

# **HODNET PARISH COUNCIL**

## **STANDING ORDERS**

### **1. Councillors**

- 1.1. Following election or co-option to the Council, each Councillor will be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders of the Council. They will sign the form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk of the Council, or of a Councillor who has been specifically designated by the Council for this purpose.
- 1.2. All Councillors will observe the Code of Conduct at all times when on Council business and no member will act in such a way that will bring the Council into disrepute, behave offensively in meetings or obstruct the Council's business.
- 1.3. The Code of Conduct adopted by the Council will define when a Councillor will declare a personal or prejudicial interest in an item for discussion at a Council meeting. The Councillor will declare that interest and the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity.

### **2. Annual Meetings**

- 2.1. If the Annual Meeting is in an election year it must be held within 14 days after that election. If it is not an election year then the annual meeting will take place on an appropriate day in May.
- 2.2. If the outgoing Chairman is available then he/she will preside until a new Chairman has been elected. The first business of the Annual Meeting will be the election of the Chairman (and Vice Chairman, if appropriate) and to receive their acceptance of office.
- 2.3. The retiring Chairman will report on the activities of the Council for the preceding year.

### **3. Meetings**

- 3.1. Meetings will be held in appropriate, accessible accommodation. Unless no other accommodation is available the meetings will not be held in premises used for the supply of alcohol.
- 3.2. An agreed frequency of meetings will be decided at the Annual Meeting and Councillors will be advised of the meetings by the issue of a summons and agenda delivered by post, email or by hand.
- 3.3. Public notices will be posted in conspicuous places including electronic media, informing members of the public of the venue, time, date and business to be transacted at the meeting. The notice will be posted at least three clear working days before the meeting.

- 3.4. Meetings will be open to the public and press but they may be temporarily excluded from the meeting if the business is regarded as confidential.
- 3.5. Members of the public may speak at Council meetings at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting.
- 3.6. The agenda for the meeting will be agreed by the Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman as appropriate. An opportunity for public questions will be made available immediately before the commencement of each meeting.
- 3.7. The Council may only take decisions on items clearly specified on the agenda; if agreed by the chairman, any urgent items which are not on the agenda may be discussed, but no decision may be made, at that meeting.
- 3.8. The Chairman of the Council will preside at the meeting and will be responsible for the conduct of that meeting. If the Chairman is not present then the Vice Chairman will preside. If they are not present then the first matter on the agenda will be the election of an appropriate Councillor who will chair the meeting. Whoever chairs the meeting will assume the duties of the Chairman for the meeting.
- 3.9. The quorum for the Council will be one third of the total Councillor places but in any case not fewer than 3. If there be insufficient members present then no business will be transacted and a fresh notice will be issued to reconvene the meeting at a later date.
- 3.10. If at any time during the meeting it ceases to be quorate then the meeting will be adjourned and any further business carried forward to the meeting when next convened.
- 3.11. Voting at the meeting shall be by a show of hands unless a majority of Councillors wants a ballot. Only the proposer and seconder will be recorded in the minutes unless a Councillor requests that their vote is noted. A Councillor may also request that the Clerk records how each Councillor has voted, including abstentions. Any request of this nature will be made before moving on to the next business.
- 3.12. In cases of equal votes the Chairman (or other person presiding) will have a second or casting vote.
- 3.13. A minute of the meeting will be kept by the Clerk or other nominated person in the Clerk's absence. The minutes are approved by the Parish Council at their next meeting and signed by the person presiding at that meeting.
- 3.14. With regard to planning applications: if there is a personal interest, a statement can be made to the Parish Council meeting but then the person must leave the meeting while discussions take place.
- 3.14.2 Parish Council meetings for planning purposes will be called when necessary (*changed by Parish Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018*).

#### **4. Finance**

4.1. The Responsible Finance Officer is a statutory office and appointed by the Council. The Clerk of the Council will take on this role of managing the Council's financial affairs in accordance with Proper Practices.

