.

- Follow any ground rules for the meeting.

- If there is more than one person presenting, agree beforehand who is going to do what so the presentation runs smoothly and seamlessly. Be clear when you are handing over to each other.

- If you are referring to a board paper or slide deck, regularly refer to where you are in the document or deck, so that others can easily follow, mentioning the page/slide number when you move on. It may be possible for you to share your paper or slides within the app, although the board may prefer to see you and have the slides separately.

- Make sure you only speak for your allotted time slot.

- When you have finished hand back to the Chair, who may invite questions from the board.

- Once your item is finished and if you are not needed for any others you should be asked by the Chair to leave the meeting. If not, then you should indicate that you are about to leave the meeting if you are no longer required. You should ensure you close the app or hang up the call when you leave the meeting

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Appendix 4 – Suggested "ground rules" for participants

- If you are using a video link remember that everyone will be able to see what you are wearing and make sure it is appropriate. Neutral colours and backgrounds work well.

- Check the view people will get from your camera and remove anything in the way or which might cause a distraction.

- Ensure your location is well lit, natural light is best.

- Make sure your microphone is working but keep it on mute throughout the meeting, except when you wish to make a comment or ask a question.

- Speak clearly and with sufficient volume into the microphone – you need to be heard but there should not be a need to raise your voice unduly.

- Look at the camera if you are on a video call. If you can be seen by everyone else all of the time, keep this in mind for the duration of the meeting.

- Remember to mute your microphone again after speaking.

- You may find it easier to concentrate if you use headphones or a headset as these will cut out any background noise in your location.

- Put your mobile phone (and any other devices which are close by) onto silent mode, or switch them off if you don't need them.

- If possible, attend the meeting in a quiet space (such as your home office), away from other family members and pets. It is best to arrange for childcare for the duration of the meeting if children are too young to be left unattended or play quietly for that long and you are attending the meeting from home. Let the other members of your household know that you need to be on the call without interruptions and when you are likely to be finished.

- Be well prepared, assemble all you need in good time, including any papers for the meeting, pens and paper to write on, devices to read the papers on and to join the call, your glasses and any refreshments you may need. Remember that others can hear you on the call and noises of eating and drinking will be off putting. Try to stick to drinks only and go on mute when you consume them. Remember to use the bathroom before the meeting - much better than having to leave the call part way through. Comfort breaks should be offered if the meeting is a long one.

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- Make sure all the devices you need for the meeting are fully charged or connected to power from the start of the call if there is any doubt that their remaining battery life is enough for the expected duration of the call.

- Join the call in plenty of time, try joining or dialling in at least 10-15 minutes before the start so that if you have any connection issues you have time to resolve them.

- Participating successfully in a virtual meeting can be difficult. Try not to speak across others or interrupt and where possible wait to be invited to speak by the Chair. If you do start to speak at the same time as someone else, pause and offer them the opportunity to go first. The person chairing the meeting should come back to you. If not try again once the other person has finished.

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Appendix 5 – Comparison of virtual meeting providers

The table below is solely to provide an indication of the services available across a range of virtual meeting applications. It has been prepared using information from the websites of each provider. It does not make any recommendation about which provider to use and others are available – such as Cisco WebEx and Sonexis. Some organisations use BT audio bridge as a backup.

1. Zoom

Zoom is a web conferencing tool used for enterprise video communications. It is cloud-based and used for video and audio conferencing, as well as webinars.

• You can quickly access Zoom from your laptop, desktop, or mobile phone.

• Zoom has easy-to-use features such as instant messaging, file sharing, whiteboarding, screen sharing, and call recording.

• Zoom has a free version that allows 40 minutes of video calling at a time. For longer length meetings you will need to purchase the next level of Zoom

• Zoom also has additional functionality for hosting webinars.

2. GoToMeeting

GoToMeeting is a web conferencing app, allowing virtual communication via audio and video calls.

• GoToMeeting is browser based so there is no need to install any software before you begin.

• It integrates with third party tools such as Google Chrome and Google Calendar

• There is whiteboarding, screen sharing and screen recording functionality

3. Skype

Skype is a video, audio, and text communication app available across multiple platforms. It is free to download and use, for the most part.

• Skype offers screen sharing

• It is possible to set high levels of security for your meeting.

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- Note: Microsoft has indicated that on 31 July 2021, Skype for Business will be discontinued and organisations are being encouraged by Microsoft to switch to Microsoft Teams well before that date.

4. Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is a chat-based collaboration tool that provides global, remote, and dispersed teams with the ability to work together and share information via a common space. Teams includes the following features:

- Audio, video, and web conferencing with scheduling assistance, screen sharing, meeting recording, and instant messaging.

- Users can share an entire screen, an app, or a file. Users can give or request control, share documents and slide decks and add a whiteboard.

- Use of a global dial-in number (audio calls)

5. Google Hangouts

Google Hangouts is a popular tool to hold voice and video conversations from your computer or phone.

- Google hangouts integrates easily with Gmail and other Google products.

- You can sign-up, download, and get started with chat and conferencing for free.

- You can send messages, texts, hold a group chat, or place a video call.

- It is possible to have up to 10 people in a call at the same time or 25 with the GSuite version.

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	GoToMeeting	Zoom	Google Hangouts	Skype
Screen Sharing	Basic screen sharing to meet most needs	Advanced options including simultaneous screen sharing (the meeting host can allow multiple people to share the screen at the same time)	Screen share functionality and easy file sharing. Only one person can share their screen at a time	Easily share presentations, documents etc on your screen during a call with integrated screen sharing.
Annotation & Whiteboarding	Basic annotation tools for screen sharing; no whiteboarding	Robust annotation tools and whiteboarding feature	Available with additional apps	Annotation tools and whiteboarding available on Skype for Business *
Design & Ease of Use	More complex control panel, separate from screen	Clean, with controls along the bottom of the screen	Straight forward controls along the bottom of screen with messaging and participant info on the right-hand side	User-friendly interface. Adding new contacts, sending instant messages and placing calls are all done with the click of a button
Recording	Multiple recording formats and unlimited cloud recording and storage at Pro plan level and above	Multiple recording features, but cloud storage above 1 GB costs extra	Available with GSuite paid for version	Call recording and live subtitles
Web Audio Dial-in and Calling	Full dial-in and calling options including Call Me on every plan	Dial-in and calling options offered at various plan levels	Both web and audio dial-in available as standard.	Dial-in and calling options available depending on if Skype or Skype for Business *
Messaging	You can exchange instant chat messages with other participants during a session. Either to the organiser, individuals or the whole group.	In-Meeting chat available during the video all to all participants or to individuals	Instant messaging available whilst in a Google Hangout, with notification pop ups when someone messages you	Instantly react to any message or use @mentions to gain someone's attention.
Additional Features	Browser based so no need for software install	Camera moves to focus on speaker. Crisp and clear video quality.	Quick and easy to access – immediately available via a web browser	Crisp and clear video quality *Skype for business is being replaced by MS Teams
Pricing	No free plan; paid plans cost more but provide greater cloud storage and attendee limits Pricing ranges from £9.50 per month	Free version provides full features however Pro plan may be the best deal if holding 40 min plus meetings with multiple participants Pro plan is £11.99 per host per month	Free with a Gmail account. Non-Gmail account users can receive invites to take part in Google Hangouts GSuite Basic starts at £4.60 per month	Free version if all using the Skype app. *Skype for business is being replaced by MS Teams – this is often included with Office 365