

# Town Council

## Minutes of Meeting

Kidsgrove Town Council  
Victoria Hall  
Liverpool Road  
Kidsgrove  
Staffordshire  
ST7 4EL

Tel: 01782 782254

[www.kidsgrovetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.kidsgrovetowncouncil.gov.uk)



### **Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, 6:30pm** **Main Hall, Victoria Hall, Kidsgrove**

- 1920-FC9-01 Present**
- Cllrs: A Cooper (chair), S Dymond, J Dodgson, P Waring, J Owen, M Stubbs, K Robinson, J Owen
- Attending: Sue Davies (Clerk)
- Member of the Public: Mr D Plimbley (Lamb Street Allotments)
- 1920-FC9-02 Public Participation: A period not exceeding 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions or submit comments.**
- The Council resolved to suspend Standing Orders to allow Mr Plimbley to speak on a matter regarding Lamb Street Allotments. Mr Plimbley then left the meeting.
- 1920-FC9-03 To receive apologies for absence and to formally approve the absence where a valid reason has been given.**
- Apologies of absence were approved for the following members, where the Clerk informed a valid reason had been passed to her:
- Cllr H Maxfield  
Cllr E Wareham-Jones
- 1920-FC9-04 To approve leave of absence for those members that have requested it and to determine the length of the approved absence due to Covid-19 related health concerns.**
- The following Members were granted a leave of absence from Council duties for a period of time up to six-months or until either the member or the Council determines otherwise before this time (noting the Council's Emergency delegation scheme):
- Cllr S Bowyer  
Cllr S Burgess  
Cllr A Cartwright  
Cllr C Dickens

Cllr K Johnson  
Cllr V Jukes  
Cllr B Owen  
Cllr J Waring

**1920-FC9-05 To note declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**1920-FC9-06 To consider and resolve to agree the council's Emergency Plan to allow the Council to function during the Covid-19 situation.**

The Council resolved to approve the Emergency Plan with some agreed amendments. The approved plan is in Appendix 1.

**1920-FC9-07 To approve the Terms of Reference and membership of the Emergency Committee.**

The Council resolved to approve the Terms of Reference for the Emergency Committee (appendix 2) and resolved to appoint the following Members:

Chair – Cllr Kyle Robinson  
Vice-Chair – Cllr P Waring  
Cllr G Burnett  
Cllr A Cooper  
Cllr H Maxfield  
Cllr M Stubbs

**Meeting Closed 7:00 pm**

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## **Kidsgrove Town Council – Coronavirus/Covid-19 Emergency Plan**

### **1. Council Meetings and continuation of Council Business**

- a) An emergency meeting will be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to resolve to approve the measures and procedures outlined in this document to facilitate the Council to function during the Covid-19 outbreak.
- b) A monthly Full Council Meeting will be scheduled for each month thereafter for if the situation and government advice allows such meeting to progress. The clerk shall have full delegated power to cancel such meetings with seven days' notice after consultation with the group leaders, Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- c) Working Parties and Committee meetings will be suspended until further notice with immediate effect.
- d) An Emergency Committee will be formed to be used if achieving a quorate at Full Council becomes difficult or if recommended social distancing measures make having up to twenty councillors meeting together inadvisable. The Committee will have a terms of reference and membership approved at the extraordinary meeting of the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The Emergency Committee will have the delegation to act on behalf of the Full Council except on those matters not permitted by legislation to be delegated. The group leaders will be proposed as the chair and vice chair and will work together to ensure cross-party cohesion throughout the emergency situation. Other named members should be under 70 years of age and not in an 'at risk' category.
- e) In the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the council or emergency committee in a reasonable time, or if it becomes impossible because of government directives, the Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. The clerk will consult closely with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and especially both group leaders for guidance as necessary and as appropriate prior to making decisions not normally delegated to the Clerk. There may be situations when all councillors, or those in a particular ward will be consulted prior to the clerk making a decision under this delegation but as councillors need to be mindful that debate cannot occur outside of meetings, responses will be sent directly to the Clerk and copied to group leaders. The Full Council should be informed of such delegated decisions by email.
- f) Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations.

## Appendix 1

- g)** The delegated authority to the Clerk will cease upon the first meeting of the full council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place unless it is resolved otherwise.
- h)** The delegation procedures put in place by this policy will include making any changes required to this policy or to procedures in response to the rapidly evolving situation and the implementation of any directives received from NALC in relation to legislative requirements.

Note - The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council only in legislation. Any unavoidable and essential deviance from Standing Orders or Financial Regulations must be clearly documented.

