

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL
The Parish Office, Uplands Lane, Four Marks, GU34 5AF

Tel: 01420 768284
Email: clerk@fourmarks-pc.org.uk
Website: www.fourmarks-pc.org.uk



Wednesday 12th January 2022

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Full Council to be held at **Four Marks Village Hall** on Wednesday 19th January 2022 at **7.00pm** for the purpose of transacting the undermentioned business.

Please note that social distancing will be observed, masks are mandatory in the Village Hall (except for those exempt) and Councillors are asked to conduct a lateral flow test prior the meeting. Please do not attend the meeting if you feel unwell or are experiencing any Covid 19 symptoms. Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Goudie
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An opportunity for members of the public to raise issues of concern or interest, to ask a question or to make a statement. Public participation will be conducted in accordance with Four Marks Parish Council's Standing Orders 3 (d) – (k), with no individual speaker exceeding a maximum of 3 minutes. All public participation, and the duration of this item will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on, any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. You must withdraw when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.

4. FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Wednesday 15th December 2021.

5. PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

To receive a report from the Planning Committee Chairman on the meeting held on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

6. OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING

To receive a report from the Open Spaces Committee Chairman on the meeting held on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

To receive a report from the Chairman, as applicable.

8. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

To receive a report from the Ward Councillor, as applicable

9. EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Correspondence items and any matters arising from report.

9.2 Draft meeting schedule 2022/2023 for comment

10. FINANCIAL ITEMS AND ACCOUNTING REPORTS

- 10.1** To receive and approve the December payments and bank reconciliations as at 31st December 2021
- 10.2** To receive and authorise the January 2022 payments to date
- 10.3** To discuss and approve a donation to Home-Start Hampshire
- 10.4** To discuss and approve a donation to EBP South

11. TO APPROVE THE AMENDED BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN AND TEMPORARY SCHEME OF DELEGATION

To discuss and adopt the amended Covid 19 Business Continuity Plan until all restrictions and guidance are lifted.

12. TO NOTE EXTERNAL COMMITTEE AND AREA REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS (as applicable)

- 12.1** Allotments
- 12.2** Benians Pavilion
- 12.3** Oak Green
- 12.4** Village Hall

13. TO NOTE COUNCIL PROJECT UPDATES (as applicable)

- 13.1** Community Building Project
- 13.2** Queen's Platinum Jubilee event weekend

14. NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 16th February 2022, 7.00pm at the Village Hall

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Council have the right to exclude the public and press from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest and may pass a resolution, without notice, to do so.

AGENDA ITEM 9.1

EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Most of the correspondence items received after December's meeting were primarily seasonally related so were circulated prior to the Christmas break, both those items and the ones received since Christmas are included in this report. As always, please contact me if you require copies of any items listed.

In addition, a thank you was received from Helen Drake from Citizens Advice East Hampshire for the Council's donation, which was paid early this month.

Also included in this report is the draft meeting schedule for the Council meetings 2022/2023 for information. The schedule, with any suggested amendments, will be formally approved at the Annual meeting of the Council in May.

There are two grant requests this month. One from Home-Start Hampshire and the second is a request from the Education Business Partnership (EBP) South, a charity that for over 20 years has linked schools and businesses to help young people understand more about career options and help bridge the skills gap, this is their first approach to the Council and the request is £200. The Council has supported Home-Start for many years, last year's donation was £750. Further details on both applications are contained within the Agenda pack.

You will note that the Covid 19 Business Continuity Plan is once again on the Agenda, as the current climate remains uncertain. Whilst various groups continue to lobby parliament to allow remote or hybrid meetings to take place lawfully in England, meeting face to face continues with most Councils but many would prefer the option of being able to meet as a hybrid or remotely if their technology allows. The Council's previous Covid 19 Business Continuity Plan was rather prematurely revoked back in July 2021. The Council are being asked to adopt this updated document to avoid calling an EGM between scheduled meetings should an urgent need arise, although it does appear we may be moving in the right direction, it would seem prudent to take this measure. Although it is hoped that the Council will not be in this position again for years to come, this has highlighted the importance of having such a policy in place and to that end, a new document will be drafted for consideration at the next Finance & General Purposes meeting (F&GP).

