

Ludgvan Parish Council

'Agenda' of updates and matters for decision – issued on 18 April 2020

Councillor responses to matters for decision to the Clerk by 9am, Friday 24 April.

Councillor name:

2.	<u>Matters for Decision</u>	Your vote: Yes/No/Abstain
2.1	<p><u>Parish Council measures in response to COVID-19 pandemic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A leaflet has been produced, an initiative led by Councillor Elliott with the aim of the leaflet landing on every doorstep in the parish, to give information on local support available, particularly for vulnerable people, and those required to self-isolate in their homes. There is also the potential for support in the form of pre-paid cards for use in supermarkets, for residents in the parish in need. Both of these schemes will be predominantly funded through the Cornwall Council, from the Ward Member's Community Chest. Please state whether you agree that the parish council contribute to these initiatives by : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contributing to the costs of printing and distributing the leaflet to households 2. Holding and distributing the pre-paid supermarket cards, delegating to 3 parish councillors to allocate cards and to maintain a confidential record of allocations 3. Consider allocating an amount as a COVID-19 emergency fund 4. If an emergency fund is set up, to set out which councillors the Clerk needs to consult with before committing to expenditure (eg: all councillors / Chairman and Vice-Chairman / other) - The parish council website has been regularly updated with sources of advice and information about the coronavirus pandemic, including a wealth of information sources of local support. There will be additional pages to make it easy for the public (and councillors) to review current planning applications, access the delegated decisions registers, and to be notified when virtual meetings are scheduled. - The clerk will post information on local sources of support, on the council noticeboards. 	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allotments remain open, noting that the government position is that working an allotment can be considered the allowed daily exercise. Plot holders will be contacted by the clerk in the near future with an update, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Guidance on visiting allotment plots, hygiene and social distancing o A reminder for any outstanding allotment fees to be paid – no cheque or cash payments accepted, and so direct payments to the council’s bank account only. o Plots will be allocated to people on the waiting list in coming weeks, and so if anyone is considering giving up their plot, the administration for this can still be carried out. o Formal plot inspections will not be carried out during the lock-down period, and it is appreciated that some allotment holders will not be able to visit their plots if they need to self-isolate at home. - And, of course, as part of the national ‘stay at home’ and social distancing measures, council meetings have been cancelled, an emergency scheme of delegation has been adopted to enable the council to continue to function effectively, and the clerk has kept councillors updated with advice on changes in legislation and guidance to the local council sector. 	
2.2	<p><u>Non-essential works</u></p> <p><u>Footpath maintenance</u></p> <p>The parish council has committed to carry out maintenance on rights of way in the parish, under Cornwall Council’s LMP scheme. Although footpaths remain open for use for access/exercise, it is open to the parish council to decide whether to cut them during the lock-down period.</p> <p>The Clerk has discussed this with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and the outcome of discussion is agreement that this is non-essential work. Although the contractor works alone and so social distancing would not be an issue, the parish council has a duty of care and should not be requiring work which could result in injury to a remote lone worker at this time. The situation will be kept under review, with cutting work not likely to start before Cormac re-commence their cutting work, noting that Cormac’s actions will be one of a number of factors to take into account.</p> <p><u>Cemetery Maintenance</u></p> <p>There are concrete beams due to be installed at St Paul’s Cemetery, Ludgvan. This work has been put on hold due to lock-down restrictions on work, and the impact on sourcing materials. The beams can be installed after burials have taken place, if necessary.</p>	

	<p>The cemeteries at Ludgvan and Crowlas remain open to the public, but grass cutting is considered non-essential and so the contractor will not be required to carry out this work.</p> <p>Members are asked to endorse the approach set out above with regard to footpaths and cemeteries.</p>	
2.3	<p><u>Decision making and virtual meetings</u></p> <p>The coronavirus pandemic has led to social distancing measures which prevent local council meetings being held. Even when social distancing is relaxed by the Government, there will likely continue to be issues around attendance at council meetings, for councillors and members of the public who may need to self-isolate at home for individual health/shielding reasons.</p> <p>The council is currently able to continue to operate using the emergency scheme of delegation adopted on 8 April 2020.</p> <p>Legislation has been changed and so local councils are now able, lawfully, to hold virtual meetings – ie using tele-conferencing technology.</p> <p>The requirement for councils to hold at least three meetings per annum means that the impetus for early implementation is likely to come from the council, rather than to meet the legal requirement for the number of meetings in a council year. There will be a wish to hold virtual meetings straight away, however there are practicalities to be addressed:</p> <p><u>Internet access and technology</u></p> <p>When holding virtual meetings, it should be a guiding principle that there should be equal access for all councillors. From an initial audit of councillors computer and wifi access, the response has been that 4 councillors have the technology needed, 1 lacks internet connectivity and equipment, and 5 replies are awaited.</p> <p>Moving forward, the council will need to decide how to proceed:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Option A – continue on the basis that all councillors will need to take the steps needed to bring their internet and computing access to the standard needed to be able to participate in virtual meetings (this option has the clear risk that some councillors may not be able to participate, and so is not recommended)</p>	

Option B – the council to use funds from reserves to purchase a laptop for each Councillor, for use at virtual meetings, and then for future use at actual meetings, on similar lines to Cornwall Council, Penzance Town Council, and others. Note that there may be a need to support set up costs for internet connection for any councillors without internet access.

Option C – the council to use funds from reserves to purchase a laptop for any councillor without access to suitable technology for virtual meetings, and to support set up costs for internet connection for any councillors without internet access.

Of the three options, Option B is recommended. When accessing virtual meetings (eg Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype), the level of security is only as good as the weakest attendee, and so there is an inherent risk in councillors using their own personal devices. A costed option for Option B would be:

For each councillor: a [laptop](#) (est. £300 each) plus £9.40 per month per user for Office 365 Business Premium.

