

# Cockermouth Town Council

8 April 2020

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Cockermouth **Wednesday 15 April 2020 at 7.00 pm** for the purpose of the under-mentioned business.

Please let me know if you are unable to attend.

All welcome.

Yours sincerely



Sheila Brown

**1. Apologies for absence**

**2. To authorise the Mayor to sign as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 18 March 2020 (pages 1-5)**

**3. To note the contents of the second meeting of the Climate Change Task Group held on 17 March 2020 (pages 6-13)**

**4. Declaration of Interest** – Members to give notice of any disclosable pecuniary interest, other registrable interest or any other interest and the nature of that interest in relation to any item on the agenda in accordance with the code of conduct.

**5. Mayors Announcements** – The Mayor will announce the events she has attended since the last meeting.

**6. Police Report** – To receive a report from Cumbria Constabulary

**7. Public Participation**

- a) To answer any questions from members of the public in accordance with the Summary of Public Rights
- b) To receive a petition from a member of the public in accordance with the Summary of Public Rights

**8. Planning Matters**

- a) To make recommendations upon various planning applications (**page 14-15**)

**9. Financial Matters**



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*Town Clerk*

Sheila Brown



*Joint Winners*  
Council of Europe Year 2000  
Europe Prize

*Previous Awards*  
Plaque of Honour, Flag of Honour  
European Diploma



*Twin Town*  
Marvejols, France



*A Fairtrade Town*

- a) To agree the attached schedule of payments (**pages 15-16**)
- b) To note the financial budget comparison between 1/4/19 – 31/3/20 (**pages 17-22**)
- c) To agree our accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 (**pages 23-25**)

**10. Clerks Report (pages 26-27)**

**11. High Consequence Infectious Disease Policy – To agree our draft policy (pages 28-31)**

**12. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (coronavirus) (flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 – To note the new emergency regulations and its implications for us as a town council (pages 32-45)**

**The Mayor will move that:-**

**Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be removed for the following items of business due to contractual issues being discussed**

- 13. To consider 3 requests from 3 of our tenants regarding a rent free period due to the effects of coronavirus on their business (pages 46-48)**

**Press and Public Welcome**

Minutes of a Meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Cockermouth on Wednesday 18 March 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Laidlow (Mayor)  
Councillor S Barnes  
Councillor I Burns  
Councillor A Kennon  
Councillor D Malloy  
Councillor A Semple  
Councillor A Smith  
Councillor C Smith

Apologies: S Nicholson, G Bennion, R Watson & A Tyson

Also Present: Two members of CERG

**165 Minutes**

Resolved – That the Mayor be authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting held on 19 February 2020.

**166 Declaration of Interest**

Councillor A Smith declared a personal interest in all planning applications due to being a member of the Development Panel.

**167 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor had attended no functions since the last meeting. All had been cancelled due to corona virus.

**168 Police Report**

There was no Police representative present at the meeting.

**169 Public Participation**

There was no public participation

**170 Tree planting proposals from Cumbria Woodlands**

Neville Ellstone was not present at the meeting. Staff at Cumbria Woodlands had ceased all face to face contact due to concerns about the corona virus.

Resolved – That the Town Clerk contacts Cumbria Woodlands to request plans and costings.

## **171 Planning Matters**

### **171a Planning Applications**

HOU/2020/0022

Demolition of garage and erection of 2 storey extension

2, Princes Road, Cockermouth

Recommended – Approval

HOU/2020/0043

Proposed ground floor sunroom/utility room to rear elevation

Garthwhins, Mayo Street

Recommended – Approval

FUL/2020/0052

To provide temporary weather protection to a section of the left (southern) river bank of Bitter Beck, Wasdale Close which has undergone mass wasting. The proposals will provide temporary weather protection whilst a long term slope stabilisation scheme is being developed.

Bank of Bitter Beck North of Wasdale Close

Recommended - That no formal response be made as Castle's and Coasts had been liaising with the Town Council over the use of Town Council owned land at St. Helens Street Allotments to access works on the slope.

### **171b Tree Works**

Resolved – That the various tree works, Tanners Lodge, Longcroft be agreed.

## **172 Schedule of Payments**

Resolved – That the schedule of payments in the sum of £6791.98 be formally approved for payment.

## **173 Correspondence**

### **173a Footway Lighting**



Those present discussed the details contained in the letter from the Deputy Leader.

The new administration at Allerdale have agreed to continue to maintain, repair and own the lights with just the electrical costs being transferred to parish councils. The charges will be introduced in April 2021 and it is anticipated that the average light cost will be around £39.20 per year. Town and Parish Councils are to be given a chance to review the locations of lights to decide if any are no longer required.

The Clerk advised those present that without details of the numbers and locations of footway lighting within our Parish she was unable to make any necessary preparations.

Members noted that CALC were seeking a legal opinion over the proposed transfer.

Agreed – That the content of the letter be noted.

#### **173b Local Electricity Bill**

Those present considered a request to support the Local Electricity Bill.

The Bill, if made law, would empower local communities to sell locally generated clean energy directly to local customers by establishing a statutory Right to Local Supply. This is currently impossible because of the huge setup and Running costs involved in doing so.

The benefits of doing this would be:-

1. Local communities and businesses could buy their electricity from a local energy company
2. Building more local renewable energy would be financially viable
3. Communities would benefit from the revenues that new local energy companies would generate, such as more local skilled jobs, energy efficiency schemes and investment in local facilities.

Resolved – a) That Cockermouth Town Council supports the Local Electricity Bill, supported by a cross-party group of 115 MP's during the 2017-19 Parliamentary Session and

b) That the Town Clerk contacts the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People to express our support.

#### **174 Training**

Councillor Bennion gave written feedback relating to her attendance at an Effective Councillor course last December.

She suggested that all town councillors disseminate their learning to the rest of the Town Council at the earliest Town Council meeting possible.

Resolved – That Councillors wishing to disseminate their learning do so by emailing all councillors.

#### **175 Youth Engagement**

Councillor Bennion suggested that a sub-committee of self-appointed youth meet with councillors to discuss what they would like to see in their town and that an ideas event inviting representatives from clubs and groups be held.

Those present expressed concern regarding raising expectations particularly if suggestions fell outside the Town Councils remit/budget.

They agreed to consult our youth on specific town council schemes.

Resolved – That this suggestion be not pursued.

#### **176 Breast-Feeding Awareness and Peer Support Groups (BAPS)**

Councillor Bennion proposed that the Clerk writes to CCC to ask if they can set up/facilitate a BAPS Group in Cockermouth Library.

Concern was expressed regarding the lack of space/private space in the library.

The Community Services Officer confirmed that groups had to follow strict standards and guidelines from UNICEF to be implemented and that Cockermouth Library had not been included in the BAPS roll out due to the fact that areas of need had been addressed first and that there was an existing well established group at Wild Zucchini's.

Resolved – That due to the lack of space and there being an established BAPS group in Cockermouth, the idea be not pursued.

#### **177 Big Lunch**

Councillor Watson proposed that this year's 'Big Lunch' event focus on the Library.

Resolved – That this year's 'Big Lunch' be cancelled due to the corona virus outbreak.

### **178 Coach Parking, Wakefield Road**

Those present discussed whether or not to continue to fund coach parking in Wakefield Road Car Park given the new coach parking installed nearby.

Resolved – That the legal situation regarding use of the new coach parking be investigated with Cumbria Highways.

### **179 Use of Memorial Gardens for Taste Cumbria/Northbound**

Those present considered an application from Allerdale Borough Council to use the Memorial Gardens between 25 September 2020 – 29 September 2020 for Taste Cumbria/Northbound.