Further to some Councillors concerns over the financial reporting, and lack of detail contained within the monthly reports, I have attended a demonstration of a similar financial software package which may have a more flexible reporting system. This will be presented at the next F&GP meeting for consideration, with any changes being made with effect from 1st April 2022. I also have a session booked with our Internal Auditor to discuss both software providers and any potential issues moving forward.

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL
CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS
For the period to 9th December 2021 – 23rd December 2021

Emails received:

9 th December	HALC	Briefing Note Covid 19: Council Meetings
9 th December	Chairman	FW: Police and Crime Plan 'More Police, Safer Streets' *
13 th December	SDNPA	SDNPA December Newsletter
15 th December	Hants PCC	Your views on council tax contributions to policing *
21 st December	HALC	Community Governance Review Campaign
20 th December	Chairman	FW: Merry Christmas from Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones
23 rd December	SCAS NHS	Wishing you a happy and healthy festive season from SCAS
23 rd December	EHDC Chairman	Christmas Greetings

EHDC NEWS Releases:

10 th December	No changes to bin collections this Christmas
14 th December	Protect staff and customers from coronavirus with good Ventilation
14 th December	Hordean man fined for clearing protected trees for use as a garden
15 th December	Consultation to make planning greener
15 th December	Don't fall for a scam this Christmas
17 th December	Council grants for life-changing projects
17 th December	Boosters, bin collections and Omicron updates all in festive Partners
20 th December	Councillor grants for community groups ☐ apply now!
20 th December	Recycling around the Christmas tree
23 rd December	Take part in two Local Plan consultations **
23 rd December	Recycling around the Christmas tree - correction!

Regular monthly news bulletins:

21 st December	CPRE	Christmas bulletin
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***circulated**

**** circulated to Planning Committee**

PLEASE CONTACT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER IF YOU REQUIRE COPIES OF ANY OF ABOVE.

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL
CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS
For the period to 24th December 2021 – 12th January 2022

Emails received:

4 th January 2022	SDNPA	Winter Newsletter
4 th January 2022	HCC Access Team	January 2022 - Happy New Year!
11 th January 2022	SLP Project	South Downs National Park Installation Update January 2022 (Esso Pipeline)
12 th January 2022	Cllr Keith Budden	EHDC Training for Parish Councillors and Officers

EHDC NEWS Releases:

6 th January 2022	EHDC launches two new grants for struggling Businesses
6 th January 2022	Make the most of community funding
6 th January 2022	PRESS RELEASE FROM EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL "Termination of Joint Management agreement between EHDC and Havant Borough Council"

Regular monthly news bulletins:

8 th January 2022	CPRE Campaigns	Happy new year!
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PLEASE CONTACT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER IF YOU REQUIRE COPIES OF ANY OF ABOVE.

AGENDA ITEM 9.2

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL												
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2022/2023												
	2022								2023			
MEETING	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
FULL COUNCIL	18th	15th	20th		21st	19th	16th	21st	18th	15th	15h	19th
OPEN SPACE	4th	1st	6th		7th	5th	2nd	7th	4th	1st	1st	5th
PLANNING COMMITTEE	4th	1st	6th		7th	5th	2nd	7th	4th	1st	1st	5th
FINANCE & GP			27th			25th			25th		29th	
ANNUAL PARISH	<i>Please note this meeting is for the ELECTORATE, and is not a Council Meeting</i>											26th

AGENDA ITEM 10.3

TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE A DONATION TO HOME-START HAMPSHIRE

Introduction

The core purpose of Home-Start Hampshire is to provide support to Families with children aged between 0 and 11 so Families can provide their children with the best possible start in life. Home-Start Hampshire is a local charity providing trained volunteers and expert support helping families with young children through their challenging times. We are there for parents when they need us the most.... because childhood can't wait.

Our trained volunteers, managed by a professional Family Coordinator, offer support and friendship to families with children up to the age of 11, either one-to-one or in groups. These are the vital years when children learn resilience, self-esteem and confidence and develop good mental and physical health which can last a lifetime.

Our charity helps individual families *now*, but our actions reach much further and wider than this. Society as whole benefits from adults who have grown up in secure, loving and supportive circumstances, and these adults then go on to lead successful lives and become good parents to their own children. However a poor start in life can so often lead to adults needing professional interventions which can be disruptive and costly.

