



MUNDESLEY-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL

Coronavirus Contingency & Action Plan

The following plan sets out the contingency measures Mundesley on Sea Parish Council will bring into effect as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The plan aims to ensure the Council will be able to operate its business to the best of its abilities throughout this public health emergency while protecting, as far as is reasonably possible, its members, employees, and volunteers. This plan will be continuously reviewed and updated to take account of the changing status of the pandemic.

No.	Item	Comments	Risk	Actions	Consequences	Updates
1	Parish Council Meetings	Meetings take place in a small room with 10-30 people present. No scope for implementing 'social distancing' measures.	High	Cancel monthly Parish Council meetings until further notice.	Impact on 'democratic decision-making' as Council decisions will have to be delegated or made via email consultation with members of the Council (see table below).	Coronation Hall (meeting venue) closed from 17 th March until further notice. 7.4.20 Remote meetings now legal waiting on further guidance.
2	Annual Meeting	Meetings take place in a small room with 10-30 people present. No scope for implementing 'social distancing' measures.	High	Postpone Annual Meeting scheduled for 25 th May 2020.	Statutory requirement for meeting to be held in May. However, Government considering bringing forward legislation to amend this statutory requirement.	Coronation Hall (meeting venue) closed from 17 th March until further notice. 6.4.20 Awaiting guidance from Government & NALC
3	Annual Parish Meeting	Meeting takes place in a large hall with 80-100 people present. No scope for implementing 'social distancing' measures.	High	Postpone Annual Parish Meeting scheduled for 1st June 2020.	Statutory requirement for meeting to be held between 1 st March and 1 st June each year. However, Government considering bringing forward legislation to amend this statutory requirement.	Coronation Hall (meeting venue) closed from 17 th March until further notice.

4	Networking Meetings & Forums	Face-to-face meetings, sometimes involving large groups of people.	High/ Med	Members and employees to avoid attending non-essential meetings.	Should not impact on Parish Council business. Networking can be done via email, telephone or by holding virtual meetings.	
5	Parish Clerk's Work	Works from home. Attends meetings. Runs errands (post office/bank/shop/parish noticeboard, etc).	Med	Cancel meetings. Minimise errands by purchasing stamps/stationery in advance. Use delivery services for stationery etc	Parish Clerk will work primarily from home, so the situation should not impact greatly on her ability to do her work.	23.3.20 Clerk now based from home
6	Employee Appraisal Meetings (April 2020)	Difficult to implement 'social distancing' measures as meetings held in a small room or social setting.	Med	Postpone meetings scheduled until further notice	Will have little impact, providing employees are encouraged to raise any concerns/urgent matters to be discussed in the meantime.	
7	Member Sickness Absence	Possibility of members being unable to carry out normal Council duties due to illness or self-isolation.	Med	Promote Government advice on staying safe and healthy during the pandemic.	Absence of individual members would not impact on Council business, but multiple absences may leave Council inquorate.	
8	Employee Sickness Absence (Clerk)	Possibility of Parish Clerk being unable to carry out normal Council work due to illness or self-isolation.	Low	Ensure employee is aware of sickness absence procedures/ Coronavirus advice.	Works from home (self-isolation not a problem). Short-term absence due to illness would not impact greatly on PC business.	
9	Internal Audit	Possibility of Internal Auditor being unable to carry out audit due to illness or self-isolation.	Med	Consider if audit could be delivered via post/email/files sharing and teleconferencing.	Council's accounts due to be examined/audited in May. This must be done before accounts are approved by the Council.	6.4.20 Awaiting Guidance from the Audit Commission
10	External Audit (Approving The AGAR)	Accounts must be approved at a meeting of the Council by no later than 29 th June and submitted to auditor by 1 st July. May not be possible for a quorate meeting of the Council to be held by the statutory deadlines.	High	If required, contact external auditor (PKF Littlejohn) to arrange extension of time for submission of the AGAR.	A statutory recommendation will be issued to all authorities that fail to submit their documents by 15 th September. These are charged at the standard fee rate depending on the authority's expenditure banding, giving rise to a minimum additional fee of £200 plus VAT.	NALC in discussions regarding council audit deadlines. Government has confirmed the deadline for local government financial audits will be extended to 30 th September. Deadline now moved to the 30 th November 2020.

