

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING - 130

MINUTES OF THE DELEGATED POWERS EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD, VIA ZOOM, ON MONDAY 30th MARCH 2020 @ 7PM

(LGA 1972 S101 DELEGATED POWERS TO AN OFFICER AND TWO MEMBERS)

PRESENT: Councillor M Worrall (Chairman), Cllrs; Baxter, Cypher, Freeman, Helmore, Hornsby, Humphries, Lewis, Wallis, Wise and Willetts.

Officer in attendance:

Mrs J Smailes – Parish Clerk/ Minute Taker.

Cllr Worrall opened the ‘virtual’ meeting by explaining that to be legally compliant; the meeting had been convened under delegated powers, powers already bestowed to the Clerk and two Members of Council at the March meeting. **Noted.**

1. **APOLOGIES**

None received.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

3. **DISPENSATION REQUESTS**

None declared.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Approval of the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9th March 2020 were proposed by Cllr Worrall. **Unanimous.**

5. **OPEN FORUM**

Members considered whether to suspend public meeting participation until further notice; ensuring Minutes were still made publicly accessible via the website.

Members discussed the merits of the proposal, the consensus being that rather than suspend public participation at this time it would instead be discouraged in order to ensure Council had sufficient time to address all agenda matters (*given the timeframe imposed by Zoom*).

Cllr Humphries proposed that District Councillors, the County Councillor and a representative from the Village Magazine be invited to attend all virtual meetings as this would enable wider publication of matters discussed by the council. **Unanimous**

6. **COMMUNICATIONS BY THE CHAIRMAN**

Members were asked to consider/ratify that all Planning/Full Council Meeting will be convened via Zoom/Bestowed Delegated Powers (*LGA 1972 S101 – delegation to an Officer/two Members*) until further notice. **Unanimous**

Chairman

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7. CLERK'S REPORT

Members noted the action points addressed since last meeting and those still pending (*copy attached*).

Cllr Worrall advised that government guidelines were being followed; that the Annual Parish Meeting had been cancelled, the Annual Council Meeting in May would be postponed with the Chair and Committee make-up remaining as is, and that the Lengthsman Scheme had been suspended until further notice. **Noted**

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a) A copy of the Monthly Payment Schedule & Reconciled Bank Statements had been circulated prior to the meeting; the content was agreed as being a true representation. **Unanimous**
- b) Approval of payments listed. **Unanimous**
- c) There were no virements/transfers addressed since the last meeting. **Noted**
- d) Members were asked to consider/approve delegated powers (*LGA 1972 S101 – delegated power to an Officer/two Members*), allowing the Clerk to address mth13 payment run (*Year End*) and to allow her to make all future requisite payments as necessary, via electronic means/BACS until further notice, [*Members were to continue to be provided with a reconciled Payment List/Bank Statement each month so they could continue to monitor on-going expenditure/income*]. **Unanimous**

Cllr Baxter voiced her support for the requirement for extended delegated powers during this unprecedented time, as did Cllr Cypher, Humphries and Worrall.

Important Notice:

The Council accepts that whilst the aforementioned delegation of power is shown above as being to that of the Clerk/RFO and two members of APC, that there may be the necessity for the delegated authority to extend to that of:

A Committee/Sub Committee (Namely - Finance – Cllrs Wallis, Helmore, Cypher and Humphries)

Or

Another Authority (*LGA 1972 S101 – Delegated Powers*)

The Clerk explained the importance of Delegated Powers and how, in extenuating circumstances (if she was unable to perform her role as Proper Officer/RFO), the Council could continue to operate, namely by;

- i. Reverting to the issuing of cheques, as authorised by Cllr Cypher and a/another (*a payment listing would need to be kept showing Payee/Cheque Number etc for later reconciliation*)
- ii. The ability to delegated authority to another authority, (a neighbouring Parish Council) in order that APC could continue to function as delegation would, in such an instance, then be to a/another Proper Officer/RFO **Noted**

Chairman

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9. **ALVECHURCH CARES**

Cllr Worrall advised that a second Zoom session had been scheduled for later that same evening in order that representatives from Alvechurch Cares, a District Councillor and representative from the Village Magazine could join the session; he sought Members approval to defer the agenda item. **Unanimous – Agenda item deferred.**

10. **MEETING DATES**

A second virtual meeting to discuss Alvechurch Cares would be convened at 8pm that same evening. **Noted**

The Planning Meeting would be convened via Zoom on the 6th April @ 7pm

Meeting Closed at 7.40pm

Chairman

Date

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MINUTES OF THE DELEGATED POWERS EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD, VIA ZOOM, ON MONDAY 30th MARCH 2020 @ 8PM

(LGA 1972 S101 DELEGATED POWERS TO AN OFFICER AND TWO MEMBERS)

PRESENT: Councillor M Worrall (Chairman), Cllrs; Baxter, Cypher, Freeman, Helmore, Hornsby, Humphries, Lewis, Wallis, Wise and Willetts.

Also present: DCllr A English (Alvechurch Cares)
Mrs K Cooke (Alvechurch Cares)
Mr R Peach (The Village Magazine)

Officer in attendance:
Mrs J Smailes – Parish Clerk/ Minute Taker.

Cllr Worrall opened the meeting by explaining that to be legally compliant; the meeting had been convened under delegated powers; he welcomed representatives from Alvechurch Cares and Mr Peach from the Village Magazine.

Cllr Worrall advised that agenda item 9 had been deferred from an earlier meeting held that same evening in order that ‘Alvechurch Cares’ representatives could take part in the discussion and provide members with a first-hand insight into the assistance being offered throughout the parish and raise any issues faced currently by volunteers.

