

# BISHOPSTEIGNTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Risk Assessment for face-to-face meetings

Local councils had powers to hold public meetings remotely, using video or telephone conferencing technology, until 6 May 2021, thus avoiding the need to meet in person. These powers were contained in [The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel Meeting\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#).

- Since these powers have now expired, all meetings of local councils, their committees, sub committees or any other meeting held under the 1972 Local Government Act Sch12 para10 must be held as a physical, face to face meeting from May 7th, 2021.
- Members of the public must be able to attend any physical meeting. A court judgement has confirmed that the limiting the public to virtual access is unlawful; they must be able to attend in person. However, the capacity of the meeting room will limit the number of people able to attend the meeting safely. Provided the capacity has been assessed and reasonable adjustments made to meet Covid 19 precautions and restrictions, access may be restricted when the room is 'full'.
- Council meetings are defined as work for councillors & staff (the clerk) and should be organised in accordance with Government guidance and the Covid 19 principles of hands, face, space and fresh air.
- Virtual formats may continue be used for business meetings of members, working parties, and consultation with the clerk.
- Only decisions taken by the council at a face-to-face meeting, or under the Scheme of Delegation will be lawful.
- PLEASE NOTE: The following payments could be made under a scheme of delegation without the need for approval at a meeting of the council or a committee:
  - Any payment which part of an agreed contractual obligation is (salary and on costs, contractors, and suppliers).  
*This is because failure to pay would be a breach of contract or the individual payment is part of budgeted expense.*
  - Any other budgeted item including approved grants, approved purchases (playground equipment, computer, other assets) insurance and any other expenditure previously agreed by the council.  
*There is an audit trail that the council has already considered and approved the payment.*
  - Any amount authorised by the Clerk which within the limits set by the Council's financial regulations.
  - Any other payment authorised under the Councils Scheme of Delegation.

Risk	Description of Risk	Mitigation Measures	Additional Comments
1. Meeting Room / Equipment	Transmission of Covid / Cross-contamination via equipment to be used for meeting ie. chairs, tables.	Using anti-viral products sanitise all furniture/equipment before the meeting and again at the end of the meeting before storage.	At least three members appointed to set up meeting room and sanitise tables and chairs before the start of the meeting.

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		<p>Consider the need for a table; perhaps a chair is enough. A decision for individual members.</p>	<p>Members to sanitise their own chairs and tables at the end of the meeting, cleaning material to be provided.</p> <p>If required: tables shall be socially distanced and allocated to each member on arrival.</p>
2. Meeting Room / Attendees & Environment	<p>Transmission of Covid / Contamination via attendees moving around the room and at pinch points causing proximity to other attendees; particularly when entering and leaving the meeting. Transmission through air.</p>	<p>Face covering to be worn when moving around within the centre. These may only be removed when seated and social distance is maintained.</p> <p>Sanitisation hand gel provided for all attendees.</p> <p>Windows and doors to be left open to facilitate the free flow of air though the meeting room.</p> <p>Staggered arrival times for members and potential audience members.</p>	<p>All attendees to sanitise on arrival.</p> <p>Each member to remain at their table, refrain from moving around the room during the meeting to avoid transmission / cross-contamination.</p> <p>Both members chairs/tables and audience chairs to be set out in a horseshoe shape to avoid people facing each other where possible.</p> <p>One way system to be adhered to, as already established at the centre.</p> <p>Notices regarding social distancing and face coverings, already provided and displayed by the Community Centre.</p>
3. Conduct of Meeting / Time in proximity	<p>Transfer though touch. Extended time within the centre - need to reducing delays where possible</p>	<p>All attendees to remain socially distanced, at all times, and where possible, refrain from moving around the room.</p> <p>Sanitising hand gel provided for all attendees.</p>	<p>Members may bring non-alcoholic refreshment from home. Drinking vessels may not be shared. No food to be consumed during the meeting.</p> <p>Consider order of business and enable adjustments to allow members of the public to leave, should they so wish, immediately after discussion of their item of interest. Encourage orderly exit, minimising contact and maintaining social distance where possible.</p>

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		<p>Face coverings may only be removed when seated and social distance is maintained.</p> <p>The circulation of tablets/ documents/ paper /stationery to be suspended.</p> <p>Councillors who declare an interest and must leave the room should wear a mask when moving about and avoid walking the public seating area.</p>	<p>No papers to be presented at the meeting or shared. To put forward documents at the last minute will not be permitted - all paperwork should be circulated in advance.</p> <p>Members to bring from home anything they may require during the meeting.</p>
4. Use of extended facilities in the centre.	Transmission of Covid via surfaces at other facilities in the centre – ie. kitchen, office, toilets, doors.	<p>Centre management have a cleaning program in place, under which the full range of facilities shall be sanitised prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Attendees moving around the centre to use other facilities must wear a face covering, maintain social distance from others and regularly sanitise their hands.</p>	
ADDITIONAL ACTIONS	<p>Track &amp; Trace/ List of Attendees</p> <p>Discourage attendance of anyone showing symptoms of coronavirus, receiving a positive test result within the previous 14 days, anyone having returned from overseas travels within the previous 14 days.</p>	<p>All attendees should register using the NHS Track &amp; Trace QR code provided by the Centre.</p> <p>Clerk to keep a record of all members and public audience who attend each meeting.</p>	<p>All attendees to notify the clerk of name and contact details on arrival. This record to be kept in accordance with GDPR by the clerk for 21 days following the meeting.</p> <p>Publication of meeting details to include this risk assessment and the Community Centre risk assessment.</p>