11	Weekly Inspections	Under current insurance regulations the playground, MUGA, Skate Park and Outdoor Gym needs to be inspected every 4 weeks. Due to the Governments 3-week lockdown from 23.3.20 to the 12.4.20 this may not be possible	Med/High	To Contact Councils insurance and see guidance in regards to continuing 4 weekly inspections.	Council may not be covered under insurance should the inspection still need to be carried out. A member of the public may become injured.	23.3.20 Council insurance contacted
12	Open Spaces	The playground, MUGA, Skate Park and Outdoor Gym open to members of the public. Due to the Governments announcement on the 23.3.20 these areas are to be closed.	Med/High	Clerk to arrange the closure of these areas to ensure compliance with the Law and insurance liability met.	Once areas are closed there is a minimum risk of these areas being used	23.3.20 all areas closed and insurance contacted

Democratic & Lawful Decision-Making

Local authorities are required to hold meetings to make decisions. Given that these are exceptional times (a declared ‘pandemic’ should meet the test for this), most Parish Councils will cancel their usual meetings and these need to be replaced with alternative decision-making processes. The lawful way to do this is that a decision that would otherwise have been on the agenda for a committee or Council is now made by the Clerk. The law permits a Council to delegate decision-making and discharge of statutory powers/functions (including “power to spend”) to a Council Officer such as a Parish Clerk/RFO. In such cases, the Officer performs these functions on the Council’s behalf but legal responsibility always remains with the Council. Although there are certain matters that the law states cannot be delegated and must be discharged by a meeting of the Full Council, delegation can remove the requirement to convene a Full Council meeting whilst still enabling essential functions to be undertaken lawfully.

At all times, the Officer must comply with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, though these may be amended or suspended by a decision of Full Council. To ensure the decision-making process remains inclusive of Council members, the Officer is advised to seek the views of all members of the Council where appropriate.

No.	Item	Comments	Current Arrangements	Amended Arrangements
1	Payments	It is essential that the Council continues to pay its staff, suppliers and contractors throughout the pandemic as far as is reasonably possible.	All payments are made by online banking, authorised by two members of the Council. The RFO prepares a schedule of payments requiring authorisation and presents this schedule (together with the relevant invoices) to the Council alongside the agenda for the next Council meeting. Payments are authorised by a resolution of the Council at a meeting of the Full Council.	RFO to draw up a list of payments known to be due for the next three months (April, May, June), primarily payments arising as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (see item 5.6 of the Financial Regulations). List to include, as a minimum, payee details and reasons for payment. The amounts due will be added to the list as soon as they are known (staff wages, pension and tax payments, for example, vary from month to month). List to be circulated by email to all members of the Council for approval. The set up for all payments on this list to be pre-prepared by the RFO as far as is possible and then authorised by two members of the Council asap. Payments to be authorised will be checked by the RFO against invoices and determined to be correct, and the final list of payments made together with any relevant invoices will be submitted to the next available meeting of the Council (see item 5.5 of Financial Regulations, which explains the RFO’s delegated authority).
2	Planning Applications	The consultation period for planning applications is 21 days, meaning not all applications can be considered at meetings of the Planning Committee or Full Council.	Planning Protocol in place, which sets out how the Parish Council considers planning matters on which it is consulted by a Planning Authority.	All planning applications to be decided in accordance with Option 3 of the Council’s Planning Protocol, whereby the Council’s response will be delegated to the Parish Clerk acting on the outcome of an email consultation with Parish Councillors (with the exception that it will not be possible for an extraordinary meeting to be requested to further discuss the application, unless this is an informal virtual meeting).

3	Annual Budget	Budget for 2020/2021 has been agreed by Council.	RFO would normally review and inform Council of current budget quarterly.	RFO to review the current budget based on the year-end position. RFO to circulate the amended budget to all members information. The budget has already been agreed by members on the 25.11.19
4	Election Of Chairman	Annual Parish Council Meeting due to be postponed.	Would normally take place at Annual Meeting.	Chairman to continue in office until such time as the Annual Meeting may be held and his successor elected.
5	Election Of Vice-Chairman	Annual Parish Council Meeting due to be postponed.	Would normally take place at Annual Meeting.	Vice-Chairman to continue in office until such time as the Annual Meeting may be held and his successor elected.
6	Items To Be Approved Or Signed	Could include letters, draft contracts, bank reconciliations, etc.	Would normally be approved and/or signed at a meeting of the Council.	Clerk to circulate items to all members of the Council and to ask the Council to approve items via an email consultation. This will then be placed on the next available Full Council meeting to be signed.
7	Items For Decision Or Response	Could include quotes, consultations, or general correspondence.	Would normally be discussed/response agreed at meeting of the Council.	Clerk to circulate items to all members of the Council and to ask the Council to make a decision about the items via an email consultation.
8	Updates & Information	Could include monthly budget monitoring, VAT reclaims, planning decisions, councillor and clerk updates.	Would normally be presented for information, noted and/or discussed at a meeting of the Council.	Clerk to circulate relevant items to all members of the Council via email. Councillors to provide email updates.

For all items listed in the table above, should Mundesley on Sea Parish Council become inquorate due to member illness and so unable to make a decision within the necessary timeframe, then the Parish Council agrees to delegate the decision-making described above and any relevant discharge of statutory powers and functions (including “power to spend”) to the Parish Clerk/RFO. Such delegation will be limited to any period of restricted activity declared by the Government in respect of the Coronavirus pandemic, and this delegation will be undertaken only as an emergency measure, to enable the Parish Council to operate its business and fulfil its responsibilities to the residents of Mundesley on Sea Parish Council.