[Note: APC responsible for the procedural governance and volunteer insurance cover].

9. ALVECHURCH CARES

Cllr Worrall provided an overview of the work being undertaken by Alvechurch Cares to residents of the parish, he then invited Mrs Cooke to provide further information and to outline the issues currently faced.

Mrs Cooke explained that there were three ways in which residents were contacting the helpline; via the phone, email and Facebook, with the phone line being the most popular means of communication. Mrs Cooke stated that the two main reasons for contact being made were to request prescription collection and for food shopping to be undertaken on behalf of someone vulnerable or self-isolating. The main volunteers currently dealing with phone line requests were herself, Samantha and Annette. The volume of requests for assistance averaged 7-8 per day, with 55 calls taken/100 emails received/answered. In addition, over 2 ½ k Alvechurch Cares leaflets had been distributed locally.

Chairman

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9. ALVECHURCH CARES (continued)

Currently there were 9 x ID checked volunteers with another 4 possible volunteers being vetted.

Mrs Cooke highlighted the positive steps that had been and continued to be taken, and the support received from volunteers and APC who she pointed out were being seen by residents as 'a trusted friend'; however, she felt it important to make APC aware of the issues currently faced by volunteers and seek council support/guidance to address the matter.

Mrs Cooke explained that what was causing the volunteers the biggest issue was the ability of some residents to access cash to pay the volunteers for the shopping they urgently needed. That whilst many older residents appeared to have money currently, it was felt that this would not be the case in the weeks/months to come and she felt that there needed to be some form of mechanism that allowed for people to pay for their groceries via cheque, requiring banking arrangements to be put in place. She stated that this would also reduce the concern by volunteers associated with catching the virus via cash handling.

DCllr English reiterated this request asking if it were possible for the Parish Council to act as 'banker'.

Cllr Baxter supported the ethos of there being financial resources made available by the council, with Cllr Cypher reminding all Members that the council had the General Power of Competency (GPC) allowing the council the discretion to make money available to support such a cause; a point confirmed by the Clerk.

The Clerk suggested that there were two possible routes the council may consider taking:-

- i. To place a set sum of money in Earmarked and to request each week a set number of volunteers submit receipts for expenditure which she would then reimburse via BACS; she explained that this would become hard to administer when residents wished to make re-payment to the Council, possibly via BACS or cheque; that ordinarily the auditor expected to see monies such as those controlled by charities etc 'sitting' outside of the council's bank accounts so that there was no dilution of financial governance.
- ii. The second option was for the council to provide a float (Grant) to a third party (it had already been noted that PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) allowed its staff to undertake voluntary community work one day a month and it had been suggested that this could provide a vehicle that would allow Mr A Cooke (Partner of PwC) to administer an account on behalf of AC (Note: The bank account would be set-up in Mr A Cooke's name). Such an account would allow volunteers to be paid agreed sums of money per receipted spend in recompense so they were not 'out of pocket'. It was felt that in most cases, the money for groceries etc would be repaid, and that by having a separate dedicated bank account, the account number could be given out to those wishing to make payment by BACS/Cheque.

Chairman

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ALVECHURCH CARES (continued)

The Clerk went on to explain that this option would mean that the APC were not then covering the sum under its insurance fidelity clause; however, by ‘gifting’ a set sum which Mr Cooke had agreed to administer, it was hoped that the majority of individuals would repay the ‘food loan’, and that the worst case scenario would be that there would be a ‘float’ deficit at the end of the process, which the council would then need to agree to ‘write-off’ under GPC, as being a Covid-19 payment.

To ensure a level of independence in this process, a Director at PwC, Richard Petley, will provide a weekly reconciliation of the account to said receipts and payments with a summary provided directly to APC.

It should be noted that Mr Cooke and Mr Petley are volunteering their services and acting in their own right, not as agents of PwC for these purposes.

Cllr Worrall felt that as the ‘trusted friend’ APC was being asked to underwrite a sum of money and proposed that council seek to go with Option 2 as outlined by the Clerk, making available from 2020/21 ‘Free’ Reserves, a sum of £1,500.

Cllr Helmore queried how the sum of £1,500 had been derived, Cllr Worrall stated he felt it to be a sensible ‘float’ which would enable volunteers to continue with shopping errands etc without fearing they would be ‘out of pocket’ for any period of time. **Noted**

Cllr Worrall repeated the proposal; that council seek to go with Option 2 as outlined by the Clerk, making available from 2020/21 ‘Free’ Reserves, a sum of £1,500. This sum would be transferred to Mr A Cooke via BACS, once bank details were known. **Unanimous.**

The Clerk was also asked to ensure a letter of thanks be issued, as soon as possible, to all volunteers, thanking them for their tireless efforts in supporting the community of Alvechurch.

Action – Clerk/Chairman

Cllr Humphries raised the question of Dog Walking and the issues surrounding allowing ‘minors’ to address such a task; after a short discussion Members resolved not to allow anyone under the age of 18yrs to volunteer due to insurance implications.

Noted - Alvechurch Cares advised

Cllr Wallis inquired whether volunteers were experiencing any issues in the quantity of certain basic food provisions they were attempting to buy for those in need.

Mrs Cooke said to date they had experienced no issue in supply restriction.

Cllr Baxter/the Clerk reminded volunteers that they may need to use/show their lanyards to prove they are an ‘essential’ worker if they are prevented from buying a number of the same provisions; also that as a volunteer they qualify for adhoc shop opening hours which should assist them in sourcing the provisions required. **Noted**

There being no further points Cllr Worrall closed the meeting at 9pm.

Chairman

Date