Pyramid Project

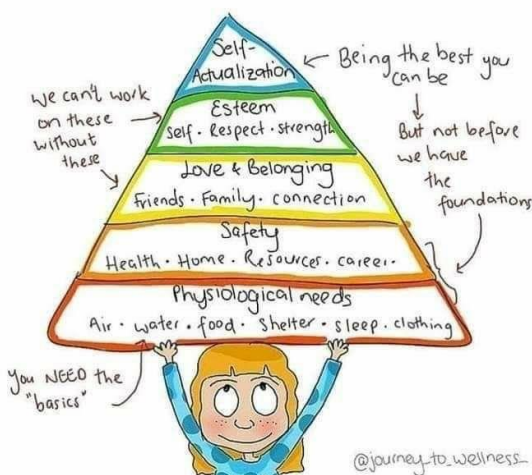
Our project is a programme of three strands of support based on the Maslow's hierarchy of needs:

Parenting – parents will develop strong and loving parenting skills and gain strategies for establishing family routines which leads to children feeling secure.

Mental health – parents and children are helped with mental health difficulties by putting coping strategies in place to encourage their well-being.

Social isolation – parents who feel isolated and excluded are helped to integrate into their communities by friendship, encouragement and practical help such as lifts to local groups.

MASLOW'S Hierarchy of Needs



The Effects of the Pandemic

This is a particularly difficult time for our charity and for the families in the Alton, Bordon and Liphook areas we cover. Our regular fund-raising activities are only just beginning to return after the disruption of the coronavirus pandemic so our income greatly reduced, yet the families we support need us more than ever.

Now that government restrictions have been lifted however, it has still not been easy for everyone to return to a normal way of life. Many of the people we support have lost confidence, or have been bereaved or lost their social support networks, or have had to deal with changes to their working lives.

The volunteers working in your area may not have been visiting families but they have kept in touch by phone or social media channels to continue their essential support where possible. We are aware of the need to reconnect and rebuild support for current families in need and we are aware that new families will be referring themselves soon with traditional Home-Start support needs.

National research indicates a huge negative impact on parents and on infants born during lockdown. New mothers battling with post-natal depression, isolation, physical health problems or bereavement really do benefit from the kindness and understanding of a volunteer who checks in regularly with them, listens without judgement and finds practical solutions to some of their problems. Home-Start UK is a member of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance and sits on the steering group for the First 1001 Days Movement.

School readiness for many has been impacted due to less socialisation and attendance at play sessions. Schools are already indicating that primary school children have had significant dips in their reading and writing skill levels and physical fitness. These are all local needs we can address with additional volunteer home visits, phone support, sign-posting, group sessions and local family outings.

Hampshire's Starting Well document says 'there are clear links between educational attainment, absenteeism and both current and future health outcomes for children and young people. Good educational attainment and skills are part of the key to breaking the intergenerational cycle of inequalities in income and employment opportunities which impact on health'. This is why Home-Start concentrates on supporting families in the early years and why we focus on building parenting skills.

How You Can Help

We are determined to take local action now, to tackle problems before families reach crisis point. We have the volunteers and the knowledge, but what we need is your funding to ensure that we can sustain and increase the training and management of our volunteers, ensure they are informed and upskilled about mental health support and the other impacts of the pandemic. We need to ensure in these overwhelming times that our paid staff are available to local families, volunteers and referrers so that the quality and safe performance of our service provision is maintained and new project work can extend our local impact.

We know from qualitative research and feedback that our work is really vital to the wellbeing of our families and cannot be over-emphasised in its importance. Most parents report positive changes in their children's behaviour, health and happiness following their six to nine month relationship with one of our volunteers and this can lead to a step change in their outlook and ability to thrive later as young adults and, eventually, as parents themselves.

Your donation to our work, so important in any year, is vital now.

Our Request: It costs approximately £10,000 per year for the 'average' local council to support one child in need. (Source: Aldaba and EIF analysis of Department for Education, Section 251, total

expenditure National Statistics, Characteristics of children in need; Looked after children, p22) – so our preventative support is highly cost effective.

Please will you consider making any donation towards our project costs:

£1300 provides one-to-one support for 1 family who are in crisis for up to 1 year, or 2 to 3 families for shorter periods. The support is flexible and tailored to their needs, and includes weekly volunteer home visits, regular reviews to measure progress and identify additional needs, liaison with other agencies to help with more complex concerns and the opportunity to attend group sessions, outings and much more.

£5000 provides one-to-one support for 4 families for up to 1 year or 8 families for 6 months.

£8500 funds a Home-Start Family Group facility supporting 20 – 25 families a year. This provides social and emotional support, models positive parenting strategies and provides parents with coaching on play, language or other child development issues for improved school readiness. Groups also identify mental health concerns and provide advice on budgeting, healthy eating, access to local services etc.

£10,000 covers the staffing cost of managing a pool of local volunteers for a year, managing induction and on-going training, effecting skilled and sensitive family referrals and ensuring children are safe-guarded.

We are happy to provide any further information required. Reports and reviews can be provided for any donations received, both qualitative and quantitative, to demonstrate how the money has been utilised to support families and we would be keen to share our learning with yourselves and other organisations.

The Government Health and Social Care Committee said the first 1,000 days of a child's life are critical, but not enough is being done; please help us to do more.

AGENDA ITEM 10.4

TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE A DONATION TO EBP SOUTH

Dear Mrs S Goudie,

Supporting young people to achieve their very best

COVID-19 has affected the lives of many in different ways and young people have been among the hardest hit, dealing with disrupted education, missing seeing friends, current worries, and uncertainty about their futures. Teenagers and younger adults are often at crucial milestones, such as taking exams, finishing school, starting further education, getting a first job, or moving away from home. Having progress halted by a pandemic was a new challenge for a generation to deal with.

Education Business Partnership (EBP) South is a charity that for over 20 years has linked schools and businesses to help young people understand more about career options and help bridge the skills gap. We work with many schools and colleges across Hampshire, and our professional careers practitioners help connect young people, including those from particularly disadvantaged backgrounds, with thousands of businesses. Our work gives young people careers guidance and the opportunity to explore different jobs, learn about different businesses and industries, and positively influence and support the choices they make.

As stated by the Department for Education in the July 2021 Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers document: "The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the economy, education and the opportunities open to students. Research has shown that school and college leaders recognise that careers guidance has become more important than ever as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic."

In 2020/21 our events and services continued to provide vital careers information to students and give businesses the opportunity to engage with young people. 74 percent of students who attended our Get Inspired Basingstoke 2021 event (held virtually) said they learnt about job types or careers that they didn't know about before the event and 100 percent of businesses who attended our Get Inspired Portsmouth 2021 event (held virtually) said they would recommend that other organisations participate in this type of event.

This academic year, we are continuing our work with schools providing vital careers guidance, in-person work experience, extended work experience and mentoring. We will be holding five Get Inspired Events – large scale careers fairs where local businesses exhibit to provide young people with information about job roles in their areas - a Primary STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) Fair, and over 45 in-school events.

Like many charities and other organisations, we have been impacted by Covid. For all of 2020/21 and some of the previous year we were not able to deliver activities that generated income and sponsorship as previously. As a charity, we rely on fundraising, sponsorship, and donations to be able to deliver our vital services that have a huge positive impact on young people. We would like to ask you to please consider making a donation of £200 to support our work so that we can rebuild and continue to inspire and engage young people across Hampshire, and those in your community who have experienced so much disruption in recent times.

If you would like to make a donation you can do so directly at: xxxx

Alternatively, if you would prefer to donate by cheque this can be made out to EBP South Ltd and posted to EBP South, 1000 Lakeside, North Harbour, Western Road, Portsmouth, PO6 3EN.

If you would like more information about our work or sponsorship packages, please contact sward@ebpsouth.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Kennett
CEO, EBP South

AGENDA ITEM 11.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN
IN RESPONSE TO THE ONGOING COVID19 PANDEMIC

This document has been prepared and subsequently updated in association with the Parish Council's Risk Assessment for COVID19.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic continues with ongoing and changing guidance from the Government
The direct link below is updated as guidance changes.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-and-support)

The Parish Council will continue to follow guidance and act accordingly.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The three main priorities for the Council are:

- a) Ensuring the Health and Safety of staff, Councillors, volunteers, contractors and Members of the Public participating in Council activities
- b) Maintaining effective and lawful decision-making processes
- c) The continuing operation of essential services and contractual obligations

N.B. Issues around Community Resilience activities will be addressed if appropriate.