Additional measures to mitigate damage to the grounds more effectively had been added.

Those present did not feel that the Memorial Gardens was a suitable site for an event of this type so late in the year. They suggested that the combined event be either split into two events held on the Main Street/Market Place or Wakefield Road Car Park be used instead.

Resolved – That permission to use the Memorial Gardens for Taste Cumbria/Northbound be refused.

The meeting closed at 7.44pm

**Minutes of a meeting of the CLIMATE CHANGE TASK GROUP held on Tuesday 17 March 2020 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, Cockermouth at 10.00am**

Present: Councillor S Barnes  
Councillor A Smith  
Councillor I Burns

Apologies: Councillor A Semple

**180 Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

**181 Public Participation**

There was none

**182 Declaration of Interest**

None declared.

**183 Climate Change Emergency**

Those present considered the replies received in respect of the actions completed at the last meeting.

The Chair had met the Chairman of the Allotments Association regarding the creation of pollinator friendly areas at our allotments.

The Budget 2020 had contained a mixed reaction to environmental issues.

The Task Group welcomed the new tax of £200 per tonne on plastic items containing less than 30% recycled plastic, a £640m Nature for Climate Fund and a commitment to plant 30,000 hectares of trees over 5 years.

One notable absentee policy was insulating Britain's 40 million homes so they don't waste energy.

Recommended - a) That the Chair draws up a scheme to create pollinator friendly areas within our allotments for future discussion.

b) That Councillor Smith requests a response from Allerdale Borough Council regarding segregated litter bins.

c) That the Town Council be requested to review the cost of green energy in April 2021 when our contract is due for renewal.

d) That a Give and Take Day be held.

e) That best pollinator garden and best pollinator allotment categories be added to the Garden Competition and that the Bee Keeping Society judge the category and provide the trophies.

f) That the list of possible actions be amended as per the attachment.

The meeting closed at 10.35am

# Climate Emergency

## List of possible actions for town council

### 1. ACTIONS WHICH ARE QUICK, CHEAP, RELATIVELY EASY

- Cease providing plastic water bottles at TC events – IN HAND
- Express concerns about river pollution to MP / Environment Agency – ACHIEVED
- Scheme for shops / businesses to refill water bottles – ACHIEVED
- Tree-planting on council-owned land - IN HAND Cumbria Woodlands have completed an audit. Neville will attend March 2020 TC Meeting
- Green pages on TC website – ACHIEVED
- Work with others (eg Goodness and Grain, Wordsworth House etc) to provide recycling opportunities for Tetrapaks – IN HAND
- Work with other businesses to increase recycling facilities (eg Aldi /Lidl for clothing) – IN HAND

- Carry out a 'green' survey of businesses asking them to score themselves against a set of criteria (eg recycling, use of plastic packaging etc)
- Where possible councillors to walk or cycle to meetings – IN HAND
- Encouraging shops to use paper bags
- Volunteers to provide advice on growing vegetables (like WW2 'Dig for Victory')
- Recycle Halloween outfits, Christmas jumpers, dressing up outfits and re-distribute through library – IN OPERATION
- Consider starting an Incredible Edible Group – To be discussed at our June 20 meeting
- Support the Local Electricity Bill – The Bill, if made Law would empower local communities to sell locally generated clean energy directly to local customers by establishing a statutory right to supply. This is currently impossible because of the huge set up and running costs involved in doing so – SUPPORTED 18.3.20 TC MEETING

## 2. ACTIONS WHICH MAY REQUIRE WORKING WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES AND/OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND WHICH MAY REQUIRE FUNDING

- Cease / restrict use of 'pesticides' on council land – IN HAND - Town Clerk to write to Tivoli. Tivoli have drastically reduced the use of Glyphosate usage in Allerdale by 75%, by using a residual herbicide in Feb/March which prevents germination. The hanging baskets we provide already contain plants that will attract bees and other pollinators
- Plant wild-flower meadow areas in Memorial Gardens and/or elsewhere - IN HAND - Rotary to plant wild flower meadow in Memorial Gardens
- Work with Allerdale / business to provide electric vehicle charging points in town – Allerdale to look at issue again/Cumbria LEP is currently considering the approach to electric vehicle infrastructure. This is likely to result in the development of an electric vehicle strategy which would look at a range of issues including the future development of charging points across the County and the approach for installation of charges at residential properties.
- Work with Cumbria Woodlands to plant trees on council-owned land – IN HAND – Audit undertaken & Cumbria Woodlands to attend our March 2020 meeting
- Support / encourage cycling-friendly businesses



- Support carbon offset schemes run by local travel agents (tie in to tree planting) IN HAND – No reply from Craig Travel, tree planting scheme already in existence with Cockermouth Travel.
- Neighbourhood Plan – specs for new builds on insulation, green energy etc.
- Town Council buildings – ensure insulation up to spec and energy from green supplier, (eg Good Energy or Ecotricity) PARTIALLY IN HAND – Town Clerk to write to procurement at CCC to find out if green energy suppliers included in their tender process and if they would be willing to move to 100% green energy. Npower supply brown energy which is cheaper. Having said that 8.5% coal, 57.9% natural gas, 17.4% nuclear, 12.6% renewable, 3.6% other. If we add green for our site this can be done from the contract anniversary period April 2021. The additional cost would be approximately 0.05p/kwh. Town Council asked to consider.
- Floral displays in town centre to use plants which attract bees and other pollinators IN HAND – Tivoli have confirmed that they use such plants
- Work with local schools to discourage engine-idling in vicinity of schools DELETE engine idling in the vicinity of schools now against the law
- Encourage county council to plant wildflower verges on approaches into town – IN HAND Town Clerk to write to CCC about planting wildflowers on verges on approaches to town and on banking in their ownership opposite Gote Road allotments. In general the soil on the verges is too rich for wildflowers. Verges need to have the soil stripped off. A bee corridor will be created across North Cumbria. It

mainly follows the A591 but will include the A66 from the Low Road roundabout heading out towards Workington. This will be funded through National/charitable funding to support bees.

- Install drinking fountain in town centre for refilling bottles (ideal for cyclists) DELETE – Lots of businesses offering free refills in town.
- Create a bee-garden – DELETE the creation of a single garden. Chair instead to speak at a future meeting of the Allotments Association about bee keeping and pollinator friendly allotments. Allotments Association to discuss this issue at their meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup>. Chair to draw up a scheme.
- Plant rowan trees (or other suitable species) in between the existing Main St trees to provide for the long-term – DELETE not felt to be feasible
- Bikes paths / lanes / parking places / electric bike charging points
- Planting vegetables on council land – amend to planting fruit trees instead of vegetables – IN HAND speaking to Neville about planting fruit trees as part of audit.
- Acquiring land for allotments – DELETE numbers on the allotment waiting list did not support the acquisition of more land.
- Encouraging shops to sell more local produce – AMEND to Encouraging shops to sell more seasonal produce

- Returnable town maps – DELETE maps produced to encourage visitors to re-use on return visits
- Town centre litter bins with separate compartments for plastic, paper and general rubbish – IN HAND Town Clerk to write to Allerdale to request these. No reply to date. Councillor Smith to chase a response
- Give and Take Day – To be discussed in detail at the meeting. Funding available from CCC. Idea supported and referred to Town Council
- Best Pollinator Allotment and Best Pollinator Garden categories to be added to Garden Competition.
- Incredible Edible – To be considered at our 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting

### 3. LONGER-TERM AIM / AMBITION

- The aim of Cockermouth Town Council is for its activities to be carbon-neutral by 2030 at the latest. This will require an audit of the council's current carbon footprint and concerted efforts to reduce it. Some of the measures that will be necessary are included above, e.g. ensuring that town council buildings are fully insulated and that energy is purchased from 'green' suppliers.

