

## Managing in the absence of the Clerk

### 1. Introduction

It is possible that the clerk could become incapacitated and unable to perform his/her duties and/or have to leave the parish with little/no notice. To prepare for such an eventuality the Clerk has prepared this document to provide guidance to the Council on how business continuity could be provided, minimising any potential impact on the Council.

### 2. Emergency situations

#### 2.1. Important information, access details, usernames and password

If the clerk became incapacitated and unable to perform his/her duties and/or have to leave the parish with little/no notice it is critical that the Council can continue to carry out essential functions, such as pay bills, manage correspondence, keep accounts, meet regulatory requirement etc.

The Chairman of the Parish Council has been provided with an envelope for safekeeping, which should only be opened if such a situation arises. The envelope must not be opened by the Chairman. The envelope must only be opened in extreme circumstances at the Chairman's request by 2 other councillors.

The envelope contains details of the following:

- Parish Council official Address
- Bank Details
- Members access to WALC website
- Clerk's Laptop log-in passcode
- Parish Council website (including admin log-in)
- Microsoft account
- SMBC Planning Portal – login
- Google Account (including Google Drive laptop back-up)
- Tax & NI
- Payroll
- Pension
- Ordnance Survey subscription
- Government Gateway registration and log-in
- Norton Web Security

#### 2.2. Access to Council's laptop and electronic files

The location of the Council's laptop is within the clerk's home/office (this is noted in the emergency envelop held by the chairman).

The log-in details for the Council's laptop are contained in the Chairman's envelope. Access to the laptop will enable the Council to access:

- 2.2.1. the council's email account including email history

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- 2.2.2. all electronic files created to date (including accounts, correspondence, policies and procedures etc)
- 2.2.3. file back-up on Google Drive
- 2.2.4. admin access to the Council's web site

### **2.3. Accounts**

A copy of the accounts (excel spreadsheet) is always backed up to the Google Drive and when available, the private section of the parish councils web site, by the clerk. This provides the PC with its accounting records and accounts necessary to run the council.

### **2.4. Cheque book & bank statements**

The location of the cheque book and bank statements is within the clerk's home/office (this is noted in the emergency envelop held by the chairman).

#### **2.4.1. Action in the event that the clerk's home office is not accessible**

- 2.4.1.1.** Details of the bank account numbers are contained within the envelope held by the Chairman
- 2.4.1.2.** NatWest bank can be contacted in person by one of the people named on the bank mandate, with a letter signed by two named signatories listed on the bank mandate, with a view to obtaining a temporary cheque book
- 2.4.1.3.** Two of the authorised cheque signatories to visit or write to the Council's bank branch and request copies of the bank statement.

### **2.5. Temporary Clerk**

The Council will, if appropriate, appoint a temporary clerks/responsible financial officer(s), potentially from amongst themselves to continue the business of the council. The temporary proper officer undertaking the payment function must in no circumstances sign cheques. Such an appointment will be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Council by the Chairman as the first item of business or the Chairman or two Councillors will call an EM for that purpose.

## **3. Planned absence**

The Clerk will on several occasions during the year will be unavailable on a planned basis, e.g. holidays. The Clerk will:

- 3.1.** Seek PC approval to delegate to the Chairman specific actions where appropriate to complete an authorised action, e.g. placing an order, sending a letter on behalf of the council. The delegation will include the controls that will apply.
- 3.2.** Set up an "out of office message" on the clerk's email system which replies to senders of mail stating that the clerk is away and asking the sender to resend the mail to the Chairman if it is urgent and giving the sender the appropriate email address