1.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Much of this has been covered in the Risk Assessment in respect of the measures the Parish Council has already taken.

1.1. STAFF

The current guidance suggests still working from home where possible. However, if staff choose to continue to work in the office, only one person should be in the office at any one time. The office will be closed to members of the public until directed otherwise.

If the situation arises again where staff *must* work from home, all equipment and risk assessments are in place to enable this.

1.2. COUNCILLORS

The temporary Government legislation allowing councils to hold public meetings remotely by using video or telephone conferencing expired on 6th May 2021 ¹. Council meetings still need to be held in person and until such time as legislation changes to allow remote meetings, this will continue, and will be fully risk assessed.

Meetings can be held remotely providing there is a scheme of delegation in place for any recommendations made to be implemented. The original business continuity plan with a scheme of delegated powers in place was revoked on 28th July 2021. An amended document is now attached as Appendix 4 for guidance.

Councillors should be guided by current Government guidance and regulations when conducting Council business.

1.3. PUBLIC EVENTS

There are no public events scheduled until June 2022. This section will be updated early 2022.

1.4 COUNCIL/COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All Meetings shall be open to the public and the press unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. (Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act (1960).

Each meeting will be risk assessed with advisory guidance for Councillors and attendees dependent upon the Government's current guidance or regulations in place at the time of the meeting.

1.5 STATUTORY DEADLINES/REQUIREMENTS 2022

In addition to the Annual Parish Meeting for residents, there are a number of statutory meetings, requirements and deadlines that apply to local Councils.

¹ The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

(a) Annual Meeting of the Parish Council - Wednesday 18th May 2022

(b) Approval of Annual Accounts/Annual Return – By 30th June 2022

All local Councils are required under s168 of the LGA (1972) to submit an annual financial return to the Secretary of State showing income and expenditure. The Local Audit and Accountability Act (2014), Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations and the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) detail the procedure required. As a Category 2 authority with expenditure over £25k but below £6.5m, Four Marks Parish Council is obliged to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and submit this to the External Auditor (PKF Littlejohn) by their deadline of 1st July. The law also requires there to be a 30 day public rights inspection period of the accounts to include the first 10 days in July.

1.6 SERVICES

(a) Benians Pavilion

The Pavilion remains open with guidance in place.

(b) Play Areas/Open Space Areas/Pitches/Footpaths

All open space play areas and sports pitches remain open with guidance in place.

(c) Cemetery

Government guidance for places of worship and burials will be followed as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

- (i) the Executive Officer continues with delegated authority to manage the operation of Open Spaces maintenance and take whatever decisions are necessary in line with the Council's Risk Assessment.**
- (ii) the Executive Officer is authorised to utilise short term and temporary contractors where necessary to keep essential services running**

2.0 COMMUNICATION

Although working from home is still advised, the Executive Officer and Assistant Executive Officer will operate from the office where possible, but on separate days. Should the office be closed again, the office telephone will be diverted to the Executive Officer's mobile telephone. Both the Executive and Assistant Executive Officers have equipment to enable home working.

There is no longer a subscription to Zoom videoconferencing, however this will be re-instigated if remote meetings become lawful or Committees agree to operate as working parties, with the Executive Officer having delegated authority to act on instruction.

It remains essential for Councillors to check their emails on a regular basis.

3.0 MAINTAINING LAWFUL DECISION -MAKING PROCESSES

3.1 THE DELEGATION OF POWER

The law² permits a Council to delegate decision-making and discharge of statutory powers/functions (including "power to spend") to the following

- i. A Committee, (who may further delegate to a sub-committee) but not a Working Party)
- ii. A Council Officer (Executive Officer, Clerk or RFO who may delegate to another officer) (see below)
- iii. Another Local Authority

in order to perform these functions on the Council's behalf. This does not prevent Council from performing the responsibilities/decision-making itself ³ and legal responsibility always remains with the Council. Although there are certain matters that the law states cannot be delegated and must be discharged by a meeting of the

² Local Government Act (1972) s101

³ LGA(1972) s101(4)

Full Council, delegation can remove the requirement to convene a Full Council or Committee meeting whilst still enabling functions to be undertaken lawfully.