The following planning applications were circulated round all 12 councillors following social distancing in respect of corona virus:

**FUL/2020/0038 (amended plans)**

Resubmission of application FUL/2019/0104 for the change of use to holiday let with associated works including reinstatement of loft space above main staircase

All Saints Church Rooms, Kirkgate

Recommended – Refusal same reasons as previous

**HOU/2020/0043 (change of description)**

Proposed ground floor sunroom/utility room to rear elevation

Garthwhins, Mayo Street

Recommended – Approval

**FUL/2020/0063 & LBC/2020/0012**

Formation of new gated opening in eastern party boundary wall

Wordsworth Hotel, 43 Main Street

Recommended – Approval

**HOU/2020/0043 (as amended) (change of description)**

Proposed ground floor sunroom/utility room with decking and glass balustrade to rear elevation

Garthwhins, Mayo Street

Recommended – Approval

**FUL/2020/0064**

Demolition of retail unit and change of use as a pay and display car park

Country Pine and Oak, Lorton Street

Recommended – Approval

**VAR/2020/0005**

Variation condition 3, opening hours on application 2/2001/0900

Harris Park Bowling Club, Fern Bank

Recommended – Approval

**WTPO/2020/0010**

Crown thin up to 25% t4 & T5

Recommended – Approval

**HOU/2020/0029**

Replacement windows and doors

17, Cocker Lane

Recommended – Approval

**The following planning application(s) require a decision:-**

HOU/2020/0057

Proposed single storey extension to rear

25, Parkside Avenue

Recommended -

# Expenditure transactions - approval list

Cheque	Gross	Vat	Net Heading	Invoice date	Details	Cheque Total
112520	£22.00	£3.67	£18.33 4020	01/04/20	A Kennon - Signs - TIC boards	£22.00
112508	£150.00	£0.00	£150.00 11060	01/04/20	Simon Hine Window Cleaning Services - clean bus shelters	£150.00
112509	£58.47	£0.00	£58.47	01/04/20	Viking - toilet roll/ stationery	£58.47
	£34.04	£0.00	£34.04 2100		toilet roll	
	£24.43	£0.00	£24.43 3020		stationery	
112510	£94.38	£15.73	£78.65 2060	01/04/20	Cumbria Pest Services - washroom control	£94.38
112511	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00 4020	01/04/20	Mr M Bradshaw - replace window in library	£300.00
112512	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00 3060	01/04/20	Poppy Appeal - wreath VE VJ celebrations	£20.00
112513	£445.00	£70.67	£374.33	01/04/20	Npower Ltd - electricity charges	£445.00
	£29.40	£1.40	£28.00 7020		wakefield road toilets	
	£415.60	£69.27	£346.33 4020		library	
112515	£144.59	£24.10	£120.49	01/04/20	Orian - Annual Inspection	£144.59
	£102.59	£17.10	£85.49 4020		Library	
	£42.00	£7.00	£35.00 12010		VH	
112516	£78.96	£13.16	£65.80 3130	01/04/20	Orian - Annual Inspection - TH	£78.96
112517	£38.21	£6.37	£31.84 14010	01/04/20	WF Cascade - cleaning products - foam soap	£38.21
112507	£113.92	£0.00	£113.92 4020	01/04/20	S P Martin Electricals Limited - Replace emergency light pack Library	£113.92
112519	£76.26	£12.71	£63.55 2100	01/04/20	WF Cascade - cleaning products - corona virus	£76.26
112521	£7.64	£1.27	£6.37 3020	01/04/20	Viking - new bin - kg	£7.64
112522	£330.00	£0.00	£330.00 5030	01/04/20	Leconfield Estates - Rent of Land St Helens Allotments	£330.00
112523	£12.00	£2.00	£10.00 3020	01/04/20	Tech 4 Office Equipment Ltd - Hire of printer KG work from home	£12.00
112524	£66.45	£0.00	£66.45 4020	01/04/20	Cockermouth Paper Shop - Library Papers - supplied up to 28.03.20	£66.45
112525	£2,235.15	£0.00	£2,235.15 6060	01/04/20	Cumbria Coal Ltd - Tarn Close Depot Rent -	£2,235.15
112526	£34.04	£5.67	£28.37 2100	01/04/20	Viking - hand towels	£34.04
112527	£226.30	£0.00	£226.30	01/04/20	Water Plus - water charges	£226.30
	£133.52	£0.00	£133.52 4020		CM Library	
	£39.40	£0.00	£39.40 14030		Public Toilets	
	£53.38	£0.00	£53.38 7020		Mem Gardens toilets	

Signature

Signature

Date

# Expenditure transactions - approval list

Cheque	Gross	Vat	Net Heading	Invoice date	Details	Cheque Total
112528	£9.41	£0.45	£8.96 14030	01/04/20	Npower Ltd - electric charges - Harris Park toilets see invoice for info	£9.41
112518	£56.39	£9.40	£46.99 3020	01/04/20	Tech 4 Office Equipment Ltd - new staples for photocopier	£56.39
112529	£1,824.00	£304.00	£1,520.00 6010	01/04/20	Christmas Plus - Xmas Lights	£1,824.00
112530	£41.28	£6.88	£34.40 6030	01/04/20	Lakes Electrial Supplies Ltd - X,mas Lights	£41.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,384.45</b>	<b>£476.08</b>	<b>£5,908.37</b>			

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/19 and 01/04/20 inclusive.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/01/01

		2019/2020	Actual Net	Balance
<b>INCOME</b>				
<b>Council</b>				
100	Precept	£198,570.00	£198,570.00	£0.00
<b>Total Council</b>		£198,570.00	£198,570.00	£0.00
<b>Establishment</b>				
300	Establishment- interest	£1,500.00	£1,213.32	-£286.68
310	Est- misc income	£0.00	£3,023.00	£3,023.00
330	Est- Maps	£0.00	£647.00	£647.00
<b>Total Establishment</b>		£1,500.00	£4,883.32	-£3,383.32
<b>Tourist Information Centre</b>				
400	Tourist Information Centre Sales	£4,000.00	£3,211.59	-£788.41
405	Tourist Information Centre Bass Lake	£190.00	£367.55	£177.55
415	Rental/ Income	£10,000.00	£9,359.96	-£640.04
420	Talking Books/Requests	£0.00	£893.20	£893.20
425	TIC - Printing, Photocopy, Laminating	£0.00	£1,841.15	£1,841.15
430	Library Replacement Card	£0.00	£51.15	£51.15
435	Library Fines	£0.00	£252.75	£252.75
440	ABC Printing	£0.00	£562.65	£562.65
445	CCC - Printing	£0.00	£288.96	£288.96
450	Rotary Calendars	£0.00	£82.50	£82.50
<b>Total Tourist Information Centre</b>		£14,190.00	£16,911.46	-£2,721.46
<b>Allotments</b>				
500	Allotments rents	£1,806.00	£1,845.94	£39.94
<b>Total Allotments</b>		£1,806.00	£1,845.94	-£39.94
<b>Christmas Lights</b>				
600	Christmas lights donations	£1,041.00	£2,209.00	£1,168.00
605	Christmas Lights - Tarn Close Depot	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Christmas Lights</b>		£1,041.00	£2,209.00	-£1,168.00
<b>Memorial Garden</b>				
700	Memorial Gardens misc income	£0.00	£2,991.50	£2,991.50
<b>Total Memorial Garden</b>		£0.00	£2,991.50	-£2,991.50
<b>Twinning</b>				
800	Twinning Income	£14,700.00	£12,526.88	-£2,173.12
<b>Total Twinning</b>		£14,700.00	£12,526.88	£2,173.12
<b>Events</b>				
900	Event Fireworks income	£220.00	£380.00	£160.00
905	Events- festival income	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00



# Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/19 and 01/04/20 inclusive.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/01/01

		2019/2020	Actual Net	Balance
910	Events- Carnival income	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
915	Events- Food Festival income	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
920	Events- Joint road closure	£0.00	£486.75	£486.75
<b>Total Events</b>		£220.00	£866.75	-£646.75
<b>Town Hall</b>				
200	Town Hall Room Hire	£1,500.00	£1,686.66	£186.66
205	Town Hall- Rent Day Services	£14,161.00	£13,970.68	-£190.32
210	Town Hall- Rent Offices	£11,940.00	£10,306.06	-£1,633.94
215	Town Hall- income ABC cleaning	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
220	Town Hall - Wedding Room Hire	£7,000.00	£10,065.00	£3,065.00
<b>Total Town Hall</b>		£34,601.00	£36,028.40	-£1,427.40
<b>Open Spaces</b>				
1100	Open Spaces- Fishing Rights- Permits	£65.00	£202.50	£137.50
1105	open Spaces- war memorials	£0.00	£14,750.00	£14,750.00
1110	open Spaces- Public Clocks	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
1115	Open Spaces- flower baskets/bulbs	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
1130	Bus Shelters	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Open Spaces</b>		£65.00	£14,952.50	-£14,887.50
<b>Projects</b>				
1010	Cenotaph	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Projects</b>		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Other Properties</b>				
1200	Other Properties- Youth Hostel	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
1205	Other Properties- Victoria Hall Rent	£2,500.00	£4,099.96	£1,599.96
1210	Other Properties- Tarn Close Sports Ground	£375.00	£375.00	£0.00
1215	Other Properties- quarterly play area /grass	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Other Properties</b>		£2,875.00	£4,474.96	-£1,599.96
<b>Balances</b>				
1300	Balances - To income	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Balances</b>		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>VAT Refunds</b>				
1500	VAT Refunds	£0.00	£39,611.61	£39,611.61
<b>Total VAT Refunds</b>		£0.00	£39,611.61	-£39,611.61
<b>Public Toilets</b>				
1400	Public Toilets - Income	£2,500.00	£4,109.53	£1,609.53
<b>Total Public Toilets</b>		£2,500.00	£4,109.53	-£1,609.53

# Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/19 and 01/04/20 inclusive.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/01/01

	2019/2020	Actual Net	Balance
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>£272,068.00</u>	<u>£339,981.85</u>	<u>£67,913.85</u>

# Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/19 and 01/04/20 inclusive.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/01/01

		2019/2020	Actual Net	Balance
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
<b>Council</b>				
1600	To Balances	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Council</b>		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Establishment</b>				
3000	Establishment Wages	£78,398.00	£84,322.77	-£5,924.77
3010	Establishment- phone,net,postage	£1,200.00	£1,078.77	£121.23
3020	Establishment- print,statio,equip	£2,500.00	£2,708.93	-£208.93
3030	Establishment- ins not town hall	£7,000.00	£10,314.52	-£3,314.52
3040	Establishment- subscriptions	£870.00	£1,605.34	-£735.34
3050	Establishment- Audit fees	£1,250.00	£1,223.40	£26.60
3060	Establishment- Misc	£3,500.00	£3,680.34	-£180.34
3070	Establishment- Grants to orgs	£1,000.00	£400.00	£600.00
3080	Establishment- Advertsing	£250.00	£0.00	£250.00
3090	Establishment- Mayors Allowance	£2,200.00	£2,200.00	£0.00
3100	Establishment- Mayors Entertainment Fund	£550.00	£433.47	£116.53
3110	Establishment- Elections	£7,000.00	£0.00	£7,000.00
3130	Establishment- H&S	£50.00	£135.80	-£85.80
3140	Establishment- Training	£500.00	£332.33	£167.67
3150	Establishment- Bank Charges	£1,200.00	£1,078.18	£121.82
3160	Establishment- Payroll	£400.00	£489.78	-£89.78
<b>Total Establishment</b>		£107,868.00	£110,003.63	£2,135.63
<b>Tourist Information Centre</b>				
4000	Tourist Information Centre-wages	£21,100.00	£23,702.89	-£2,602.89
4010	Tourist Information Centre- goods resale	£2,000.00	£3,001.03	-£1,001.03
4020	Tourist Information Centre-costs	£16,000.00	£20,150.89	-£4,150.89
4030	Tourist Information Centre-Bass lake	£152.00	£0.00	£152.00
4040	Rotary Calendars	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Tourist Information Centre</b>		£39,252.00	£46,854.81	£7,602.81
<b>Allotments</b>				
5000	Allotments Water Charges	£1,000.00	£434.68	£565.32
5010	Allotment Gen Main	£1,400.00	£1,016.25	£383.75
5030	Rent for St Helen's Street	£330.00	£347.92	-£17.92
<b>Total Allotments</b>		£2,730.00	£1,798.85	-£931.15
<b>Christmas Lights</b>				
6000	Christmas lights contract	£16,850.00	£17,271.25	-£421.25
6010	Christmas Light misc bulb cable etc	£5,186.00	£8,111.52	-£2,925.52
6020	Christmas Lights Elec Costs	£1,000.00	£1,029.69	-£29.69
6030	Christmas Lights SWOD exp	£3,000.00	£3,745.27	-£745.27
6040	Christmas Lights comps	£85.00	£85.00	£0.00

# Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/19 and 01/04/20 inclusive.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/01/01

		2019/2020	Actual Net	Balance
6050	Christmas Lights - CADS Panto	£300.00	£300.00	£0.00
6060	Christmas Lights - Tarn Close Depot	£4,361.00	£4,361.26	-£0.26
<b>Total Christmas Lights</b>		£30,782.00	£34,903.99	£4,121.99
<b>Memorial Garden</b>				
7000	Memorial Gardens Contract	£8,300.00	£9,197.10	-£897.10
7010	Memorial Gardens Play Area	£3,000.00	£37,824.65	-£34,824.65
7020	Memorial Gardens Misc	£1,000.00	£5,432.78	-£4,432.78
<b>Total Memorial Garden</b>		£12,300.00	£52,454.53	£40,154.53
<b>Twinning</b>				
8000	Twinning visit incoming	£1,000.00	£963.40	£36.60
8010	Twinning Visit Out Going	£14,700.00	£14,029.25	£670.75
8020	Twinning Grants EPSF	£500.00	£500.00	£0.00
<b>Total Twinning</b>		£16,200.00	£15,492.65	-£707.35
<b>Events</b>				
9000	Events- FireworksDisplay	£6,000.00	£5,642.66	£357.34
9010	Events - Festival exp	£500.00	£500.00	£0.00
9020	Events- Carnival exp	£250.00	£250.00	£0.00
9030	Events- Food Festival	£4,166.00	£4,166.67	-£0.67
9040	Events - Taste Christmas	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£0.00
9060	Events- Joint Road Closure	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Events</b>		£11,916.00	£11,559.33	-£356.67
<b>Town Hall</b>				
2000	Town Hall - Gen Main	£2,500.00	£1,910.14	£589.86
2010	Town Hall- Refurb of Furnishings	£1,000.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
2020	Town Hall- Capital Impr Scheme/ Grd Maint	£1,000.00	£1,336.00	-£336.00
2030	Town Hall- rates	£11,108.00	£12,275.00	-£1,167.00
2040	Town Hall- Utilities	£6,000.00	£7,075.09	-£1,075.09
2050	Town Hall- Phone,net, frank	£2,176.00	£1,697.23	£478.77
2060	Town Hall- window, bins,sanitary, fire	£600.00	£961.51	-£361.51
2070	Town Hall- Insurance	£2,121.00	£0.00	£2,121.00
2080	Town Hall- Refreshments	£145.00	£58.95	£86.05
2090	Town Hall- Cleaners wage	£4,000.00	£4,267.92	-£267.92
2100	Town Hall- cleaning products	£250.00	£581.93	-£331.93
2110	Town Hall - Wedding Exp	£0.00	£797.89	-£797.89
<b>Total Town Hall</b>		£30,900.00	£30,961.66	£61.66
<b>Open Spaces</b>				
11000	Open Spaces-Fishing stationery	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
11010	Open Spaces- war memorials	£350.00	£30,180.55	-£29,830.55
11020	Open Spaces-Public Clocks	£270.00	£736.00	-£466.00
11030	Open Spaces -flower baskets	£2,500.00	£2,472.47	£27.53
11060	Open Spaces - Bus Shelter	£500.00	£530.00	-£30.00
11080	Open Spaces - clever sid	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00
<b>Total Open Spaces</b>		£3,720.00	£33,919.02	£30,199.02

# Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/19 and 01/04/20 inclusive.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/01/01

		2019/2020	Actual Net	Balance
<b>Other Properties</b>				
12000	Other Properties- YHA exp	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
12010	Other Properties-Victoria Hall	£1,000.00	£3,000.00	-£2,000.00
12020	Other Properties-Tarn Close Sports Ground misc exp	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
12030	Other Properties-3/4 insp/grass swings	£1,800.00	£2,435.10	-£635.10
<b>Total Other Properties</b>		£2,800.00	£5,435.10	£2,635.10
<b>Balances</b>				
13000	Balances - From Exp	£0.00	£11,961.44	-£11,961.44
<b>Total Balances</b>		£0.00	£11,961.44	£11,961.44
<b>VAT Refunds</b>				
15000	VAT Due to C/E	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total VAT Refunds</b>		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Public Toilets</b>				
14000	Public Toilets- Gen Main	£2,100.00	£1,846.34	£253.66
14010	Public Toilets - Cleaning Products	£1,000.00	£271.61	£728.39
14020	Public Toilets- Cleaners Wage	£5,000.00	£5,627.23	-£627.23
14030	Public Toilets- Utilities/ Rates	£3,000.00	£4,945.23	-£1,945.23
<b>Total Public Toilets</b>		£11,100.00	£12,690.41	£1,590.41
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		£269,568.00	£368,035.42	-£98,467.42
Total Income		£272,068.00	£339,981.85	£67,913.85
Total Expenditure		£269,568.00	£368,035.42	-£98,467.42
Funded by reserves			£0.00	
<b>Total Net Balance</b>		<b>£2,500.00</b>	<b>-£28,053.57</b>	

# Income and Expenditure Account

Unaudited

31/03/19 £		31/03/20 £
	<b>INCOME</b>	
2,140.09	Allotments	1,840.57
0.00	Balances	0.00
1,385.50	Christmas Lights	2,329.00
2,362.27	Establishment	4,883.32
805.00	Events	866.75
0.00	Flood Prevention income	0.00
0.00	Income	0.00
18.40	Memorial Gardens	2,991.50
8,204.00	Open Spaces	14,952.50
159,720.43	Other Properties	4,474.96
194,384.83	Precept	198,570.00
0.00	Projects	0.00
3,895.00	Public Toilets	4,109.53
14,230.26	Tourist Information Centre	16,911.46
34,414.08	Town Hall	35,834.74
1,638.60	Twinning	14,321.88
423,198.46	<b>INCOME TOTAL</b>	302,086.21
	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
4,147.56	Allotments	1,747.36
2,650.00	Balances	11,961.44
31,221.87	Christmas Lights	35,541.76
100,658.21	Establishment	110,003.63
11,359.67	Events	11,559.33
250.00	Expenditure	0.00
0.00	Flood prevention scheme	0.00
11,176.85	Memorial Gardens	52,402.72
78,521.03	Open Spaces	33,454.05
11,069.14	Other Properties	5,435.10
0.00	Projects	0.00
11,995.45	Public Toilets	12,633.09
0.00	S. 137 Payments	0.00
56,154.23	Tourist Information Centre	46,523.71
29,859.59	Town Hall	30,638.04
7,105.43	Twinning	15,492.65
356,169.03	<b>EXPENDITURE TOTAL</b>	367,392.88

# Income and Expenditure Account

31/03/19		31/03/20
£	EXPENDITURE	£
195,388.16	Balance as at 01/04/19	262,417.59
423,198.46	Add Total Income	302,086.21
618,586.62		564,503.80
356,169.03	Deduct Total Expenditure	367,392.88
0.00	Stock Adjustment	0.00
0.00	Transfer to/ from reserves	0.00
262,417.59	Balance as at 31/03/20	197,110.92

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Chair

  
Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer

# Consolidated Balance Sheet

Unaudited

31/03/19

£

31/03/20

£

## Long Term assets

0.00	Investments	0.00
0.00	Long Term Debts	0.00
0.00	<b>TOTAL LONG TERM ASSETS</b>	<b>0.00</b>

## Current assets

45,862.05	Investments	45,862.05
0.00	Loans Made	0.00
0.00	Investments	0.00
4,500.00	Stocks	4,500.00
14,557.42	VAT Recoverable	7,584.75
166.66	Debtors	0.00
1,093.20	Payment in Advance	0.00
202,561.00	Cash in Hand at Bank	141,868.49
268,740.33	<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>199,815.29</b>
268,740.33	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>199,815.29</b>

## Current liabilities

0.00	Loans Received	0.00
0.00	Temporary Borrowing	0.00
0.00	VAT Payable	0.00
1,735.74	Creditors	0.00
4,587.00	Receipts in Advance	2,704.37
6,322.74	<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2,704.37</b>
262,417.59	<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>197,110.92</b>

0.00	Long Term Borrowing	0.00
0.00	Deferred Liabilities	0.00
0.00	Deferred Credits	0.00
0.00		0.00
262,417.59	<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>197,110.92</b>

## Represented by

262,417.59	General Fund	197,110.92
0.00	Capital receipt following sale	
0.00	Sale of Double Mills	0.00
262,417.59		197,110.92

Signed

Chairman

Date

AUDIT OPINION

Responsible Financial Officer



•  
CLERK'S REPORT

**Tourism and Publicity**

Visitor numbers for March – tbc

The library/tic closed on 18 March 2020 until 1 May 2020

**Library**

Cockermouth Heritage Group will be staging an exhibition in the library throughout May 2020 to commemorate WW2 – This may be cancelled.

Councillors Kennon & Malloy kindly refurbished the notice boards outside the library.

Dressing up has been warmly welcomed. Outdoor seating will be delivered once the restrictions are lifted.

**Victoria Hall**

The new doors have been installed.

**Public Toilets**

These were closed on 24 March 2020. Awaiting further Government Advice.

**Play Areas**

These were closed on 24 March 2020. Awaiting further Government Advice.

The climbing frame is being painted.

The broken slats on the bridge in the Memorial Gardens have been replaced.

**Twinning**

The small group of 10 French Rotarians will not now visit Cockermouth between 3-6 April 2020. Neither will the 3 others travelling with them will attend Daffodil Day.

