

**COCKSHUTT CUM PETTON PARISH COUNCIL
CLERKS REPORT – IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS
COMMITTEE DATE: 9th APRIL 2020
(Report updated 10th July 2020)**

In the light of government advice in an effort to stem the transmission of Coronavirus, CCP-PC was asked to consider how it proceeds with meetings given the Council's statutory duties.

Statutory duties between March the end of June:

- Holding the Annual Parish Meeting before the 1st June
- Holding the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May
- Approving the Annual Returns (which must be done at a Council meeting before the end of June)

Meetings must be held in person. So for example, the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May should take place but if it is not quorate that meeting then can be postponed and re-scheduled. Properly called meetings cannot be cancelled. We can hold extra-ordinary meetings to deal with certain items.

Due to lockdown the meetings in April and May were cancelled.

Emergency Legislation

Emergency legislation came into force on 4th April which permitted Parish Council's to hold all ordinary meetings before 7th May 2021 remotely, and removed the requirement for an Annual Meeting of the Parish Council this year.

Further emergency legislation came into force on 30th April extending the period for completion of Annual Returns, these should now be approved by no later 31st July 2020

All local elections are postponed until after 6th April 2021.

The Regulations omitted either to dis-apply the requirement to hold an Annual Parish Meeting between 1st March and 1st June or to enable such a meeting to be held remotely. NALC advise was that local Council's did not pursue any arrangements for the Annual Parish Meetings pending further clarification.

RECOMMENDATION

In order for the Parish Council to comply with its statutory duties as best it can whilst also adhering to government health advice and restrictions the Parish Council was recommended to put in place a Scheme of Delegation

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

- *To note that it is lawful for the Clerk in accordance with 4.1 CCP-PC financial regulations, to spend against specific items all of which having been identified in the budget when setting the precept, and additionally to authorise the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and authorised signatories to make payment in excess of £250.00 for SALC affiliation fees, the Council's Insurance due on 1st June and street lighting repairs in excess of £250.00. All payments to be reported to the Council at the next ordinary meeting to be held as soon as practicable subject to current government health advice & restrictions*

Current CCP-PC financial regs. already authorise :-

- 4.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:
- the Council for all grants and any item over £250;
 - the Clerk for any items under £250 or less.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the Chair of Council or relevant committee.

- 4.2 No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council.....

- *To note that it is lawful for the Clerk in accordance with 4.5 of CCP-PC financial regulations, to authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Clerk's judgement is necessary and to authorise urgent work when unforeseen circumstances occur, and additionally to authorise the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and authorised signatories to make payment:-*
 - *For the patio to a maximum of £5,000.*
 - *Recent/ongoing essential drainage works on Jubilee Field**All payments to be reported to the Council at the next ordinary meeting to be held as soon as practicable subject to current government health advice & restrictions¹*

- 4.5 In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the Clerk may 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, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500.

The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- *To re-affirm that the Clerk/Locum Clerk responds to planning applications in accordance with CCP-PC Scheme of Delegation on planning applications adopted on adopted 14/2/19*

¹ Grant applications to be suspended until the resumption of Council meetings at which the Full Council may consider and approve such applications

- *To re-affirm that the Parish Council will respond to relevant consultations in accordance with the scheme of delegation adopted 10/10/2019*

To delegate to the Clerk (Locum Clerk) in consultation with the Chair

- *the postponement/cancellation of the Ordinary Meetings of the Council currently scheduled monthly for 2020 and up to 7th May 2021 should this be required*
- *To receive and act upon Government advice in relation to the holding of the Annual Meeting of the Parish scheduled to meet on 9th April 2020 (noting such meetings must be held before 1 June) and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council scheduled to meet on 14th May 2020 (noting such a meeting must be held in May), the Clerk (Locum Clerk) to make necessary re-arrangements for these meetings*

In the event that a meeting to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Returns is not advised or not possible members to approve the AGAR by confirming their approval and vote to the Clerk at clerk@cockshuttcuppetton-pc.gov.uk