

# WRAXALL AND FAILAND PARISH COUNCIL

## HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

1.1. Wraxall and Failand 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 and HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Wraxall and Failand.

### 2. Scope of the policy

2.1. The main areas of concern for Wraxall and Failand Parish Council with respect to HCIDs 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 Wraxall and Failand **and**
- At least 4 councillors have requested its activation to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the clerk, or the Chairman plus 3 councillors have requested its activation to the Clerk, or its activation is resolved in a meeting of the Wraxall and Failand 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 Wraxall and Failand has passed **and**
- A minimum of 4 councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced **or**
- 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](http://www.gov.uk) (11/03/2020)

<b>Contact HCID</b>	<b>Airborne HCID</b>
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 ( <i>Yersinia pestis</i> )
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 – The Clerk**

- 6.1. Wrexall and Failand Parish Council has no official offices, as such the only employee, the Clerk, works from home. The public may only visit the Clerk by appointment. 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 1<sup>st</sup> normal place of work.
- 6.2. Any other public location used for Parish Council meetings is the 2<sup>nd</sup> normal place of work for the Clerk. This is dealt with in Section 7.
- 6.3. 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
  - 6.3.1. If the Clerk is sick or unfit for work he/she needs to focus on his/her recovery and consideration should be given to appoint a cover clerk.
  - 6.3.2. As per Part 2 Para 10.9 of the 'Green Book', if the Clerk is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate, their absence should not be recorded as sickness absence. As they are 'well' at this stage they should stay on normal full pay for the duration of the self-isolation period until such time as they are confirmed to have contracted any such HCID, at which point they transfer to sickness absence leave and the usual provisions of the sickness scheme will apply.
  - 6.3.3. If the Clerk is caring for someone who has or may have coronavirus, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given the Clerk

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. The Chairman should keep in touch to support the Clerk

- 6.3.4. Following any school closures, the Councils should be fully supportive of the Clerk if he/she has 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 whom attend meetings, there is high percentage of attendees whom 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.
- 7.4. In the circumstances where public meetings are not permitted then Councillors may choose to conduct meetings by electronic means, when permitted by the government, and provided that the means used allows them to both see and hear each other, for example, by using video conferencing or internet video facilities. Such meetings can be useful if a decision needs to be made and if Councillors are self-isolating.

## **8. Delegated Authority**

- 8.1. To allow the council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following items are delegated to the Clerk for the duration of the activation of this policy.
  - 8.1.1. Planning applications. After consultation with all councillors, a summary response will be circulated to all councillors for approval by the majority of councillors prior to submission to North Somerset Council by the Clerk.
  - 8.1.2. Finance
    - 8.1.2.1. In order to provide contingency to make payments for budgeted, or subsequently agreed expenditure, authority is granted to the Finance Committee members to authorise such payments, and to the Clerk to affect them, without formal approval at a parish council meeting, with a list of such payments presented to the next convened meeting, and formally authorised.
    - 8.1.2.2. Where this policy is activated over the end of the financial year, the Clerk will prepare the end of year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and circulate to all of the councillors. On the acceptance of a minimum of 4 councillors, they will be signed by the Clerk and Chairman as applicable for submission to the external and internal auditors. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Party.

**9. Review of the policy**

9.1. This policy was approved by the Parish Council at its meeting on 20th March 2020 and will be reviewed annually.