

BEER PARISH COUNCIL

HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Beer 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 an HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Beer.

2. Scope of the policy

- 2.1. The main areas of concern for Beer Parish Council with respect to HClDs 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 Beer **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 Beer 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
 - When the imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Beer has passed **and**
 - A minimum of 4 Councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced **and**
 - The government of the United Kingdom has reinstated all public meetings.

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 (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

- 6.1. Beer Parish Council has no official offices – the **Parish Clerk** works from home. The public may only visit the Clerk by appointment at the Mariners’ Hall, Fore Street, Beer. 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 first normal place of work.
- 6.2. The Mariners’ Hall used for Parish Council meetings is the second normal place of work for the Clerk. This is dealt with in Section 7.
- 6.3. Beer Parish Council has a depot in Clapps Lane, Beer which provides a work base/storage facility for the **Workman**. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, the Council will review the Workman’s duties to minimise public engagement and ensure safe working practices.
- 6.4. 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
 - 6.4.1. Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.
 - 6.4.2. The Statutory Sick Pay (General) (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations 2020 were made on 12 March 2020 and came into force on 13 March. The Regulations provide that statutory sick pay will be available to anyone isolating themselves from other people in such a manner as to prevent infection or contamination with coronavirus disease, in accordance with the guidance published by Public Health England, and by reason of that isolation is unable to work. Statutory Sick Pay will be payable from the first day and employers with fewer than 250 employees will be able to reclaim the cost from the government up to a maximum of two weeks’ Statutory Sick Pay.
 - 6.4.3. If an employee is caring for someone who has or may have HCID, 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.
 - 6.4.4. 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 who attend meetings, there is a high percentage of attendees who 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** (suspend Standing Orders 1 & 2)
- 7.3.1.1. Specifically, it is a statutory requirement to hold an **Annual Parish Meeting** by 1 June and an **Annual Meeting** in May each year. In the event of an HCID outbreak, these meetings will be postponed until a) this policy is deactivated or b) new government legislation enables meetings (Annual Meeting) to be held by videoconferencing.

8. Delegated Authority

- 8.1. To allow the Council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following items are delegated to the Clerk/RFO for the duration of the activation of this policy. The Clerk as Proper Officer/RFO is the only individual in law who can act on behalf of the Council and lead the administration of all the Council’s activities.
 - 8.1.1. **Planning applications**, after email consultation, a summary response will be circulated to all Councillors of the Planning Committee for approval prior to submission to East Devon District Council by the Clerk (minimum of 3 responses required for quorum).
 - 8.1.2. **Finance** (suspend Standing Order 38/Financial Reg 3c & 5b)
 - 8.1.2.1. all standard recurring payments will be paid by the RFO at the appropriate time to prevent any late charges, such as salaries, pension payments, rents, utilities etc.
 - 8.1.2.2. non recurring payments to be authorised by a minimum of 3 Councillors by e-mail prior to payment in accordance with the existing bank mandate.
 - 8.1.2.3. A Schedule of Payments to be circulated to all Councillors each month. 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. It is a statutory requirement to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and submit this to the External Auditor (currently PKF Littlejohn) by their deadline of 1st July. The RFO will complete the AGAR in accordance with normal procedures and a) circulate the accounts and AGAR by email to all of the Councillors and on the acceptance of a minimum of 3 Councillors, organise signing by the RFO/Clerk and Chairman as applicable for submission to the external and internal auditors. Or b) approve the accounts and Annual Return at a meeting of the Council held by videoconferencing if new legislation allows. 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 third 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 third party.

8.1.4. **Coastal Community Team matters.** The Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman of the Council and the Chair of the CCT Committee will have delegated authority for decision making regarding the role and remit of the Village Manager for the duration of the policy. CCT expenditure to comply with 8.1.2.2 above where the Chairman of the Council and the Chair of the CCT Committee will approve payments.

8.1.5. 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 Parish Council at its meeting on 23 March 2020 and will be reviewed annually or as necessary.

Signed:

Annie Dallaway
Parish Council Clerk

Geoff Pook
Parish Council Chairman