A small group of barrel organists will come over to Cockermouth in July to play at Cockermouth Live. Cockermouth Live will pay the performers some money towards their expenses.

Arrangements are well underway for the 37<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Visit.

The EPSF has been cancelled for this year due to corona virus.

**Allotments**

Rents are being sent out.

Plot 9a St Helen's Street allotments has been given up. We will re-let asap.

**Metalcraft Community Fund**

Their first meeting was cancelled. The £500 was donated to the Cockermouth Foodbank.

**Cancellations due to the Corona Virus**

All weddings have been cancelled.

The planning inquiry Strawberry How may be cancelled.

Castle Tours in June have been cancelled.

Our UTC work experience student has been cancelled.

## HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Cockermouth Town Council actively seeks to protect the Councillors, Volunteers and Staff working for and on behalf of the council and its activities. As such, and following any current Public Health England (PHE) and government guidelines, the following policy applies to any High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) as defined by PHE

This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Town Council will follow in respect of and HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Cockermouth.

### 2. Scope of the policy

The main areas of concern for Cockermouth Town Council with respect to HCIDs are:

- Remaining an effective council
- Safety & Health of Councillors, Contractors, Staff, Volunteers and Members of Public.

### 3. Activation of the policy

This policy is considered to be activated, when

- There is an active outbreak of a HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Cockermouth **and**
- At least 3 councillors have requested its activation to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the Town Clerk, or the Chairman plus 2 councillors have requested its activation to the Town Clerk, or its activation is resolved in a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council.

OR

- The government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings.

### 4. Deactivation of the policy

This policy is considered to be deactivated, when

- When the imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Cockermouth has passed **and**
- A minimum of 4 councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced **and**
- The government of the United Kingdom as reinstated all public meetings.

### 5. Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

A HCID is defined as

- acute infectious disease
- typically has a high case-fatality rate
- may not have effective prophylaxis or treatment
- often difficult to recognise and detect rapidly
- ability to spread in the community and within healthcare settings
- requires an enhanced individual, population and system response to ensure it is managed effectively, efficiently and safely

The current list of HCIDs as defined on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) (11/03/2020)

Contact HCID	Airborne HCID
Argentine haemorrhagic fever (Junin virus)	Andes virus infection (hantavirus)
Bolivian haemorrhagic fever (Machupo virus)	Avian influenza A H7N9 and H5N1
Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF)	Avian influenza A H5N6 and H7N7
Ebola virus disease (EVD)	Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)
Lassa fever	Monkeypox
Lujo virus disease	Nipah virus infection
Marburg virus disease (MVD)	Pneumonic plague (Yersinia pestis)
Severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome (SFTS)	Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)*
	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

At any such time as a new disease is classified as a HCID, it shall be treated as if it were in the list above and this policy shall apply.

## 6. Matters relating to staff

Cockermouth Town Council's official office is based at The Town Hall, Market Street, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 9NP. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, face to face contact will not be permitted. Correspondence can be sent to the Town Clerk at her official office, alternatively she can be contacted via telephone on 01900 821869 or emailed on [clerk@cockermouth.org](mailto:clerk@cockermouth.org)

In the event of a HCID outbreak the National Joint Council for local government services (NJC) will issue guidance for employers which the council will follow. A summary of the most recent guidance during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 is detailed below

Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery. As per Part 2 Para 10.9 of the 'Green Book', if an employee is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate, their absence should not be recorded as sickness absence. We would expect all options for home or remote working to be explored with the employee. As they are 'well' at this stage they should stay on normal full pay for the duration of the self-isolation period until such time as they are confirmed to have contracted any such HCID, at which point they transfer to sickness absence leave and the usual provisions of the sickness scheme will apply.

In circumstances where an employee decides to self-isolate without instruction from the authorities it is not unreasonable for the employer to ask for some evidence such as an email from a holiday operator that shows the dates of the holiday, the resort location and flight details. However, it will probably not be possible in all cases for an employee to produce any evidence, so employers will need to use their discretion when trying to establish the facts behind the employee's decision to self-isolate

If an employee is caring for someone who has or may have coronavirus, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given the employee may then have been in direct contact with the virus we would expect only working from home arrangements to be then considered for the

duration of the incubation period. Employers should keep in touch to support employees.

Following any school closures, employers should be fully supportive of employees with childcare responsibilities and consider flexible working arrangements, including adapting working patterns to care for children or dependants or taking time off, whether this is special leave, annual leave or flexible working.

## **7. Public Meetings**

It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, that council business shall be conducted at public meetings of the council and any committees.

Councillors and other Volunteers can choose to not attend public meetings. As an officer of the council, the Clerk cannot choose to not attend meetings.

Due to the nature of local government and considering the Councillors and Members of Public whom attend meetings, there is high percentage of attendees whom would be considered "high risk" with respect to all of the HCIDs listed in Section 0. As such, to protect the health of all attendees, public meetings are suspended during the active period of this policy.

## **8. Delegated Authority**

To allow the council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following items are delegated to the Town Clerk for the duration of the activation of this policy.

Planning applications, after consultation with a minimum of 4 councillors, a summary response will be circulated to all councillors for comment prior to submission to Allerdale Borough Council by the Town Clerk.

### **Finance**

- 8.1.1.1. all standard recurring payments listed as line items on the budget will be paid by the RFO at the appropriate time to prevent any late charges, such as salaries, printing costs, dog waste, licences and IT services etc.
- 8.1.1.2. all payments to be authorised by a minimum of 2 councillors by e-mail prior to payment.
- 8.1.1.3. All payments will be formally authorised by the full council at the next full council meeting.
- 8.1.1.4. Where this policy is activated over the end of the financial year, the RFO will prepare the end of year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and circulate to all of the councillors. On the acceptance of a minimum of 4 councillors, they will be signed by the RFO, Clerk and Chairman as applicable for submission to the external and internal auditors. The accounts will be accepted by resolution at the next full council meeting.
- 8.1.2. Responses to other communications. The Clerk will circulate at the earliest opportunity, any communication from any 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties which would normally be presented at a meeting for consideration by the council. The clerk will circulate the summary response to the full council prior to responding to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party.
- 8.1.3. In accordance with LGA 1972, where this policy is activated during a meeting of the council the meeting will be adjourned. Using the delegated authority as detailed in 0 to 8.1.2, the Clerk will endeavour to close out as much of the

remaining agenda, the results of which will be reported to the council after the adjournment when the rest of the agenda is considered.

**9. Review of the policy**

9.1. This policy was approved by the Parish Council at its meeting on 2020 and will be reviewed as required.

S Brown  
Town Clerk



3 APRIL 2020

## **L01-20 | THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020**

### **Introduction**

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") come in to force on 4 April. Broadly speaking, the 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May next year. They also remove the requirement to hold an annual meeting. The 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings in England. Separate legislation is anticipated for Wales.

This briefing will summarise the detail of the 2020 Regulations and what they mean for local councils. The briefing should also be read in conjunction with the NALC guidance on remote meetings, which considers more practical issues around the holding of electronic meetings. The term "local council" will be used in this briefing to refer to parish councils, town councils and councils using alternative styles.

### **Background to the 2020 Regulations**

The COVID-19/ Coronavirus pandemic and the unprecedented in peacetime Government measures in response to the crisis (e.g. prohibitions on gatherings, social distancing, self-isolation and shielding of those deemed to be the most vulnerable) have meant that the requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person with all members present in one place cannot be met. The statutory requirements for meetings are mainly contained in the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act") and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 ("the 1960 Act").