Laptops would be issued to each councillor for their use throughout their term of office, and the Office 365 Business Premium will give the Microsoft suite of office applications (eg Word, Excel, etc) and, importantly, the ability to set up secure virtual meetings using Microsoft Teams (as recommended by Cornwall Council).

There would be an initial cost of £2,900 for laptops (plus £580 when the remaining two councillors are co-opted) plus £1,128 per annum for 10 councillors licences for use of Office 365 Business Premium. £4,000 in 2020/21 and then a need to budget at least £1,500 per annum in following years for the office licence.

Software for hosting virtual meetings

The council will need to arrive at a decision on the software to be used to host the virtual meetings. Current thinking is that meetings between councillors and the clerk (eg working groups) should be held via Microsoft Teams, a secure system and will be user-friendly once the technology has been purchased and set up.

There is a requirement for council meetings to be open to the press and public, including virtual meetings, if possible. This is likely to be possible by holding a meeting using Zoom and then live-streaming it via Facebook. This is something that Councillor Elliott has volunteered to work on. In addition to the technical issues, there will be a need for the parish council to set up a Facebook account, and again Councillor Elliott has volunteered to lead on this.

Other considerations

Arrangements for virtual meetings may need amendments to be made to the council's standing orders and other policies / procedures.

In addition to the time put to this voluntarily by those councillors who can help, there will be officer time involved in governance and co-ordination for virtual meetings. The Clerk also needs to put time to administration for burials, allotments, banking, etc and the end of year accounts. The current system of delegated decision making and more frequent updates to the website also take officer time.

Some delay in supply of laptops has been experienced recently with the surge in home-working.

Arrangements for any set-up of the laptops and/or internet access, and for training or support will need to take into account the requirement for social distancing, and for a period note that some councillors are self-isolating and so extra care must be taken.

Councillors are asked to state whether you support Option A, B or C.

You can also let notify the clerk of your IT and internet equipment currently (ie whether you have the technology to join a virtual meeting).

And any other comments on this topic can be given at this point.

2.4	<p><u>Approval of annual subscriptions</u></p> <p>Annual renewal for BrightPay, payroll software, recommended by the Clerk as a trusted and reliable payroll tool. Annual licence due for payment. Cost: £49.00</p> <p>Annual subscription to CALC, recommended by the Clerk, especially in view of the current situation and need for sector specific advice on governance and wider council matters. Cost: £1,095.12</p> <p>Councillors are asked to confirm if you support these renewals.</p>	
2.5	<p><u>Cornwall Council consultation – Biodiversity Net Gain</u></p> <p>Cornwall Council is publishing the following document for a six week consultation period between 9th April 2020 and 5pm 21st May 2020</p> <p>Biodiversity Net Gain Chief Planning Officers Note</p> <p>This document will set out Cornwall Council’s approach to how the planning system can ensure that the development process achieves minimum 10% net gains in biodiversity and leave nature in a better state than beforehand.</p> <p>Copies of the document can be downloaded from www.cornwall.gov.uk/biodiversity</p> <p>How to view the documents and comment</p> <p>Due to the unprecedented situation caused by Covid-19, the first round of consultation will be held predominantly online, and no face to face events or exhibitions will be organised during the current health emergency. This is to protect the health of our communities. We recognise that people may want to contribute ideas and comments through other means - if you are unable to view the document online, we may be able to arrange a paper copy.</p>	

	<p>Representations should be made using the provided representation form available online at www.cornwall.gov.uk/biodiversity</p> <p>Completed Representation Forms should be emailed to: localplan@cornwall.gov.uk</p> <p>Initial comments from parish councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this is not the right time for a consultation to be carried out, global warming is important but it is not important to consult on it at a time of global pandemic - there is a lot to discuss, including requiring larger developments to have areas protected from open access until matured - questioned whether new housing development could increase biodiversity - the parish council needs to encourage new-builds, and this is seen as an obstacle <p>The clerk had originally suggested that councillors might choose to respond to the consultation as individuals. A request has been made for the parish council to consider this and to send a parish council consultation response. In view of this, please send your views, answering yes/no/abstain to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. should there be a parish council response, and for that response to be a request for the consultation to be deferred to a later date? 2. Should there be a parish council response, and for a working group of councillors to consider and draft a response? (If yes, please indicate whether you wish to volunteer for the working group) 	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>												
<p>2.6</p>	<p><u>Payment Schedule</u></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="280 1134 1480 1393"> <thead> <tr> <th>Payee</th> <th>Purpose</th> <th>Amount payable</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cornwall Association of Local Councils</td> <td>Annual subscription</td> <td>£1,095.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Simon Rhodes</td> <td>Works to the Square, Ludgvan (invoice dated 070420)</td> <td>£200.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>L Dowe</td> <td>March salary & expenses</td> <td>£1,405.15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Payee	Purpose	Amount payable	Cornwall Association of Local Councils	Annual subscription	£1,095.12	Simon Rhodes	Works to the Square, Ludgvan (invoice dated 070420)	£200.00	L Dowe	March salary & expenses	£1,405.15	
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HMRC	March salary, PAYE and NIC	£667.40
L Dowe	Refund for office equipment costs	£1,124.77

Breakdown of salary and expenses payment to L Dowe:

£1,377.25 – salary payable

£18.00 – monthly payment for home office

£9.90 – 22 miles at 45p per mile, travel expenses.

Breakdown of office equipment costs payment to L Dowe

£958.80 – Dell laptop

£76.00 - Giff Gaff mobile phone contract – initial set up of £10 and then 11 monthly payments of £6 per month

£89.97 – Amazon, purchase of office mobile phone