



FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Introduction

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents>) places a duty on a local authority to ensure it is, as far as reasonably practical, prepared to continue to provide important functions and services in the event of a disruption.

Whilst this is not a statutory duty for a Parish Council, Four Marks Parish Council ('the Council') recognises the importance of producing and maintaining a Business Continuity Plan for implementation in the event of disruption to the day to day running of the Council.

This Business Continuity Plan identifies the:

- instances of disruption
- plan for the management of risk, including:
 - risk areas
 - immediate responses
 - procedures to follow to maintain continuity of services
 - follow-up procedures and necessary changes to delivery of services
 - external contacts

where such services are disrupted by factors within the Council's areas of responsibility.

Core Business of Four Marks Parish Council

The Council provides local services to its Parish electorate which includes the provision of:

- A Clerk and assistant employed to carry out appropriate functions for the Council
- Management of the finances of the Council, using the Parish precept for the benefit of the Parish and issuing of discretionary grants
- Administration of the Benians Trust
- Consultation on local planning applications to represent the interests of the Parish
- Liaison with East Hampshire District Council, Hampshire County Council or other relevant third party bodies on the provision of services to the parish and on issues that affect the parish;
- Maintenance services around the Parish including Parish Lengthsman duties (currently funded by Hampshire County Council) and sub-contracted grounds maintenance of the recreation

area, cemetery, the green at Lymington Bottom, wildlife areas surrounding Badger Close, Kingswood Copse, Oak Green parade and all other open space owned and managed by the Parish Council

- Parish Noticeboards
- The Council's website;
- Parish facilities, including:
 - The recreation ground inclusive of children's play area, adult gym and sports pitches
 - The Sports Pavilion
 - Swelling Hill pond
 - Litter bins and dog waste bins on Parish owned land in conjunction with East Hampshire District Council
 - Four Marks cemetery
 - Parish Council owned open public spaces and woodland.
 - Four Marks allotments.

Disruption

Potential causes of disruption include:

- Force majeure events ("acts of God"), disaster and disruption including:
 - severe adverse weather (for example: storms, winds, snow)
 - flooding
 - acts of war, terrorism
 - fire
 - illness
 - National pandemics – e.g., the outbreak of Covid-19.
- Vandalism, damage to, or theft of Council property
- Illegal and/or unauthorised encampments or incursions
- Failures, including of:
 - equipment due to failure or breakage
 - utilities and infrastructure provision; and
 - public services
- Losses, including of:
 - Council staff and Parish Councillors through death, illness, injury, resignation or dismissal, which, in the case of parish councillors, may leave the Council inquorate;
 - Equipment through theft, breakage or major damage; and
 - Council records through theft, fire or corruption of files.

Risk Management Plan

Event	Impact Minimisation	Immediate Action	Continuity
Closure of Parish Office due to Government advice or Public Health requirements.	<p>Clerk and assistant should continue to carry out their work remotely wherever possible.</p> <p>Equipment, insurance and risk assessments have all been considered to enable remote working.</p> <p>Office landline to be diverted to Council owned mobile to receive incoming calls.</p>	<p>Chair and Vice Chair are made aware. The Clerk will then ensure that all Council members are informed.</p> <p>To ensure that the maximum number of people within the community are informed, notices will be displayed at the Parish Office, on Parish noticeboards and via social media and the Parish website.</p>	<p>Ensure those contacting the Parish Office know that staff are working from home. This will be achieved by informing individuals that phone and amending email signatures to highlight that staff are working remotely. A note will also be added that staff will be working in a home environment and possibly using their own devices to cover any GDPR issues.</p>
Disruption to Council meetings due to prohibition by the Government or other body of authority.	<p>Where possible, meetings will be held to fulfil statutory obligations, however, if government guidance prohibits meetings, the Council will suspend meetings until further guidance is given.</p>	<p>Clerk to make all Councillors and public aware that meetings are prohibited. This will be via the website, social media and Parish noticeboards where possible.</p> <p>Clerk to monitor situation and await supplementary draft and full legislation, keeping the council informed at all times.</p> <p>Council to adopt temporary scheme of delegation</p>	<p>The Clerk will respond to any guidance from the Government or any legal changes as and when they come about.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Clerk will investigate alternative methods which will allow the meeting to take place virtually in readiness to execute this if it is permitted in the absence of a physical meeting.</p>
Loss of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer ("RFO") due to accident, illness, incapacity, death, resignation or dismissal	<p>Ensure key tasks are up to date, including all Council accounts and minutes.</p> <p>Document containing log ins and passwords to be kept in office safe.</p> <p>Finance and General Purposes Committee to ensure continued compliance with Financial Regulations.</p>	<p>Inform Chair and Vice-Chair. Chair or Vice Chair to inform Council.</p> <p>Notices on parish noticeboards and website, inform local newspaper, if and as appropriate.</p> <p>Chair to inform Health & Safety Executive, if necessary.</p>	<p>Clerk's assistant to cover and consult with Medstead Parish Clerk where necessary.</p> <p>Recruit permanent Clerk.</p> <p>Review procedures to ensure minimal impact from loss.</p>