In recognition of the problem of holding and attending meetings, and further to the lobbying of NALC and others, the Government included s.78 in the Coronavirus Act 2020. This section gave the Secretary of State the power to make Regulations to make provisions for the holding of meetings. The 2020 Regulations set out those provisions.

## **What are the main provisions for local councils?**

The relevant Regulations for local authorities are as follows:

Regulation 2 – the 2020 Regulations apply to local authority meetings that are required to be held, or held, before 7 May 2021. The date could be brought forward if Government rules are relaxed.

Regulation 3 – parish councils in England are included within the definition of “local authority” in the 2020 Regulations. Parish meetings are not included within the definition and, as such, there is nothing permitting them to meet remotely. In NALC’s view, the current Government guidance means that parish meetings should not take place in person, including the annual meeting of the electors.

Regulation 4 – this provides that where an appointment would otherwise be made or is required to be made at an annual meeting of a local authority, the appointment continues until the next annual meeting of the authority or until such time as that authority may determine (Regulation 4 (2)). This would apply to the election of the chairman, the first business at the annual council meeting. Therefore the current chairman will remain in place until an annual meeting is held (possibly next year) unless the council decide to elect a replacement earlier.

Regulation 5 – this permits the holding of remote meetings. The effect of the Regulation is that persons attending a local council meeting do not need to be in the same place. “Place” means more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers (Regulation 5 (1)). To attend a meeting remotely a member in remote attendance must meet specified conditions (see below).

Regulation 5 (6) also enables local councils to make standing orders to specify (i) how voting will be carried out, (ii) how members and the public can access documents and (iii) how remote access of the press and public by electronic means will take place. Councils should make these decisions based on their own needs and capacity. Local factors such as broadband strength may also determine what methods they use. See also the NALC guidance on remote meetings.

Regulation 6 – confirms that being present at a local council meeting includes being present through remote attendance. The Regulation also disapplies paragraph 7 of Schedule 12 to the 1972 Act. This means there is no requirement for a parish council to hold its annual meeting although a council may do so if they so choose. However paragraph 8 of Schedule 12 has not been disapplied. Paragraph 8 requires a local council to hold in a year not less than three meetings



in addition to the annual meeting. We believe this should also have been disapplied. The equivalent paragraphs have been disapplied for principal authorities (paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12).

Regulation 13 – s.1 (4) (a) of the 1960 Act has been amended so that public notice of the time and place of the meeting is deemed to be given if published on the relevant principal authority's website. In NALC's view the notice could be placed on the local council's website or in a prominent physical place to meet the advertising requirements contained in Schedule 12 of the 1972 Act. Councils should take account of social distancing requirements before deciding to put notices in physical spaces NALC's view is that a council's decision making is unlikely to be challenged if it only places the notice on its own website.

Regulation 17 – confirms that a local council complies with Regulation 8 of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (decisions and background papers to be made available to the public) by making the written record and any background papers available for inspection by publishing them on their website; or by such other means that the council considers appropriate.

### **What are the specified conditions to enable local councils to meet remotely?**

Regulation 5(2) of the 2020 Regulations provides that a member in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time if the member is able at that time:

- a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members in attendance,
- b) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting, and
- c) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

All of the above conditions must be satisfied.

These conditions allow members to join via a video link system or by telephone so long as every member can be heard by every other member and the public.

All members, clerk and other staff, and any members of the public will be in attendance for the purposes of the 2020 Regulations if they are in remote attendance. The provisions in Regulation 5 will apply notwithstanding any standing orders or rules to the contrary.

Existing provisions that have not been specifically disapplied still apply, including the notice requirements in Schedule 12 of the 1972 Act.

### **Summary**

- The 2020 Regulations permit the holding of remote meetings, with conditions.
- Local councils can decide the methods they will use to facilitate the holding of remote meetings.
- There is no requirement to hold an annual meeting.

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## **CONTENTS**

Foreword	2
Planning and preparation	2
Council discussions and voting	3
Public participation	5
After the meeting	5
Remote meeting platforms	5



## **FOREWORD**

On 4 April 2020, the government brought The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 into force to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely. NALC has produced a legal briefing with our interpretations of the regulations which can be accessed in the member's area of our website. This guide has been produced by NALC to support local (parish and town) councils to be able to conduct their meetings in a new way.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

This is very likely to be the first time your council has tried holding meetings remotely, and so planning and preparation will be key. Ideally, your aim should be for councillors and staff to be entering your first remote council meeting with confidence and clarity about how the meeting will run. The clerk should make arrangements in advance or the council may wish to consider setting up a small working group. Below you find some issues to consider.

### **Which platform to use**

The remote meeting platforms section of this guide (see page five) provides a list of platforms that are available and may be good options for council meetings. This list is not exhaustive and it's worth spending a bit of time considering different options. One factor that may affect your choice is the technology available to councillors and staff (e.g. if not everyone has a computer/laptop then you will want to pick a platform that allows individuals to join by telephone).

### **What investment might be needed?**

It is possible to hold remote meetings at no cost to the council. Most platforms offer some free option for holding meetings. However, for a small investment you may be able to access additional functions that the council may feel are good value. For example, most platforms impose a time limit on their free accounts that may be difficult for council meetings to adhere to.

On top of the potential cost of the meeting platform itself, you may wish to consider investment in hardware. For example, if some councillors do not have access to a laptop the council may consider purchasing this equipment. You should also consider individuals with specific needs (e.g. if someone has a hearing impairment then certain headphones may help them hear the meetings better). As part of your preparations you should contact councillors and staff to find out what technology they do have access to and any concerns or needs that they have.

Any spending decisions will have to be made by the council bearing in mind your budget and ability to incur such costs. It is also worth remembering that this is only a temporary situation and at some point we will return to holding face-to-face meetings again. Large investments would not be advisable if they won't have long term benefits.

## **Holding a practice meeting**

Practice makes perfect – and this is particularly true when trying something new. If possible it is worth holding a practice meeting with all councillors and staff so that you can work out any technical issues and to see if your approach to voting and discussions does work for everyone. You may then need to go back to amend your proposed approach and even try a second practice before the ‘real’ council meeting.

Holding practice meetings might feel like an extra demand on everyone’s time, but it will be much easier to work out bugs and issues in advance than to be struggling with them during the council meeting itself. How frustrating would it be to discover that you are not able to hold the council meeting due to technical difficulties you could have resolved in advance?

Once these practical issues have been resolved attention will then need to turn to how you will conduct the meeting itself. This is covered in the following sections. Once those issues have been considered you will then need to decide if any written guidance for the council would be useful. This might be an addendum to your standing orders explaining how these will be interpreted, or a less formal document that lays out how the meeting will run.

## **COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND VOTING**

In general you should try and keep to your usual approach to meetings and stick to your standing orders as much as you can. The council should remember this is a usual council meeting. You should consider in advance how you will manage discussions and voting to allow the meeting to run as smoothly as possible.

### **Council discussions**

The chairman of the council should still chair the meeting. They should take the opportunity of any practice meetings to ensure they are confident following the agenda, managing input from councillors and staff, and keeping the meeting to time. Some suggestions to aid this are:

- Asking everyone to mute themselves when not speaking - this helps keep background noise to a minimum which will improve everyone’s ability to hear the discussions.
- If everyone is able to join by video then they could raise their hands when they wish to speak.
- If some people cannot join by video then raising hands will not be an option. It also will make it harder to keep track of who is speaking. In this scenario, the chairman could ask people to state clearly when they would like to speak. The risk with this is that people may wish to speak at the same time and so speak over one another, but in a small group this may be manageable. Another option might be for the chair to read from a list of councillors names and ask them in turn if there is anything they wish to say or ask. This may take more time but allows for a more controlled approach.

