

# WHITCHURCH TOWN COUNCIL

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All Councillors are summoned to an extraordinary meeting of Council, to be held ~~in the Edward German Room, Whitchurch Civic Centre on~~  
**By Conference Call - Thursday 26 March 2020 at 7:15pm**  
Public and press ~~are invited to attend~~ may email the Clerk for dial in information.

Members are respectfully reminded of the obligation to declare any interests relevant to business to be conducted at this meeting and of the convention as to withdrawal from the meeting for the relevant item unless the interest is not one that debars the member from speaking thereon.

## AGENDA – EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

**Though the public is welcome to attend, there will be no public forum.** Whilst it is good practice to include a public forum prior to the start of any council meeting, there is no legislative requirement to hold it. As such, until the UK is declared free of COVID-19 public forum will not be held at any WTC meeting. Please continue to contact the Clerk directly if you have items you wish to raise to the attention of the Council using the normal methods of either e-mail to [clerk@whitchurchcouncil.uk](mailto:clerk@whitchurchcouncil.uk) or in writing to the Town Clerk, Whitchurch Town Council, Civic Centre, High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 1AX.

*Please note that all Council meetings are audio recorded and, in line with the Council's meeting recording policy, you are requested to inform the Mayor if you are recording or filming the meeting.*

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given. (LGA 1972 s85(1))**
- 2. Declarations of Interests (LA 2011 s31)**  
*Member to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for dispensations that accord the Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)*
- 3. Mayor's Announcements**
- 4. To approve revised Civic Centre room hire rates and conditions to take effect 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.**
- 5. To approve the Whitchurch Town Council High Consequence Infectious Disease policy**  
**Appendix A**  
5.1 To consider activating the High Consequence Infectious Disease policy.
- 6. Confidential Business – Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960**  
6.1 To resolve the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information or staff matters.
- 7. Staffing Matter**  
7.1 To approve the appointment of a temporary member of staff. (LGA 1972 s112; s151)

*B Duffy*

Beverly Duffy, Mayor  
20 March 2020

# Appendix A

## HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

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

### 2. Scope of the policy

- 2.1. The main areas of concern for Whitchurch Town Council with respect to HCIDs are:
  - Remaining an effective council
  - Safety & Health of Councillors, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and Members of the Public.

### 3. Activation of the policy

- 3.1. 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 Town **and**
  - At least 3 councillors have requested its activation to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the clerk, or the Chairman plus 2 councillors have requested its activation to the Clerk, or its activation is resolved in a meeting of the Whitchurch Town Council.

OR

  - The government of the United Kingdom suspends public meetings and/or gatherings.

### 4. Deactivation of the policy

- 4.1. This policy is considered to be deactivated, when
  - When the imminent threat of infection in the Town 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 and/or gatherings.

### 5. Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

- 5.1. A HCID is defined as
  - acute infectious disease
  - typically has a significant 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

5.2. 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 – The Clerk

- 6.1. Whitchurch Town Council have their administration offices based at the Civic Centre. There are posted office hours in which the public may visit the Clerk or Assistant Clerk(s). During any active outbreak of an HCID in the UK, the office hours will be suspended and no appointments will be scheduled. The Clerk and Asst Clerk(s) will not come into contact with the public during working hours.
- 6.2. 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
  - 6.2.1. Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.
  - 6.2.2. 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.
  - 6.2.3. 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
  - 6.2.4. 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.
  - 6.2.5. 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**

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. Councillors and other Volunteers can choose to not attend public meetings. As an officer of the council, the Clerk or Assistant Clerk(s) cannot choose to not attend meetings.
- 7.3. 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 5.2. As such, to protect the health of all attendees, public meetings are suspended during the active period of this policy.

## **8. Delegated Authority**

- 8.1. To allow the council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following items are delegated to the Clerk, and therefore to the Assistant Clerk(s) as directed by the Clerk, for the duration of the activation of this policy.
  - 8.1.1. Planning applications, after consultation with a minimum of 3 councillors on the Planning Committee, a summary response will be circulated to all councillors for comment prior to submission to Shropshire County Council by the Clerk.
  - 8.1.2. Finance
    - 8.1.2.1. 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.
    - 8.1.2.2. non recurring payments, such as one off costs relating to the various assets of the Council or expenses to be authorised by a minimum of 2 councillors by e-mail prior to payment.
    - 8.1.2.3. All payments will be formally authorised by the full council at the next full council meeting.
    - 8.1.2.4. 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 10 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.
  - 8.1.3. 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 formally designated Councillor(s) for the various projects and responsibilities, or if none designated, to the full council prior to responding to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party.
  - 8.1.4. 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 8.1.1 to 8.1.3, 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 Town Council at its meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ and will be reviewed annually

Signed:

B Duffy

Date:

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