

EAST HARPTREE PARISH COUNCIL.
SUMMARY OF BUSINESS FROM 18th MARCH to 16th APRIL 2020

Meetings.

The Government has put in place emergency legislation to allow Local Authorities including Parish Councils to function during the current restrictions. NALC has issued guidance for councils which I have attached to the accompanying email.

In summary, the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 mean that Parish Councils must meet in person at a specified place. If you are not in the room you cannot take part. The act also requires councils to meet a minimum of four times per year, one of those meetings being the Annual Parish Council meeting which must be held in May. This is the meeting where councillors elect the Chairman for the year. Beyond the four meetings, councils can hold additional meetings at their discretion, there is no legal requirement to hold more than the minimum. Currently, we have fulfilled the requirement for the three meetings other than the Annual Meeting.

With the current government restrictions, Parish Councils were effectively prevented from meeting and so the emergency legislation allows councils to meet online using a suitable platform such as Zoom. In all other aspects, the meeting will follow the normal format and must allow for public participation which could be a logistical nightmare to organise. The notification of the meeting and agenda can be posted on the Parish Council website.

The emergency legislation also allows the relaxation of the requirement to hold the annual meeting in May; councils may decide to hold the meeting at a later date when restrictions allow or not to hold the 2020 meeting at all but carry appointments, etc through to 2021.

Planning applications

Councillors have dealt with four applications since the last meeting using email and this has worked well. Details of the applications, the Parish Councils response and reasons have been summarised on the website on the Parish Council News page.

Business from the last meeting.

Notice Boards – this matter was deferred at the last meeting.

Hearing Loop Maintenance – an order has been placed for the works to be carried out when the hall re-opens.

Website – documentation has been prepared to be sent out shortly.

Assets and liabilities – work continues (I am checking back through old minutes for information)

Financial Matters

The replacement bank form is currently going the rounds of Richard, Kate and Andrew before coming back to me for submission to the bank.

Payments this month which require approval are:

E-on Clock electricity charge to 31st March 2020 - £143.43.

HMRC Tax payment - £146.40

A J Butcher Salary and expenses (expenses approved by Andrew) - £418.91.

The cheques will be signed by Andrew and the Clerk as previously awaiting the completion of the amended mandate.

Would councillors please confirm their approval of the above payments and their agreement to the signatories.

The draft accounts to 31st March 2020 will be finalised shortly and circulated prior to audit. When restrictions are eased I will be able to pass the books and papers onto the internal auditor prior to councillors approval. We are required to submit to a full External Audit, the timetable for which has been put back by two months so we have until August to approve the accounts.

B&NES Local Plan.

We have received details of a consultation on the updated Local Plan which is taking place between 6th April and 1st June. This is the link to the documentation:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/planning-consultation-local-plan-partial-update-and-statement-community-involvement>.

Andrew has liaised with Pam who will be producing a summary to be circulated to councillors for information and comment.

Alan Butcher
16th April 2020