

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

Due to the impact of COVID19 the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Clerk, acting together, proposed arrangements to enable the essential business of Hemingford Abbots Parish Council to be carried out, with due regard for the health and safety of our residents, service users, Councillors and employee.

Given the advice from the government on social distancing, all Councillors were sent the proposals and they emailed to state whether they agreed to these arrangements. Formal ratification will be sought at the first public Council meeting that is able to be held.

SAFETY STATEMENT – MEETINGS

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council recognises and agrees that no business, meeting, service provision or service delivery of the Authority is of any importance **above that** of public and personal safety. As such the following resolutions are made:

AGREED: all scheduled public meetings will be cancelled for an **initial 3 month period until 22nd June 2020** (or as circumstances dictate).

Notices will be put on the Parish Council Boards announcing the cessation of meetings and directing residents to the Parish Council website for more information.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS / FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

AGREED: That Hemingford Abbots Parish Council gives delegated authority to the Clerk as our Responsible Financial Officer (in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman/Finance Lead) to suspend any relevant Standing Order or Financial Regulation as they judge to be necessary to ensure the smooth running and operation (wherever possible) of the Parish Council for a period of **no longer than 3 months** (or as circumstances dictate). The Clerk will compile and maintain a log of such suspensions and reasons; the log will be presented to a future meeting of the Parish Council for scrutiny.

ADDITIONAL DELEGATED AUTHORITY – STAFF MEMBERS

AGREED: Hemingford Abbots Parish Council gives additional **delegated authority** for a period of **no longer than 3 months** to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman/Finance Lead to:

- undertake day to day duties (wherever possible and within legal constraints and with the best intentions of public safety and to promote infection control) in order to minimise disruption to service provision and ensure business continuity;
- undertake any additional duties necessary (wherever possible and within legal constraints and with the best intentions of public safety and to promote infection control) in order to minimise disruption to service provision and ensure business continuity;

- undertake decisive actions (within legal constraints and with the best intentions of public safety and to promote infection control) in respect of cancelling any meetings of the Parish Council, its committees or working groups.

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING / ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

As meetings are to be cancelled this will affect:

The Annual Meeting of Hemingford Abbots Parish Council (scheduled for 18th May 2020), where the roles of Chair and Vice Chair and any other representatives are agreed.

Therefore, the roles of Chair, Vice Chair and any other representatives will remain the same until a suitable and safe public meeting is called and held.

The Annual Parish Meeting, scheduled for 18th May will not take place.

However, the Parish Council will hold such meeting at a future date.

It is noted that whilst the above decisions are **contrary to existing legislation** (as of 23rd March 2020) the Parish Council has made these decisions in order to place public safety at the forefront.

ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

AGREED: That the Clerk prepares and circulates to all Councillors on a monthly basis a payment schedule showing those accounts becoming due for payment. Any Councillor wishing to question the validity of any payment to be made that is listed on the schedule should circulate the question to all Councillors and to the Clerk for explanation and resolution. In the absence of any objection being raised by a Councilor within a period of 3 days following initial circulation then those Councillors with delegated responsibility will authorise the agreed listed payments. Ratification of payments by resolution of the Council to be made at the earliest and safest opportunity. This process will remain under review, as the current unprecedented situation develops.

PLANNING MATTERS

AGREED: That the Council will deal with planning applications via email and gives delegated power to the Clerk to collate responses and submit to HDC (on a majority basis).

BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

AGREED: In respect of any emergency or Health & Safety matter to authorise an increase in the spending limit to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman / Finance Lead from any item below £500 to any amount below £ 1,000.

AGREED: in the event of the out-sourced payroll function ceasing, the Clerk will pay both estimated staff payments and HMRC through bank transfer in line with the normal timescales. All such payments will be reviewed, and if necessary adjusted, at the earliest opportunity.

AUDIT The Clerk will prepare for the annual, statutory Audit and AGAR submission. She will seek advice from NALC and/or CAPALC on the matter of the statutory deadlines for submission and public scrutiny of the accounts and will act as appropriate on any National Guidance on these matters that is issued to Councils.

CONTRACT AWARD

AGREED: That the awarding of essential new contracts be delegated to the Chairman and Vice Chairman /Financial Lead (acting through email) using best value principles (noting best value does not mean the cheapest) with the decision to be ratified by the Council at a future date.

STAFFING MATTERS – ANNUAL APPRAISALS

AGREED: That annual staffing reviews be delayed and any monetary awards be backdated to 1st April 2020 (once and if approved).

POLICY UPDATES

AGREED: That delegation is afforded to the Clerk to update policy documentation where revision dates are the only necessary updates, such updates to be ratified by the Council at a future meeting. Where any legislative or operational changes in policies are judged to be necessary, the Clerk will update relevant documentation and implement any necessary changes.

WORK OF PARISH CLERK

AGREED: That the Parish Clerk continues to work her hours from home.

AGREED: In the event that the Parish Clerk is unable to carry out her duties, the situation will be reviewed, and in full consultation with the Council appropriate measures put in place to ensure essential activities continue.

These measures were arranged by email on 23 March 2020, as follows:

Proposed:	Bridget Flanagan, Chair, HAPC
Seconded:	John Peters, Vice Chair, HAPC
In agreement:	Chris Nicol
	Zoe Ryall
	Marcus Whewell

It was agreed that these measures will be ratified at the first available Public meeting of the Hemingford Abbots Parish Council.

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Clerk to the Council
24th March 2020