

172a Corona Virus Contingency Plan

As the Government has this week announced a change from a policy of Containment to one of Delay, the Parish Council is invited to consider setting in place a set of contingencies to ensure that essential services are maintained as long as possible without risking the health of either staff, council members or residents of the parish.

A risk assessment has been undertaken and a set of mitigation measures proposed for consideration. Every effort will be made to maintain services safely where sufficient staff are available. It is recognised that open access facilities will need to be checked for safety and that dogs will need to be exercised so these facilities will be maintained for as long as possible.

Public buildings will need to be cleaned more frequently during the outbreak so it may be necessary to close the buildings if staff levels fall significantly. If it is necessary to reduce services they will be shut down according to the following schedule. It will only be necessary to close the park and seal litter bins if all staff are unable to work. Scientific advice suggests that the virus does not live long in ultra violet light so activities undertaken as individuals in the open air will be treated as low risk and maintained as long as possible.

There is a legal requirement to hold both the Annual Council Meeting in May and an Annual Parish Meeting between 1 March – 1 June, unless the Government grants a dispensation not to do so. It is only by convention that the Parish Council calls the Annual Parish Meeting; it can be called by six electors although if present at the meeting, the Chairman of the Parish Council must preside. Other meetings may be cancelled if required. Please see [SALC briefing](#) for further details.

Coordination of Support to Vulnerable Residents

It has been suggested that the Council puts measures in place to support residents who may have a greater risk from contracting Coronavirus. These include older residents and those with underlying health conditions who may already be self-isolating and who will have few opportunities for social interaction if they live alone.

The level of support that can be given will be limited if the Parish Office has to close but it should be possible to put vulnerable residents in touch with Councillors or trusted volunteers who are willing to collect shopping and prescriptions or telephone neighbours to check they are staying well. Care will be needed to ensure personal information is not shared without consent.

There is a danger that vulnerable people will be at increased risk of fraud if they accept help from people they do not know personally. The Parish Council holds a position of trust and members of the Parish Council who wish to help in this way may wish to publish their photographs in the Villager magazine and on the Council website so that residents can check their identity. The Council may also wish to consider issuing ID cards to staff and members who may be visiting vulnerable persons.

It may be necessary to consider setting fixed contact times for calls (possibly normal office opening hours, whether or not the office is open) and making it clear what help can and cannot be provided. It is important that anybody feeling unwell contacts the NHS if they cannot manage their symptoms. Staff also need to be able to switch off outside of working hours.

Schedule of phased service reductions

- Cleaning of bus stops / Grooming astro turf (low risk but non-essential)
- Non urgent maintenance & repairs (particularly 2 person operations)
- Line marking of pitches (unless required for matches) – Low risk activity but time consuming
- Grass cutting of amenity areas – Low risk
- Grass cutting of sports pitches – Low risk
- Seeding / patching sports pitches – Low risk
- Cleaning of Youth and Community Building (Closure may be required)
- Cleaning of Lythwood Pavilion & changing rooms (Suspension of Football / Bowling / 10K)
- Watering of Parade planters (reduce frequency to once per week) – Low risk – We could decide not to get the planters this year if staff shortages become severe but we may have to pay for the plants
- Closure of Longmeadow play park (If litter picks & safety checks cannot be completed)
- Litter Picking - Sealing up of litter bins (notices requesting litter / dog waste be taken home)
- Safety checks on defibrillators, lifebuoy, youth complex, outdoor gym – All low risk activities

Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Risk	Likelihood			Impact	Mitigation Measures
	L	M	H		
Clerk required to self-isolate (7 days or more) or unable to work normal hours due to caring responsibilities		x		Office closure / Restricted access to Council facilities (keys / tokens / records/ photocopier / petty cash)	<p>Notices on website, notice boards and office door; Close office to visitors; Clerk to use laptop to work from home if required; Enquiries directed to Council mobile phone number 07458 095619; Face to face staff meetings replaced by telephone calls; Council debit card to be kept at Clerk's home address for emergency purchases to an agreed amount (£500 daily limit), (Unanimously resolved) ;</p> <p>Clerk's budgetary authority increased from £500 to £2,000 in consultation with the Chair of Council, until the next meeting, (Unanimously resolved);</p> <p>Temporary suspension of two signature approval for BACS payments (Unanimously resolved);</p>

					Delegation of powers to authorise Chair of Planning to comment on Planning Applications on behalf of the Council, in consultation with Chair of Council and the Clerk between meetings (Unanimously resolved)
Risk	Likelihood			Impact	Mitigation Measures
	L	M	H		
Clerk unable to work due to sickness (7 days or more)		X		Office closure / Council functions restricted to essential activities until locum Clerk appointed / delays to statutory functions (eg. payroll, audit processing, publication of agendas, supervision of staff)	<p>Council to undertake appropriate cleaning of office / Council to appoint a locum Clerk with the assistance of SALC, to carry out essential services. The Council laptop and mobile phone will be recovered by a Councillor, sanitised and issued to a locum. Emergency access codes for computer files, safe and office alarm held by the Chairman will be issued (unopened) to the locum clerk. The spare office key will be provided to the locum clerk or nominated individual. The Council to give delegated powers to the locum Clerk to act as the Proper Officer.</p> <p>Should it prove it possible to appoint a suitable locum, all payments becoming due will be paid by cheque, prepared by the Chairman or his designated substitute and signed by two authorised cheque signatories; (Resolved unanimously);</p> <p>Should it be temporarily impossible to appoint a locum, the Council email account will be monitored by the Chairman or his designated substitute. (Resolved unanimously)</p>
Grounds Staff required to self-isolate (7 days or more) or unable to work normal hours due to caring responsibilities			X	Reduced level of services / requirement to close facilities if they cannot be maintained safely	<p>Unaffected staff to cover colleagues hours if possible / non-essential work to be postponed in a phased way (see separate schedule) / staff to be permitted to work flexible hours in consultation with the Clerk / staff to be paid in accordance with sick pay policy for self-isolation / Staff to follow government guidance to minimise the risks of cross infection (Resolved unanimously)</p>

Risk	Likelihood			Impact	Mitigation Measures
	L	M	H		
Grounds staff unable to work due to sickness (7 days or more)		X		Reduced level of services / requirement to close facilities and public areas if unable to maintain them safely.	Appropriate cleansing of workshops and public areas / provision of soap, gloves etc / Staff having had close contact to consider self-isolation if appropriate (Resolved unanimously)
Councillors required to self-isolate or unable to attend meetings due to sickness Government directive not to hold public meetings.		X		Inquire meetings / inability for Council to make lawful decisions	Delegation of powers to Clerk to undertake any appropriate actions, in consultation with the Chair and / or Chair of relevant Standing Committee and report to next appropriate meeting Actions may include not calling scheduled meetings; notifying public of meeting cancellations; (Unanimously resolved);
Requirement to hold Annual Council and / or Annual Parish Meeting (Statutory duty - A Government dispensation is required to cancel these)		X		Increased risk of infection of Council staff, members and general public	It was unanimously resolved to suspend all meetings including the Annual Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting until Government advice indicates it is safe to hold public gatherings.
All Staff required to self-isolate or unable to work due to sickness	X			Inability to maintain services safely	Council buildings to be closed / Play park to be closed / Litter / Dog bins to be sealed / notices to be posted on unsecured facilities that they are unchecked so use with caution. (Resolved unanimously)