- i)** The Committee must abide by all government legislation governing Town and Parish Councils unless this becomes absolutely impossible due to restrictions imposed or presents an unacceptable risk hazard to the public, officers and/or Members. This decision will rest with the Clerk in consultation with the Group leaders, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- j)** All members will pledge to put aside party-political differences in relation to Town Council business whilst the Town Council is steered through the virus outbreak.
- k)** Any member with an underlying health issue who is concerned about attending meetings will be invited to write to the Clerk. The Council will authorise absence for these Councillors until such time as the Council or Emergency Committee decide this is unnecessary based on government advice.
- l)** Any other member not able to attend the Council meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 will be advised to submit an application, giving a reason, to have their absence approved rather than just noted. (Note- this may be imperative if the council is unable to meet for an extended period as the 6-month attendance rule is legislative.)
- m)** Councillors unable to attend meetings due to infection, required isolation or because they must be shielded, will have absence approved, not just noted, throughout the duration of the emergency situation.
- n)** The Council has two staff members with the necessary skills and background to manage the office and to keep essential administration up to date. In order to minimise the risk of both these members of staff being ill at the same time, as much as possible, when manned, the office will only have one staff member in.
- o)** The Council Office will not admit members of the public during the ongoing crisis. Where possible, communication will be by email and telephone. Necessary visitors will be met in the refreshments room where an appropriate distance can be maintained. Add - The Clerk will maintain an active divert of the office phone during periods that the office is not manned and will put appropriate signage on the door.

## 2. Victoria Hall

- a)** The town Council will always heed government guidelines regarding the Victoria Hall usage and will keep abreast and react to new development and advice in as timely a manner as possible.
- b)** All hall booking will be cancelled for the foreseeable future and until government advice regarding avoiding unnecessary socialisation has been lifted.
- c)** Commercial bookings involving those classed as 'at risk' by government guidelines, involve numbers above recommended by the government or that contravene government guidelines in any other way will be asked to cancel and will be refunded.
- d)** All other commercial bookings will be either refunded or an alternative date offered if preferred by the client.

## Appendix 1

- e) The cleaning contract and caretaking will continue for the foreseeable future, despite bookings being cancelled, to ensure the Victoria Hall remains in a state of deep clean.
- f) The monthly amount payable by the contract holders of the Tap Room Bar to the Town Council will cease to be payable should either the Town Council request closure or the Government decree the closure of such establishments. In such situation, the Town Council will instruct when the bar can be reopened, and the payment will recommence at that time.

### 3. Staffing Issues

- a) Any members of staff who fall into the at-risk categories as defined by the Government will not be expected or asked to leave their home to work for the foreseeable future and until the government directives that such people no longer need to be shielded. However, it is expected that where possible, home working will take place as an alternative. The Clerk will ensure arrangements for this are in place.
- b) To help protect business continuity, the Clerk and the administration assistant will be asked to not work together in the office unless absolutely necessary. Home working is encouraged to prevent this.
- c) All non-urgent staffing issues will be put on hold.

### 4. Community Support

- a) Kildgrove Town Council Officers will be instructed to prioritise helping the council with its community support alongside ensuring essential Council business is progressed appropriately.
- b) The Town Clerk and Ranger, whilst able to work, will try and support the community.
- c) The Town Council will use its website and Facebook page to help provide up to date information to the Community.
- d) The Town Council will try and support the Community and in any way it can within its powers through the crisis.
- e) The Town Council will support the community groups that are forming to help the vulnerable and socially isolated.
- f) The Town Council will set aside £10,000 from general reserves into a budget line for the 2020/21 year which can be used to support local charities and volunteer groups as they work to support the community. Applications for assistance will be to the Clerk.
- g) Officers and Members will always be heedful that any help they offer within the community is within guidelines and won't inadvertently put anyone at risk.

### 5. Other Business

- a) The Ranger will cease his visits to community centres and various residential homes and will not organise group events until advised by the Council otherwise.
- b) Allotments will remain open and operating at present but meetings and close contact between allotment holders will be discouraged.
- c) Council events involving the community will be cancelled until further notice.

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## Coronavirus Covid19 Emergency Committee – Terms of Reference

### 1) Introduction

The Coronavirus Covid19 Emergency Committee is set up to oversee and manage Kidsgrove Town Council's business during the duration of the 2020 Coronavirus situation.

The Committee will be in place until a resolution of the Council disbands it.

The Committee will have full delegated power to make decisions for the Town Council apart from those decision which cannot be legally delegated to a committee.

The Committee was set up by Kidsgrove Town Council at its meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

The Committee must always abide with the Council's current approved Standing Orders and Financial Regulations or clearly minute any deviation which becomes necessary in order to progress essential Council business, giving the reasons.

The Committee must abide by all government legislation governing Town and Parish Councils unless this becomes absolutely impossible due to restrictions imposed or presents an unacceptable risk hazard to the public, officers and/or Members. This decision will rest with the Clerk in consultation with the Group leaders and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. <sup>1</sup>

### 2) Membership

The membership of the Committee will consist of three labour elected members and three opposition elected members. The quorum for a meeting will be three.

The chair will be the group leader of Labour (the majority party) and the vice-chair will be the Conservative group leader.

However, in these roles they will be expected to work closely both together and with the Clerk. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should be consulted and kept informed of the business of the committee.

A substitution system will apply: Group leaders can put substitutions in place but must inform the Clerk in writing (email accepted) prior to the meeting.

### 3) Aim and Remit of the Committee

The Committee will have full delegation to manage the Council's business other than those aspects which cannot be delegated by legislation. The Clerk will advise on this matter and her word will be final. (See footnote 1).

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<sup>1</sup> If the Clerk is unable to perform her duties for any reason, then the advice of the Staffordshire Parish Association should be sought on these matters.

## Appendix 2

Approved at the Full Council Meeting dated: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Minute Reference: 1920-FC9-07

Chair:

Clerk: