



COLEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

EMERGENCY POWERS POLICY – ADOPTED 29th October 2024

1. Scope of the Policy

- 1.1 This Emergency Powers Policy has been written to enable the Council to continue to operate all our essential functions in any future emergency situation where the Council is unable to undertake meetings on a normal basis for a prolonged period. This includes, but is not limited to, situations arising from disease pandemics, severe natural disasters, foreign hostilities or terrorism.

2. Activation of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy is considered to be activated, when there is an active (or imminent threat) of an emergency situation, and...
- 2.2 At least 3 Councillors have requested its activation, or its activation is resolved in a meeting of the Colehill Parish Council, or the Government of the United Kingdom have suspended all public meetings.

3. Deactivation of the Policy

- 3.1 This policy is considered to be deactivated, when the actual or imminent threat has passed and...
- 3.2 at least 3 Councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced, or the Government of the United Kingdom has reinstated all public meetings, and/or made provision for meetings to be undertaken on a virtual basis.

4. Key Provisions of the Policy

- 4.1 All Parish Council meetings, including the Annual Parish Council Meeting will be suspended.
- 4.2 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council will remain in post for the duration of these Emergency Powers.
- 4.3 All powers and decision making for the Council will be delegated to the Parish Clerk (note, the law does not permit decisions to be delegated to an individual Councillor).
- 4.4 The Clerk must attempt to consult with the Chair and Vice Chair before any decisions are made. If the Chair or Vice Chair are incapacitated and/or out of contact, then the Clerk should attempt to consult with other Councillors in lieu.
- 4.5 The Clerk should review all council activities/services/events and determine which are safe and appropriate to continue and which will be suspended.
- 4.6 Any essential payments will be paid by the Clerk, as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), including salaries, printing costs, stationery and IT services etc., along with any essential costs relating to the emergency situation. All payments must be formally authorised by the full council when they are next able to meet.

- 4.7 In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, Financial Regulation 5.18 permits the Clerk to authorise revenue expenditure up to £2,000. When this policy has been activated the Clerk shall be permitted to incur expenditure up to an increased limit of £15,000 for a single transaction, providing the Chair and Vice Chair (or other Councillors operating in lieu) confirm agreement.
- 4.8 The Clerk may authorise any revenue expenditure not covered by 4.7 up to a £5,000 limit, providing the funds have been allocated in the approved budget, and providing the Chair and Vice Chair (or other Councillors operating in lieu) confirm agreement.
- 4.9 Where this policy is activated over the end of the financial year, the RFO will prepare the end of year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and attempt to circulate to all Councillors. The accounts will be accepted by resolution at the next full council meeting.
- 4.10 The Clerk should follow all appropriate regulations and guidance issued by the UK Government and/or the Local Authority.
- 4.11 The provisions in this policy should be taken as overriding any conflicting clauses in the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- 4.12 The Clerk should attempt to keep all Councillors updated on a regular basis, using telephone, email or virtual meetings as most appropriate.
- 4.13 Any communication with the press or public shall be the responsibility of the Clerk after due consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Press Officer where appropriate.

5. Matters Relating to Staff

- 5.1 Colehill Parish Council has no public offices and the two members of staff either work from The Reef or from home. If it is essential for a member of staff to meet with a member of the public during an active emergency situation, then this will normally take place either at The Reef or the Village Hall with another Councillor in attendance where possible.
- 5.2 If the Clerk is unable to work due to illness, then the Assistant Clerk will normally provide essential cover. If this is not possible then the Chair will access any email correspondence and action anything urgent in conjunction with the vice-Chair, and if necessary seek to obtain the services of a locum Clerk.

Version History

| Date | Summary of Changes |
|----------|---|
| 9/3/21 | New policy to replace the “High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) Policy” established in 2020 for the Covid pandemic. |
| 5/4/22 | Clause added to allow revenue expenditure up to £5,000 for items in budget. Removing historic background information. |
| 11/4/23 | Amendments to section 5 to reflect recruitment of a Deputy Clerk. |
| 29/10/24 | Amendment to 4.7 to reflect changes in Financial Regulations |

This Policy will be reviewed annually, next review due October 2025.