N.B. Authority to make decisions cannot be delegated to an individual Councillor or Councillors. However, they may be consulted by the Executive Officer before a decision is made/actions are taken by the Executive Officer.

The Clerk (Executive Officer) as Proper Officer /RFO is therefore the only individual in law who can act on behalf of the Council (although the Clerk [Executive Officer] can delegate power to other staff) and lead the administration of all the Council's activities. Some obligations are statutory whilst others are determined by the Council as part of the Clerk's (Executive Officer's) job description. These delegated powers therefore arise as the everyday duties of the Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer, including management of all staff, services and finances.

At all times the Clerk (Executive Officer) has to comply with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These can only be amended by a decision of Full Council. The Standing Orders/Financial Regulations therefore address specific principles (including those laid down in statute) for governance (lawful/legal management and control by the organisation as a corporate body) of all financial operations, decision making and conduct of the Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

A delegation scheme is put in place to allow the Executive Officer to make decisions, to allow the Council to continue with its daily operation, as detailed within this document and as per Appendix 4, in emergency situations.

3.2 EMERGENCY POWERS

Standing Order 15 permits the Clerk (Executive Officer) to take decisions on certain matters where no meeting is scheduled within the necessary timescale. However, these decisions can only be taken in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council. All decisions taken under this Standing Order are reported to next Parish Council meeting for ratification. Technically in this unprecedented situation, the Council and its Clerk (Executive Officer) could just rely on this Standing Order to "see them through" the next few months. However, when the decision involves expenditure, this has to be balanced against specific requirements in the Financial Regulations and therefore a more detailed delegation of power is proposed to include as much scrutiny of the actions of the Clerk (Executive Officer) by the Council within the confines of both the Financial Regulations and potential self-isolation.

3.3 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS/FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

In the absence of Council or Committee meetings, certain items of business cannot be transacted unless the Council decides to suspend the particular rule that requires something to have Council approval before it is expedited. This includes for example making payments to the Council's suppliers, only using the Council's debit card at work on a Council computer to authorise orders or BACS payments and seeking 3 quotes/council approval for procurement over certain values, where possible.

RECOMMENDATION

In event of an emergency, a temporary delegation of authority policy be activated which will serve to temporarily suspend/amend the specific Financial Regulations as detailed in Appendix 2. Proposal on how finance and payroll will be administered by the Executive Officer working from home are detailed in Appendix 3.

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY POLICY

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Parish Council will monitor the Government guidance and advice regarding the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2. The Parish Council will conduct appropriate Risk Assessments for continuation of business in conjunction with an approved Business Continuity Plan to ensure that the Council will be able to operate its business to the best of its abilities during the pandemic while protecting, as far as is reasonably possible, its employees, Councillors, volunteers, contractors and members of the public

2.0 OPERATIONAL PERIOD

- 2.1. **This policy will come into effect immediately the Chairman closes the meeting of Parish Council at which the policy is approved.**
- 2.2. **This policy will be rescinded by a subsequent Parish Council meeting when the policy is no longer deemed necessary and the requirements of the Local Government Act (1972) or subsequent legislation can be applied.**

3.0 ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

- 3.1. The Executive Officer as Proper Officer /RFO is the only individual in law who can act on behalf of the Council and lead the administration of all the Council's activities. Some obligations are statutory whilst others are determined by the Council as part of the Executive Officer's job description. These delegated powers therefore arise as the everyday duties of the Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer, including management of all staff, services and finances.
- 3.2. The purpose of this policy is to delegate further authority to the Executive Officer in order to ensure the Council can continue to operate its business to the best of its abilities for the benefit of the Four Marks community.
- 3.3. The Executive Officer can delegate authority to other staff. In the event that the Executive Officer is temporarily incapacitated and unable to carry out their duties during the operational period, all delegated authority will pass to the Assistant to the Executive Officer for the period the Executive Officer is incapacitated