Event	Impact Minimisation	Immediate Action	Continuity
Loss of Councillors causing the Council and/or one or more of its committees to be inquorate	<p>Inquorate Planning or Open Spaces committee: utilise reserve members (if appropriate)</p> <p>Inquorate Finance & General Purposes Committee – decisions will go to Full Council.</p> <p>Inquorate Full Council: Co-option of Councillors from waiting list (if any) / reserves by EHDC, if necessary</p>	<p>Clerk to inform remaining Councillors and employees of the Council.</p> <p>Inquorate Full Council: Clerk to inform EHDC Electoral Service.</p>	<p>Inquorate Full Council: EHDC to decide on temporary working strategy for Council business.</p> <p>By-election or co-option procedure to be instigated.</p> <p>Council to review procedure for recruitment of Councillors.</p>
Loss of Council documents due to fire, flood or other causes	<p>Scan important documents and keep an electronic copy, or keep in fire/flood proof storage. Important documents include: Staff and Parish Councillors' contact details, next of kin details; external contacts, including accountants and auditors details; Land Registry documents; all contracts, including leases/tenancy agreements; bank account details). Rights of burial and records also to be scanned.</p> <p>Regular back up of electronic documents held on the desktop on portable back up drive to be kept in an off site separate location by Clerk.</p> <p>Laptops to be backed up on regular basis.</p>	<p>Clerk to inform Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>Retrieve last back-up.</p> <p>Clerk to inform Insurance company if necessary.</p> <p>Report incident to Full Council.</p>	<p>Review procedures to ensure improvements and security.</p>
Loss of Council equipment or electronic data due to theft, fault, damage or breakdown	<p>Back up of Clerk's PC – also save items to drop box and save on office laptops where necessary.</p> <p>Carry out regular risk assessments, including security reviews.</p>	<p>Clerk to inform Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>Report theft to police and Insurance company.</p> <p>Decide on immediate replacement.</p> <p>Report incident to Full Council.</p>	<p>Replace in accordance with current regulations.</p> <p>Review procedures to ensure improvements.</p>

Event	Impact Minimisation	Immediate Action	Continuity
Damage to Sports Pavilion.	Maintain adequate insurance cover. Carry out periodic maintenance checks	Clerk to inform insurance company. Clerk to inform police, if necessary. Clerk to inform Chair and Vice Chair and Full Council to be informed. Clerk to notify Benians Committee. Clerk to notify public of any closure via notices on parish noticeboards and website, inform local newspaper, if and as appropriate.	Review procedures to ensure improvements.
Damage to Allotment Site	Maintain adequate insurance cover for items the Council is responsible (the perimeter fencing) Maintain the infrastructure of the Allotment Site which (including hauling ways, external boundaries, any trees not growing on plots, water mains and tanks and buildings owned by the Council.	Clerk to inform insurance company, if appropriate. Clerk to inform police, and water board, if and as necessary. Clerk to inform Chair and Vice Chair. Full Council and Four Marks Allotments Association to be informed.	Not applicable.
Damage to Council open spaces and/or play equipment	Maintain adequate insurance cover, where available and appropriate Carry out all necessary risk assessments and routine checks, maintenance and repairs	Clerk to inform insurance company, if appropriate. Clerk to inform police, if necessary. Clerk to inform Chair and Vice Chair. Full Council to be informed. Health and Safety audit of play equipment and cordon off, as necessary and appropriate.	Regular inspections by trained Councillors Annual inspections by certified RoSPA body
Illegal and/or unauthorised encampments or Traveller incursions	Regularly maintain and update the Council's policy on dealing with illegal and unauthorised encampments Maintenance of deterrence to illegal access of Council owned open spaces.	As detailed in the Council's policy on dealing with illegal and unauthorised encampments	Not applicable

Event	Impact Minimisation	Immediate Action	Continuity
Non availability or damage to the Councils regular meeting place (currently FM village hall)	Awareness of alternative meeting places; Benians Pavilion COGS Primary School	Clerk to inform All Councillors of alternative meeting place. Clerk to notify public via notices on parish noticeboards and website, inform local newspaper, if and as appropriate.	Short Term use of other local facilities Review procedures to ensure improvements. Hold meetings remotely if allowed, or delegated authority to the Clerk in place
Local disaster	Maintain up to date risk assessments of all Council property/liabilities. Maintain up to date contact detail list of Councillors, Clerk, and assistant, including next of kin. Maintain up to date list of emergency contacts. Promulgate awareness of East Hampshire District Council and Hampshire County Council Disaster Planning and key contacts.	Clerk to inform all Councillors. Contact relevant emergency services if appropriate. Call extraordinary meeting of Full Council to review the position and any necessary action.	Review risk assessments. Review procedures to ensure improvements.
Disruption to Council work due to severe adverse weather conditions	Clerk and assistant unable to travel to workplace mitigated by Clerk and assistant working from home. Clerk or assistant and Councillors unable to attend Council meetings: may be mitigated by rescheduling of meetings	Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair to reschedule impacted meetings and Clerk to notify Councillors of rescheduled meetings. Clerk to notify public via notices on parish noticeboards and website, inform local newspaper, if and as appropriate.	Review procedures to ensure improvements.

The Clerk is the first point of contact for all emergencies and business continuity actions. If the Clerk is not available, the actions should be implemented by the Chair, or in their absence, the Vice-Chair or a member of the Council that has been nominated by the Chair or Vice-Chair.