



## NORTH WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr Geoff Chapman

Clerk: Mrs Rosemary Coulter

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### CORONAVIRUS COVID 19 OUTBREAK

#### PLAN TO ENSURE THE CONTINUITY OF NORTH WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL SERVICES

##### AIM

The aim of this document is to outline the measures put in place by North Waltham Parish Council (NWPC) to ensure it fulfils its statutory functions and maintains services during the Coronavirus Covid 19 outbreak.

##### BACKGROUND

The planned NWPC Ordinary Meeting, which was due to take place on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020, was inquorate and, therefore, the Parish Council was unable to approve a formal Delegation of Authority. However, those present discussed the functions of the Parish Council and formed a plan to manage during the current outbreak. This plan will be ratified by the Full Council at the first available opportunity.

##### THOSE PRESENT

Cllr Geoff Chapman (Chairman), Cllr Judith McGinley (Vice-Chairman) and Rosemary Coulter, Clerk.

##### FUNCTIONS OF NWPC

NWPC Standing Orders and Financial Regulations remain in place. However, as it is unlikely that NWPC will be able to hold a quorate meeting during the outbreak, the following functions were identified, and plans drawn up.

##### 1. FINANCE

- Three invoices awaiting approval for payment - as NWPC has already agreed for this work to be undertaken and costs were agreed against estimates, it was agreed to pay these invoices.
- Another invoice for equipment ordered is expected before the year end. As this purchase has already been agreed by NWPC, it was agreed to pay this invoice when received.
- Following these payments, there is no other outstanding work planned or purchases requiring payment.
- The Clerk's salary is paid monthly by Standing Order – no further action required.
- The balance on the Multipay card is paid monthly in full by direct debit – no further action required.
- Budgetary control and authority to spend - the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) has the following authority to spend:
  - in conjunction with the Chairman of Council for any items below £500. (Financial Regulation 4.1)
  - in the case of extreme risk to the delivery of council services ... up to £500. (Financial Regulation 4.5)
  - up to £499 on the Multipay card. (Financial Regulation 6.18)
- The Clerk shall report such actions to the Chairman as soon as possible and to the Parish Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- These amounts were considered sufficient to manage during the current disruption to services. Should any unforeseen expenses occur, the Clerk will consult the Parish Council via email for members views and authority to spend.

## **2. MEETINGS**

- The Ordinary Parish Council meeting planned for 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020 is cancelled.
- Ordinary Meetings after April 2020 will be reviewed on a month by month basis and the decision as to whether to go ahead will be made in accordance with advice from the Government and Public Health England (PHE).
- The Annual Parish Meeting is postponed indefinitely. As an alternative, village organisations will be asked to provide a short report outlining their activity during the last year and their plans for the forthcoming year, which will be collated by the Clerk and made available on the North Waltham website.

## **3. OTHER EVENTS**

- The Community Coffee and Litter Pick, planned for Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2020 is cancelled.

## **4. PLANNING**

- All new planning consultations from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) will be sent electronically.
- The Clerk will circulate these to Parish Councillors and ask them to review and respond within a set timeframe.
- The Clerk will then collate the responses and suggest a collective response from NWPC, which will again be circulated to Parish Councillors before responding to BDBC.
- In order to complete this process within the timescale, Parish Councillors will need to respond within the requested timescale.

## **5. AUDIT**

- The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) should be completed and signed off by the Parish Council by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. This may be difficult to complete if NWPC is unable to convene a quorate meeting before this date. It was decided to review this nearer the time of completion in line with Government and PHE advice.
- The Clerk has arranged a meeting with the Internal Auditor on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

## **6. KEEPING IN TOUCH**

- The Clerk will continue sharing information in the usual way.
- The Clerk will provide regular update reports to Parish Councillors, at least on a monthly basis but more frequently if required.
- The Clerk understands that the Government may be reviewing and relaxing some of the rules and regulations for Councils later this week. The Clerk will keep Parish Councillors informed of any changes.

## **SUMMARY**

The actions outlined above will be subject to regular review by the Clerk and Chairman and changes may be made as required to ensure the Parish Council is able to function during the disruption to its services. Councillors are welcome to comment and suggest further ways of maintaining services during the disruption.

This plan will cease when the Parish Council is able to convene a quorate meeting.

Rosemary Coulter  
Clerk to North Waltham Parish Council

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020