## **4.2 Estimates and Precept**

**4.2.1. The RFO will compile estimates of income and expenditure annually for the Council's consideration.** The Council will review the budget not later than the end of December in preparation for the precept being agreed, and submitted to the Collection Authority in January. During the year the budget will be reviewed against actual expenditure and income. Amendments to the budget will be discussed in Council and changes minuted.

## **4.3. Income and Expenditure**

4.3.1 The RFO will supply regular updates of income and expenditure.

## **4.4. Accounting and Audit**

4.4.1. The RFO will determine all accounting procedures and financial records of the Council in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

4.4.2. The RFO will complete the annual financial statements of the Council including the annual return as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and will submit and report on them to the Council. The Council will review each year and ensure that there is an adequate, effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other procedures in line with Proper Practice.

4.4.3. An Internal Auditor will be appointed by the Council to carry out the work required to comply with the Proper Practice. The person appointed will be competent and independent of the operation of the Council.

4.4.4. The RFO will submit the Annual Return to the External Auditor by the due date, ensuring the return is complete.

## **4.5 Banking Arrangements and Cheques**

4.5.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the Bank Mandate, will be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They will be regularly reviewed for efficiency.

4.5.2. A resolution of the Council will nominate at least three members to be authorised by the Council to sign cheques or authorise other means of payment.

4.5.3. All items of expenditure will be authorised by the Council and the payments approved. The RFO will examine invoices, verify and certify the expenditure. Where cheques are completed these will be signed by two authorised Councillors. On-line transactions may be used where authorised by the Council, (or in an emergency or to avoid interest payments by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman)

4.5.4. Any utility bill or other regular payment (e.g. lighting repairs, salary and HMRC payments, annual insurance renewal) agreed by the Council may be paid by Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two authorised Councillors, by standing order, or by on-line transaction.

#### **4.6 Loans and Investments**

4.6.1 All loans and investments will be negotiated in the name of the Council and will be set for a period approved by the Council.

4.6.2 All borrowings will be in the name of the Council and will not be entered into until necessary approvals have been given. Any application will be approved by Council, especially the terms and purpose. These terms must be reviewed annually.

4.6.3 All investments of money under the control of the Council will be in the name of the Council and all certificates or other documents will be retained by the RFO.

#### **4.7 Contracts and Purchase Orders**

4.7.1 All Councillors and officers are responsible for obtaining good value for money at all times. An officer placing an order on behalf of the Council will ensure that good value and appropriate terms are obtained for the transaction.

4.7.2 Orders for values £500 to £2000 require a minimum of two quotations; for values above £2000 three quotations are required. Contracts exceeding £**25,000** require additional safeguards and will follow Proper Practice (**set out in appendix 1**)

#### **4.8 Assets**

4.8.1 The RFO will ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets is maintained by the Council. It will be reviewed at least annually, in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets if appropriate.

4.8.2 For the purpose of the External annual audit the Parish Council assets as described in the Asset Register shall be valued thus:-- Year of asset purchase – purchase value, all subsequent years valued at nominal £1.

#### **4.9 VAT**

4.9.1. The RFO will promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with the VAT Act 1974 section 33 will be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year.

#### **5. Insurance**

5.1. Following the annual risk assessment the Council will review the level of insurance cover and ensure it is adequate and appropriate for the activities of the Council. Minimum cover will include Public Liability, Employers Liability, Money and Fidelity Guarantee.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

6.1. A risk assessment will be undertaken annually of all the activities of the Council and a report approved by the Council. This assessment will also cover the appropriateness of the internal audit arrangements. The Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually.

5.2. If the Council undertakes a new activity not covered by the existing risk assessment an assessment will be undertaken before the activity commences.

## **6. Freedom of Information**

6.1. The Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and has adopted the Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils. The Clerk will ensure the Council conforms to the requirements of the Act allowing public access to the appropriate documents.

## **7. Clerk to the Council**

7.1. The Council may appoint a number of employees to assist it in the performance of its duties. The Council will appoint a Clerk to the Council which will be on an employed basis, unless the Clerk is a member of the Council, acting in an unpaid capacity.