4.0 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

- 4.1. With the exception of any matters which the law states cannot be delegated and are reserved for full Council any decision requiring Committee or Full Council approval where it is not possible to convene a lawful meeting is hereby delegated to the Executive Officer, as per the Temporary Scheme of Delegation (Appendix 4)

5.0 TEMPORARY ALTERATIONS TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 5.1. The Executive Officer is authorised to make expenditure on revenue items up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. Financial Regulation 4.1 is suspended during the operational period in favour of authorisation as follows:
 - 4 Councillors to include the Chairman and Vice Chairman for all items over £5000
 - Chairman and a second member of a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £1000; or
 - the Executive Officer, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items above £1000 but below £5000.
- 5.2. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, Financial Regulation 4.5 permits *the Executive Officer to authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in their judgement is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure.* During the operational period this shall be subject to an increased limit of £5000 for a single transaction. The Executive Officer shall report such action to the

Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 5.3. The Executive Officer shall prepare the monthly Schedule of Invoices for payment which shall be circulated electronically with the Council paperwork prior to the respective Meeting, to present to the Council or Committee for review and authorisation by resolution, as per Clause 5.2, and signed by the Chairman at the first opportunity.
- 5.4. In respect of Financial Regulation 10.3, it is accepted that in these unprecedented circumstances, there may be insufficient suppliers available to obtain 3 or more quotations for a specific transaction. Therefore, provided that at least 3 suppliers have been approached to quote, an order may be placed on best value terms available at the time without the requirement for 3 or more responses.

RECOMMENDATION: TO APPROVE THE UPDATED BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN AND TEMPORARY SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER (APPENDIX 4)

a.

APPENDIX 1 – COMMITTEES

Planning Committee	Statutory consultee. Dependent upon whether EHDC are processing Planning Applications	The Committee will continue to meet in person, with the option of changing the venue and fully risk assessed public access, unless legislation changes to allow hybrid or remote meetings, or the Committee agree to meet as a working party remotely with delegated responsibility to the Executive Officer to submit any responses recommended by the Committee on the Council's behalf.
Open Spaces Committee	Various projects and ongoing improvements and open spaces maintenance	The Committee will continue to meet in person, with the option of changing the venue and fully risk assessed public access, unless legislation changes to allow hybrid or remote meetings, or the Committee agree to meet as a working party remotely with delegated responsibility to the Executive Officer/Assistant to the Executive Officer.
Finance & General Purposes Committee	Budget Policies Staffing	The Committee will meet in person, with fully risk assessed public access and delegated authority as per the Committee's Terms of Reference.

APPENDIX 2 - FINANCIAL REGULATIONS TO BE SUSPENDED/AMENDED

FR 4.1

Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget.

This authority is to be determined by:

- the council for all items over £5,000
- a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £1000 but below £5,000; or
- the Clerk (Executive Officer), with subsequent approval from the Chairman or relevant Committee Chairman, for any items above £1000 but not greater than £5000

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Executive Officer, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

FR 4.5

In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Clerk (Executive Officer) may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Clerk's (Executive Officer's) judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1000 for a single transaction. The Clerk (Executive Officer) shall report such action to the Chairman as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

FR 5.2

The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments made or requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with relevant invoices, present the schedule to the Council, or Committee. The Council/Committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the Council or Committee. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.

FR 10.3.

All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1.