- The chairman may ask everyone to state their name before they start speaking so that it is always clear who is speaking.
- How will you keep track of who is 'present'. It may be the case that some individuals have technical issues that mean that they 'leave' the meeting, for example their internet connection means that they are cut off. Some platforms are very clear on who is present, some are less clear. If you are not sure you would be aware of anyone accidentally dropping out of the meeting you might wish to do a quick 'roll call' before each item to ensure you are able to accurately minute who was present.

## **Voting**

There is no 'right way' to conduct voting in a remote meeting. You will have to find an approach that works best for the council. Some things to consider are:

- Will everyone be joining by video? If so then you could raise hands to vote as in a physical meeting.
- If you will not be able to see everyone then of course raising hands will not work. In this case you might do a roll call of councillors names and ask them to state their vote. Some platforms may allow other methods of voting eg stating a vote in a 'chat' function. Whatever method you choose, you should consider this in advance of the meeting and ideally practice it in advance too.
- You might also consider asking the chairman or clerk to read back the votes of the council so that everyone is sure their vote has been recorded correctly.
- Make sure every vote, whether visually or by telephone, is clear and unambiguous.

## **Behaviours and conduct**

It is worth remembering that the required standards of behaviour and discussion are the same whether in remote or face-to-face meetings. These are difficult times and people may be worried about their health or family members, they may be frustrated being isolated at home, and there may be challenges with using new technology particularly if there are technical difficulties. Everyone in the meeting will need to be respectful and compassionate towards one another, emotions may be higher than usual but that only makes it more important that everyone approaches the meeting with respect and in the spirit of the council's code of conduct.

## **Declaring Interests**

The council will need to consider how they will manage councillors 'leaving' a meeting if they have an interest and do not wish to be part of the meeting, particularly if they consider there will be negative public perception if they remain. It may be that the councillor with an interest, leave the meeting but agree, with the chairman a time to return to the meeting. Should the council need further time on a matter, another agreed time frame can be given.



## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Council meetings must still be advertised and the public have a right to observe. If you would normally allow public questions or input in your meeting then it is worth trying to keep this approach with remote meetings too.

Different platforms have different options for how this can be achieved. Some allow the audience to speak whenever they wish, whereas others, give the council more control over who can speak when. It's worth keeping in mind that there is the same risk of disruption to a normal council meeting as there is for a remote meeting. So it may not be necessary to be able to control the public's ability to speak, it is likely they will follow the rules of the meeting as they usually do. The chair or clerk should also take a note who wishes to speak, from the public, to ensure that no one is missed out. This is key in rural areas with poorer broadband capacities, which can cause people to 'leave' meetings accidentally due to signal strengths.

If there are parts of the agenda that are confidential then you will need to ask the public observers to leave as you normally would. If you fear there is a risk of people accidentally joining the confidential item you might consider setting up a different meeting ID/log in that is not shared with the public for that item. Some platforms also allow meetings to be password protected.

If you do have members of the public attending then take some time at the beginning of the meeting to explain to them how the meeting will run and how and when they can speak. This will help manage their expectations.

## **AFTER THE MEETING**

Minute taking should be done as usual with the clerk seeking clarity at any point, should it be needed. The minutes should be agreed at the next meeting and can always be retrospectively signed at the next face-to-face meeting.

Once you have held your first remote council meeting it is worth taking a little time to reflect on how it went and what you might wish to change or improve for next time.

## **REMOTE MEETING PLATFORMS**

In this section you will find a range of meeting platforms with their advantages and disadvantages along with any pricing information to help your council make a decision on the best platform to use.

### **Google Hangouts**

<https://hangouts.google.com>

This is a communication platform that can be used for messaging, video conferencing and calls. The Classic Google Hangouts is free. Google Hangouts

Meet is Google's paid video conferencing software — find out more at [https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en\\_uk/pricing.html](https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/pricing.html)

Advantages:

- It can be used on multiple devices including computers/laptops, Android and Apple devices.
- Screen sharing options are available.
- Participants can use the chat option whilst on the video call.

Disadvantages:

- For video conferencing there is a limit of up to 25 participants.
- Participants must have a Gmail account.

### **GoToMeeting**

<https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-gb>

This is HD video conferencing software that can be used for meetings and collaboration. Find out more about pricing at <https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-gb/meeting/pricing-ma>

Advantages:

- Meetings can be scheduled in advance.
- Invitations can be integrated with Office 365 or Google Calendar plugins.
- Participants can join meetings through 'call me' option
- GoToMeeting can automatically call participants.
- Screen sharing options are available.
- Can host meetings with up to 250 participants.
- Meetings can be recorded and meeting transcripts can be shared.

Disadvantages:

- The platform requires fast internet connection.
- Older systems may struggle to operate GoToMeeting.
- There are limitations with the free version — meetings can last 40 minutes and include three participants.

### **Microsoft Teams**

<https://products.office.com/en-gb/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>

This is a collaboration and conversational platform as part of Office 365. Find out more about pricing at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/business/compare-more-office-365-for-business-plans>

Advantages:

- Within meetings you can share screens and record your meeting.
- Participants can join meetings, without joining Teams by clicking on the email link.
- Previous meeting notes and recordings can be accessed.

*This  
is  
our  
preferred  
method*

- The platform allows for 250 participants.

Disadvantages:

- The maximum PowerPoint size is 2GB.
- There are limited features on the Microsoft Teams free platform compared to the paid Microsoft Teams. More information is available on Microsoft Support.

## **Skype**

<https://www.skype.com/en>

This is an online communications tool that can be used with PC/laptop, mobile phone, tablet or web. Skype has HD voice and video calling which helps to host group meetings. Skype can also be used for instant messaging. Skype is free however calls to mobile or landline incurs a charge.

Advantages:

- Screen share is available, which can be used for PowerPoints, videos, pictures and on screen calls.
- You can save calls and record your screen.
- Conversations can be protected with end to end encryption.
- Skype can be used to reach those without skype using telephone calling services.

Disadvantages:

- There is a limit of 49 people joining group calls
- Skype provides limited customer support.

## **Slack**

<https://slack.com/intl/en-gb>

This is a collaboration hub which provides an alternative to email communication. It can be used for conversations as well as voice or video calls. Find out more about pricing at <https://slack.com/intl/en-gb/pricing>

Advantages:

- Screen sharing options are available.
- Slack operates using channels which helps bring everything together in one place, such as documents and conversations.
- Joining and starting calls is fairly straightforward.
- Slack is known to be a secure platform for calls.

Disadvantages:

- Slack has limitations with how many people can join a call. This is up to 15 people using the paid standard package.
- There is a limitation to how many features are available on the free version.

## **Zoom**

<https://zoom.us>

This is a video conferencing platform. This can be used for meetings, collaborations and participants can also use the chat option. It also supports audio conferencing, allowing people to join by telephone as well. Find out more about pricing at <https://zoom.us/pricing>

### **Advantages:**

- Participants can share screens with each other (e.g. share a PowerPoint presentation).
- Meetings can be made securely. This includes having passwords and meeting IDs for participants to join meetings.
- Meeting invitations can be added to Outlook Calendar, Google Calendar or Yahoo Calendar.
- You can save the chat conversations.
- Meetings can also be recorded for future reference.

### **Disadvantages:**

- The level of support you can receive from Zoom is dependent on the Zoom package being used.
- The free Zoom package limits group meetings to 40 minutes.