



## **BRADWELL WITH PATTISWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Temporary Policy Decision Making during Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak 2020**

Version	1.0
Issue date	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
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Reviewed by	Parish Councillors
Approved	Minute:

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Bradwell with Pattiswick Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to maintaining its effectiveness in serving the residents of the parish and will continue to comment on planning applications submitted to Braintree District Council and Essex County Council (Minerals & Waste). The Council is also committed to ensuring its suppliers and employees are paid in accordance with their trading terms and Contracts of Employment.

Government guidance is clear in its intent that to halt the spread of the Covid-19 virus, steps must be taken to isolate potential sources for spreading the virus. In line with that guidance, the Parish Council has closed its office to the public and other visitors. All meetings will be suspended and alternative measures put in place to carry out the business of the Council.

The Council will follow any additional recommendations or instructions received from the Essex Association of Local Councils, the National Association of Local Councils, The Society for Local Council Clerks, Braintree District Council, Essex County Council or the Local Government Association. The Council is mindful of the year-end requirements for the auditing of accounts and the Annual Governance and Return process. Any instructions issued in this respect will be implemented and the Council will comply with those instructions.

This policy will remain in force until government isolation restrictions are lifted, the office can re-open and scheduled meetings can be held.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS**

This policy is subject to the Council’s statutory obligations set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Openness of Local Government Bodies regulations 2014 together with the Council’s standing orders and Financial Regulations.

## **MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Council have been suspended until further notice. If guidance is issued that will allow “virtual” meetings, this will be followed providing the Council has access to the necessary equipment.

## **CORRESPONDENCE and EMAIL RECEIVED**

Any written correspondence received should be referred to the Parish Clerk for action. If a Councillor receives a request for information under the rules relating to Freedom of Information, this must be forwarded to the Parish Clerk without delay to ensure appropriate response is provided in line with published timescales. (See policy: Freedom of Information and Data Protection).

When items are received that need decisions or comments from Councillors:

- The Clerk will provide details to Councillors containing information and guidance on what is required from Councillors. The Clerk will state a realistic timescale in which a response is necessary.
- Councillors to respond to email within timescales required by the Clerk giving clear response or decision.

- The Clerk will maintain a record of decisions made and how each Councillor responded in order to provide evidence of consultation should any decision be challenged.
- In the event of any Councillor who does not respond, they will be classed as an “abstention”.
- In the event of an unclear decision, i.e. 3 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention, in accordance with Standing Order 3.q, the Chairman will be asked for his casting vote.
- The Clerk will respond to the original request accordingly.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- The Clerk will provide details to Councillors seeking their views on the application. The Clerk will provide a realistic timescale in which to provide comments (including an individual decision of approve or object).
- Councillors to provide comments by email within timescales for Clerk to prepare a draft response on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Clerk will send draft response to all Councillors who must respond within 48 hours if there is any query or disagreement to any comment.
- Any Councillor not replying to either the first request or the draft response, will be assumed to have no comments on the application and therefore neutral on the decision.