APPENDIX 3 – ADMINISTRATION OF FINANCES AND PAYROLL IN THE EVENT OF NOT BEING ABLE TO AUTHORISE IN PERSON

Approval of Invoices for Payment	Normally by Full Council at monthly meeting and signed by Chairman	As per amended Financial Regulation 5.2 to allow for circulation by email as per 5.3 of this Business Continuity Plan
Parish Council Credit Card	Normally held in Parish Office	EO will keep the credit card with her at all times to ensure access should the need to self isolate arise.
BACS payment authorisation	EO plus Chairman and Vice Chairman	<p>Invoices for payment will be examined, verified, checked for accuracy, coded and signed by the EO. Payments will be entered onto the BACS payment system for authorisation.</p> <p>Scanned copies to be taken of each invoice and circulated with the schedule of payments and/or bank authorisation payment sheet.</p> <p>Payment sheet and invoices will be sent to two signatories electronically. In the first instance the Chairman and Vice Chairman, or other designated signatory Councillors, as appropriate.</p> <p>The signatories will send an email confirming authorisation for retention on file.</p> <p>EO to file hard copies for signature at the first available opportunity by both Chairman and Vice Chairman, or other designated signatory Councillors, as appropriate.</p>
Cheque payment authorisation	EO plus two signatories	Due to the current restrictions, cheque payments should be avoided. However, in exceptional circumstances where cheque payment is the only option, two signatories will be asked to visit the office by appointment to sign the respective paperwork, cheque and stub as required.
Bank reconciliations	Financial Regulation 2.2 requires bank reconciliation verification by an appointed Councillor on a regular basis.	Continue as current – Cllr Davis, at an arranged time, with appropriate procedures in place.
Procurement/placing of orders	Day to day/within budget can be affected from home by EO.	EO has power to spend in an emergency. Temporarily increase value to £5,000 in consultation with 4 Councillors

Monthly payroll (Basic PAYE tools RTI)	Payroll software is only on desktop computer	Salary payments have reverted to BACS system. Payroll can only be processed from desktop computer. Should home working resume, and office working no longer allowable. Desktop will be removed to home location.

APPENDIX 4

TEMPORARY SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Background

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic emergency legislation was enacted which confirmed the legality of Council and Committee meetings being held virtually, existing legislation having always been interpreted as requiring attendance in person. This emergency legislation expired on 7th May 2021. A temporary scheme of delegation to the Executive Officer that had been put in place to enable the Council to fulfil its obligations and continue as democratically and compliant as legal possible, was revoked on 28th July 2021 as the Council returned to normal business.

As the pandemic continues and guidance changes, best practice would indicate that it would be reasonable to have a standard temporary scheme of delegation available to put in place should there be a requirement in an emergency. The temporary scheme of delegation will be enacted either by motion at the next appropriate Full Council meeting, or by the Chairman and Vice Chairman if the Council are unable to meet for ratification at the next council meeting when held.

Terms of Reference

Under Section 101 of the LGA (1972) there is provision for delegating authority to the Proper Officer for making decisions on behalf of the council as and when appropriate. The purpose of introducing the temporary scheme of delegation to the Executive Officer is to ensure that the Council can still operate with full compliance with the current Government restrictions in legislation.

1. To take action on any issue that cannot wait until the next Parish Council meeting

The Executive Officer will address any need/resolution to all Councillors by email. Action taken should be routinely carried out with the input of at least two Councillors. The Executive Officer would normally be expected to consult with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, or Committee Chairman, to take their views into account.

2. Planning Applications

To prepare and submit a response to planning applications on behalf of the Council, following recommendations from the Planning Committee, via discussion meeting or email.

3. Financial thresholds

- a. To authorise expenditure on items where the Council within a budget approved by the Council has agreed to the expenditure as per 5.1 to 5.4 of the Delegated Authority section of this document.
- b. To incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work or essential project which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure submit to a limit of £1000, as per the Delegated Authority section point 5.1.
- c. To take any action regarding minor repairs (up to a cost of £1000) and to report minor matters to the relevant authority.

4. Record keeping

Record keeping and the maintenance of a solid trail (particularly around decision making in any form) should be retained in writing and reviewed and certified to ensure good documentary evidence.

5. Reporting back to Full Council

A log will be kept of all decisions made under this Temporary Scheme of Delegation and reported back to the next available Council meeting.

Delegated actions should be in accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and in line with directions given by the Council from time to time and this Scheme of Delegation and where applicable any other rules/regulations and legislation.

Council matters

The following items are reserved for Council decision only and cannot under any circumstances be delegated to an Officer.

- To appoint the Chairman and Deputy Chairman in May each year
- To sign off and approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Statement by 30th June each year
- To set the Precept
- To appoint or dismiss the Clerk/RFO
- To make byelaws
- To borrow money
- To consider any matter required by law to be considered by Council
- To incur capital expenditure or revenue expenditure not specifically included within the Annual Estimates approved by the Council
- To approve or amend Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as to the conduct of the Council's business
- To approve the Committee structure including terms of reference, membership and voting rights
- To confirm eligibility to use the General Power of Competence