

Stillingfleet Parish Council

Decision Making During the Coronavirus Emergency

Introduction

Following Government instruction banning public gatherings / meetings and in line with current guidelines for social distancing, the following **temporary measures** are to be put in place to ensure essential decision making is carried out by the Parish Council, in particular the payment of invoices received to ensure essential services are maintained (e.g. street lighting).

These measures will be reviewed by the Chair, Vice Chair and the Parish Clerk on a monthly basis and if they are to be maintained for a further month, Councillors will be duly advised by email by the Clerk.

The measures are designed to avoid physical contact between Councillors / the Clerk / the public, wherever possible. In exceptional circumstances where face to face contact is required, social distancing rules need to be observed (2 metre at least and washing hands thoroughly after contact).

Where the Chair is not able to carry out their role due to illness, authority will be immediately delegated to the Vice Chair. Where the Clerk is not able to carry out her role due to illness, the Chair will request a volunteer from Councillors to stand in.

Members of the public should be encouraged and directed to use the Parish Council Website as much as possible to keep up to date with communications and also advise the Parish Council of urgent matters they wish to bring to the attention of the Parish Council.

Councillors should check their emails at least once a day and unless already provided, provide their telephone number to the Clerk and Chair.

- 1 Outstanding matters or new matters arising may be instigated by any Councillor or the Clerk and should be sent to the Clerk in the first instance who will ensure the full details of the matter are emailed to all Councillors.
- 2 The Clerk will provide a timeframe for email responses (where appropriate) and if necessary arrange a conference call discussion between the Councillors, (as agreed with the Parish Chair). Provided timescales permit the Chair will ensure all Councillors are engaged and given the opportunity to provide relevant comments and observations.
- 3 At the end of the discussion timeframe, the Clerk will request Councillor email approval for the matter to be carried / actioned. The number of approvals will depend on the matter in question, but should be a minimum of two Councillors. If Councillor approval is not provided in the timeframe, then the Chair will determine if it is necessary to delegate authority to the Clerk to action.
- 4 The Clerk will keep a record of all action taken using this method of decision making and when the Council is next able to meet, whether it be physically or virtually, it will retrospectively ratify all actions/decisions made in the intervening period.

Monthly Financial Reporting

- 5 The Clerk will provide a bi-monthly financial report as normal to Councillors via email giving Councillors the opportunity to question and query the finances.
- 6 Cheques requiring signature will be hand delivered in an envelope to one signatory who will then hand deliver to the second signatory, who will then post back to the Clerk for actioning. Face to face contact should be avoided where possible.

Planning Matters

- 7 Where planning applications are received during the emergency period, the Clerk should follow the same process of emailing applications to Councillors on the Planning Committee allowing them a discussion timeframe as agreed with the Chair. At the end of the discussion period, the Chair will submit a final observation on each application which will be actioned in the normal way.

Monthly Minutes

- 8 During the period that the Council is operating under these emergency measures full bi-monthly minutes will be temporarily suspended and replaced by a summary prepared by the Clerk of any matters arising and the key points of any Councillor's discussions, noting the outcome and proposed action and the intention to ratify all such decisions at the next full Council meeting.
- 9 Financial Records and Planning Applications / Decisions will be published as normal in the document.

Approved on behalf of Stillingfleet Parish Council	Name:	Date of extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council at which this proposal was approved
	PAUL ELMHIRST CHAIRMAN	2 April 2020