7.2. The Clerk will act as the Proper Officer of the Council, and he/she will: receive the Declarations of Acceptance of Office and notices disclosing interests; sign documents on behalf of the Council and issue agendas and notices of meetings; receive and distribute plans and documents on behalf of the Council; and also advise the bank of changes to mandates with the bank.

7.3. The Clerk will act as Responsible Financial Officer or be responsible for managing a Finance Officer or other employees of the Council.

7.4. As an employee of the Council the Clerk is covered by employment legislation dealing with employment rights, discrimination in employment, unfair dismissal, redundancy and similar matters. The Clerk will therefore have a contract of employment stating the terms and conditions under which he/she is employed.

This will effectively be administered by the Chairman or designated Councillor acting with the authority of the Council.

## **8. Committees and task and finish groups**

8.1. The Council from time to time may set up committees and task-and-finish groups to undertake work on behalf of the Council. The Council will set their Terms of reference, and they will report periodically to the Council.

## **9. Emergency Business**

9.1. Should it not be appropriate to convene a special meeting then any emergency business will be handled by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and one other Councillor. Actions will be reported promptly to the Council.

## **10. Alteration or Reversal of previous decisions**

10.1. Decisions of the Council will not be revised within 4 months, except where a special item is placed on the agenda bearing the name of two Councillors, and is considered and approved by the Council.

## **11. Standing Orders**

11.1. These and any other standing orders will be reviewed annually by the Clerk and the Chairman, and any amendments will be decided by the Council.

11.2. During the course of meetings of the Council, the Chairman's decision as to the interpretation of the standing orders will be final. In cases of doubt, the Council will seek the advice of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils.

11.3. The Council may resolve to suspend a Standing Order, in order to progress the business of the Council, and such decision will be included in the minutes. The suspension will not be taken lightly and it will be time-limited.

These Standing Orders were considered and adopted by Hodnet Parish Council on:

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 and

amended on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 Minute ref ..8i

Further amended and Appendix A added on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Appendix 1 - contracts

**A) A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in paragraph D) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity.**

**B) Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:**

- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;**
- ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;**
- iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;**
- iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;**
- v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;**
- vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.**

**C) Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.**

**D) A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £181,302 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £4,551,413 for a public works contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.**

**3.21.3.4 A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or**

*in excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.*

## Appendix A

### HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Hodnet Parish 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 Parish Council will follow in respect of and HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Hodnet.

#### 2. Scope of the policy

- 2.1. The main areas of concern for Hodnet parish 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

- 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 Parish of Hodnet **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 Hodnet Parish Council.

OR

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

#### 4. Deactivation of the policy

- 4.1. This policy is considered to be deactivated, when
  - The government of the United Kingdom as reinstated all public meetings **and**
  - A minimum of 4 councillors have requested public meetings be recommended **or**
  - When the imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Hodnet has passed.

#### 5. Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

- 5.1. 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

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

<b>Contact HCID</b>	<b>Airborne HCID</b>
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.** Hodnet Parish Council has no official offices, as such the only employee, the Clerk, works from home. The public may only visit the Clerk by appointment. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, no appointments will be permitted. The clerk will not come into contact with the public during working hours, at their 1<sup>st</sup> normal place of work.
- 6.2.** The Lyon Hall, or any other public location used for Parish Council meetings is the 2<sup>nd</sup> normal place of work for the Clerk. This is dealt with in Section .
- 6.3.** 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
- 6.3.1. Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.
- 6.3.2. 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.
- 6.3.3. 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
- 6.3.4. 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.

- 6.3.5. 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 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 . 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 for the duration of the activation of this policy.

8.1.1.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 Shropshire 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, licences and IT services etc.
- 8.1.2.2. non recurring payments, such as one off costs relating to the repairs to the car park 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 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.

8.1.3.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 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 to , 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 26 March 2020 and will be reviewed annually.



Chairman..... Date 26/03/2020.....