

Continuity Plan

The three main priorities of the Parish Council are:

- a. Ensure the Health and Safety of staff, councillors, contractors and members of the public participating in council activities.
- b. Maintain effective and lawful decision-making processes
- c. The continuing operation of services and obligations.

The clerk will continue to work from home and requires no change.

Councillors – Any councillors with an At-Risk status are to be discouraged from attending any further meetings.

Annual Parish Meeting – Statutory requirement to hold between 1 March and 1 June - awaiting government legislation. **Recommendation** – to Postpone

Annual meeting of the Council – Statutory requirement to be held in May– nomination of Chair and Vice Chair. If this meeting needs to be cancelled or postponed the current Chair and Vice Chair remain in their positions until the Annual meeting occurs. Awaiting advice. **Recommendation** – to proceed using electronic means if legislation permits

Annual Audit of accounts – It is likely that pending emergency legislation will delay – awaiting government legislation – **Recommendation** – continue to prepare for audit and proceed with approval via electronic means if legislation permits.

Vacancies – in the event of a number of vacancies following the postponement of the election, the council will await the agreed, adjusted co-option policy.

Planning responses – The Council are required to make decisions on a planning response.

Recommendation - to agree a response via email to the planning committee and clerk to submit to authority on the behalf of the council if extensions cannot be acquired.

In the absence of Council meetings, certain items of business cannot be transacted unless the Council decides to suspend the particular rule that requires something to have Council approval before it is expedited. This includes for example making payments.

It is proposed that a new delegation of authority policy is introduced which will serve to temporarily suspend/amend the specific Standing orders, Financial Regulations and to give authority to the Parish Clerk/RFO, in consultation with the chairman, vice-chairman and 1 other councillor to ensure the Parish Council can operate to the best of its abilities during the pandemic whilst protecting its employees, councillors, contractors and members of the public.

Easton on the Hill Parish Council - Delegated Authority Policy

1. Background

The Parish Council has been monitoring Government advice as the COVID 19 pandemic escalates in the UK. This policy has been developed in response to that advice which as of 16th March 2020 has introduced social isolation/distancing measures to such an extent that the Parish Council is no longer able to meet according to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 to conduct its business.

2. Operational period

2.1 The policy will come into effect immediately the Chairman closes the extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council at which the policy is approved on Monday 23rd March 2020.

2.2 The policy will be ceased by a subsequent Parish Meeting when councillors and members of the public are next able to meet in person in accordance with Government advice in respect of COVID 19 and the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 or as described by adjusted and agreed legislation in respect of virtual meetings.

3. Role of the Clerk/RFO

3.1 The Clerk/RFO is the only individual in law who can act on behalf of the Council and lead the administration of all the Councils activities. Some obligations are statutory whilst other delegated powers are determined by the Council as part of the Clerk's job description.

3.2 The purpose of this policy is to delegate further authority to the Clerk/RFO in order to ensure the Council can continue to operate its business to the best of its abilities for the benefit of Easton on the Hill community.

4. Delegation of Authority

4.1 With the exception of matters which the law states cannot be delegated and are reserved for full council, any decision requiring full council approval, where it is not possible to convene a lawful meeting, is hereby delegated to the Clerk/RFO, in consultation with 3 councillors, for the operational period.

4.2 Where possible the 3 councillors should consist of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and one other councillor. If this is not possible a substitute should be nominated, and Clerk notified.

4. Temporary alterations to Financial Regulations

The clerk is authorised to make expenditure on revenue items up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. Financial regulation 4.1 will be suspended during the operational period in favour of authorisation as follows:

- 3 councillors as described in this policy clause 4.2 for any item over £500
- The Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman of Council or Vice Chair if chairman unavailable for items below £500.

In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, Financial Regulations 4.5 permits the clerk to authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work. During the operational period this shall be subject to an increased limit of £1000 for a single transaction. The

clerk shall report such action to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

The Clerk/RFO shall prepare the monthly schedule of payments which shall be circulated electronically to all councillors for inspection and questions. After 3 working days, the schedule shall be approved for payment as per clause 4.2 and electronically signed by the Chairman.